

Stewardship Of God's Temple (Part One): Controlling Our Appetites

Fighting Gluttony

David F. Maas

Given 19-Jun-21; Sermon #1603

Before I begin, I would like to thank my dear siblings-in-Christ, Barbara Shanks in Montgomery, Alabama, Debbie Clinton in Phoenix, Arizona, Mike Fuhrer in Portland, Oregon, and Arnie Fontaine here in Colton for sending me links to articles, websites, and books for the subject I wish to address today.

I Corinthians 3:16-17 Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are.

The *New American Standard Bible* renders this passage as: “Do you not know that you are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone destroys the temple of God, God will destroy that person; for the temple of God is holy, and that is what you are.”

I Corinthians 6:19-20 Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price: therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

To colorize and add more depth to this passage, the Lockman Foundation's *Amplified Bible* renders this passage as follows: “Do you not know that your body is the temple (the very sanctuary) of the Holy Spirit Who lives within you, whom you have received [as a Gift] from God? You are not your own, you were bought with a price [purchased with a preciousness and paid for, made His own] So then, honor God and bring glory to Him in your body.”

Previously, some would differentiate spiritual and physical sins, placing physical sins on a less important level, similar to the way Roman Catholic theologians differentiate mortal (premeditated willful sins) and venial sins (sins of weakness), or perhaps the way the Gnostics in their dualistic philosophy would assert, that since matter is inherently evil while spirit only is good, that anything one does in the body, including gross and vile sin, is relatively meaningless because real life exists only in the spiritual realm.

In his article, “Stewardship of the Body,” Ryan Braught claims that mainstream ‘Christianity’ may have absorbed too much of the Gnostic ascetic Stoic philosophy, stating “All too often I believe the contemporary church has bought into the Gnostic philosophy which John warned about in his first epistle, a misguided philosophy which insisted that spirit is good but physical/material is bad/evil.”

We cannot allow the risk to assume that physical sins, such as overeating or excessive drinking, are to be flippantly ignored, characterized as harmless weaknesses. If we do, we may have inadvertently adopted the Gnostic dualism heresy previously flagged as hazardous by John.

When we take the Passover, we may have the natural tendency to compartmentalize Jesus’ broken body, symbolized by the broken bread, as healing for our physical sins, while the shed blood, symbolized by the wine, as payment for our spiritual sins. As Dr. Don Ward has often emphasized, the bread and the wine, representing the body and blood of Christ, constitute one whole sacrifice. We should never flippantly regard a physical sin as of lesser concern.

At one church event in Pasadena, when the late Herbert W. Armstrong was offered a second piece of cake by a well-meaning hostess, he politely declined the offer. When she then insisted, “Come on, Mr. Armstrong, a little piece wouldn’t hurt,” he sharply retorted, “Do you really want me to sin?”

In this next series of sermons, my specific purpose will be to discuss the tending, dressing, and keeping, indeed the stewardship of our physical bodies—namely, the sanctuary of God’s Holy Spirit. How we treat our bodies demonstrates our loyalty to our Creator and our desire to follow His

holy law—which absolutely includes physical laws regarding eating, drinking, and exercising—all discussed in Roderick Meredith’s booklet “The Seven Laws of Radiant Health,” available from several sources on the Internet in PDF format. Dr. Meredith reminds God’s people, “the cause of sickness is the breaking of physical laws set in motion to govern the operation of our human bodies. These laws are just as real as the law of gravity, and the penalty for breaking them is just as sure.” He continues, “Why, then, are so many sick today? In a nutshell, it is because there are physical laws that regulate our bodies. If we break these laws or if they are accidentally broken, it is a transgression of law (referencing I John 3:4) and it automatically exacts a penalty. The penalty is pain, sickness, or possibly even death.”

All of God’s laws, statutes, precepts, and ordinances are based upon spiritual principles which will last for eternity. Let us vigorously nail this important tenet down.

Psalm 119:111 Your testimonies I have taken as a heritage
[inheritance] forever, for they are the rejoicing of my heart.

The *New American Standard Bible* renders it: “I have inherited Your testimonies forever, for they are the joy of my heart. The NIV uses the term statutes instead of testimonies, which are both synonyms for precepts, judgments, and laws.

Psalm 119:142 Your righteousness is an everlasting righteousness,
and Your law is truth.

Psalm 119:152 Concerning Your testimonies, I have known of old
that You have founded them forever.

The NIV translates it this way: “Long ago I learned from your statutes that you established them to last forever.”

Psalm 119:160 The entirety of Your word is truth, and every one
of Your righteous judgments endures forever.

In the Amplified we read: “The sum of Your word is truth [the total of the full meaning of Your individual precepts]; and every one of Your righteous decrees endures forever.” The NIV renders this same passage: “All your words are true; all your righteous laws are eternal.” In other words, long after we have been resurrected and transformed into dazzling, luminous spirit beings, the eternal principles governing all aspects of God’s holy law will be perpetually in force, and the inner core of our being will delight in them forever.

We will, in essence, be composed of law. We do not want to be free from law, but free from sin which is the transgression of the law (I John 3:4).

Exodus 15:25-26 There He [the Lord God] made a statute and an ordinance for them, and there He tested them, and said, “If you diligently heed the voice of the LORD your God and do what is right in His sight, give ear to His commandments and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on which I have brought on the Egyptians. For I am the LORD who heals you.”

Moses reiterates this conditional promise in the second giving of the law:

Deuteronomy 7:15 “And the LORD will take away from you all sickness, and will afflict you with none of the terrible diseases of Egypt, but will lay them on all who hate you.”

Like the grace God bestows upon His people, these health blessings are conditional and require submission to His holy laws and statutes. Healing, which Jesus Christ deliberately associated with forgiveness of sins (referencing Matthew 9:5 and Luke 5:23) is also conditional, dependent upon unconditionally submitting to His laws, judgments, ordinances, decrees, and precepts. Knowing God’s law and acknowledging its value is not good enough—we must be actively keeping and doing it.

As John Ritenbaugh pointed out in his article, “The Right Use of Power,” the terms *salvation* and *development* identify two entirely different concepts. We are saved by grace. But if there is going to be development from where God begins whenever we first receive His Spirit, then it requires something on our part to enable the fullness of development to take place. That involves

intensive work on our part—utilizing the agonizing self-discipline that Richard alluded to in his sermon last week.

Paul somberly warns us in Roman 2:11-12, “For there is no partiality with God. For as many as have sinned without law will also perish without law, and as many as have sinned in the law will be judged by the law.” The Amplified renders this passage: “For God shows no partiality [undue favor or unfairness; with Him one man is not different from another]. All who have sinned without the Law will also perish without [regard to] the Law, and all who have sinned under the Law will be judged and condemned by the Law.”

In other words, all of God’s laws are in force perpetually whether any of us are remotely aware of them or not. For example, the laws of clean and unclean meats were obviously in force from the time of Adam and Eve to the time of Noah (referencing Genesis 7:2-3), as well as the seventh day Sabbath commandment (referencing Genesis 2:3), and moreover, are still in force today, though antinomian Protestant theologians are convinced that these Old Covenant mandates, meant only for the Jewish culture, were permanently nailed to the cross.

Doug Batchelor, in his article “God’s Free Health Plan,” reminds these dutiful antinomians that “the Jew’s digestive system in no way differs from the Gentile’s digestive system. These health laws are for all people for all time.” Tragically, the lion’s share of Jacob’s offspring across the entire earth has blatantly disregarded God’s holy laws-Sabbath laws, morality laws, financial laws, including laws governing eating, drinking, and stewardship of their bodies—and are consequently cursed with the dreaded diseases of Egypt which God at one time removed from them conditionally as they promised to keep His statutes, judgments, and precepts. Let us turn over to a familiar memory verse.

Hosea 4:6 “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also reject you from being priest for Me; because you have forgotten the law of your God, I also forget your children.”

Today, I would like to focus on a subject which some speakers have regarded as a dangerous third rail, potentially more offensive or threatening than the discussion of sexual perversion, mandatory vaccines, or tyrannical mask laws, and that is the topic of gluttony.

Back in 1955, the late evangelist Billy Graham, reflecting on the state of the nation's health in the aftermath of President Eisenhower's heart attack, proclaimed emphatically that gluttony, once condemned by Medieval Catholic theologians as the first of the seven deadly sins, had ironically far surpassed alcoholism as society's most tolerated and most acceptable sin. To complicate this assessment, the current woke culture in the lands of Jacob's offspring have implemented very intense penalties for even the stigmatizing hint of fat shaming—or skinny shaming also, for that matter.

Over the past 77 years, I have experienced both kinds of shaming. For the first 30 years of my life, I was blessed (a mighty well-disguised blessing as Winston Churchill would say) with a super-fast metabolism, so much so that I needed to stand twice in one place to make a shadow. In the fall of 1967, when I first started teaching in a tiny high school in Barnum, Minnesota, I was devastated that my students were mocking me, calling me Bernie Fife (Andy Taylor's bumbling, bug-eyed deputy). When I desperately tried to get some sympathy from my mother during semester break, she just giggled and replied, "Well, you do look like him." The skinny shaming did not abate until the fall of 1974, when I joined the faculty at Ambassador College, Big Sandy, where a fabulous chef, Carlton Green, started to put some real meat on my pitiful skeletal, bony frame.

After I started graduate school at Texas A&M, a steady diet of burritos, Red Coleman Texas hamburgers, and the Blue Bull (Schlitz Malt Liquor) started packing on huge amounts of adipose tissue onto my girth until I developed a chronic case of Dunlap's disease—an embarrassing malady in which my belly "done lapped" over my belt. During those early years, I was not too particularly concerned about the consequences of binge eating—until I was diagnosed with type 2 diabetes in the fall of 2011—leading to a host of other complications, including fatty liver disease, compromised kidneys,

compromised adrenals, sleep apnea, and other related issues related to obesity and over-indulgence. Sadly, for too many of us, “Vee Get too soon Alt, und too late Schmardt!”

Even though Moses in Psalm 90 reminds us that our physical bodies will eventually wear out, approximately 70 years, or 80 by strength, we have absolutely no excuse to let our working bodies fall into disrepair.

In her article “How to be a Good Steward of Your Body,” Carrie Dedrick, focusing on Proverbs 23:2, “Put a knife to your throat if you are given to gluttony, observes that this verse seems incredibly harsh, and yet, gluttony is mostly overlooked in the church today.” But the deadly consequences of an uncontrolled appetite are far more serious than annoying a stingy man. When we overindulge, we are likely to become overweight; we may be on a steady path to heart disease or diabetes, which has the potential to severely inhibit our lives and our ability to work for the Kingdom.

Roderick Meredith has emphatically stated that God’s people, the Israel of God, “are called to be a light—an example to others. They are called to help and serve others. And they are called to be leaders preparing to rule with and under Jesus Christ in the World Tomorrow. But they simply cannot do this effectively if they are sick most of the time.”

None of us can say we were unaware of the cost of discipleship at our calling, but because our carnal mind is enmity against God, and totally hostile to His life-sustaining laws (referencing Romans 8:7), we kick the can down the road when it comes to making permanent lifestyle changes, wistfully sighing, “If I had known I would last this long, I would have taken better care of myself earlier.”

My physician (my daughter-in law’s cousin, hence, my niece-in-law) has been since 2013, carefully monitoring my blood tests four or more times a year which have yielded up and down results. In January of this year, she sternly said she would begin to prescribe insulin if I could not get those A1C numbers down, which thankfully I did in one month to her satisfaction-relying on a combination of a modified Keto diet and a regimen of intermittent fasting prescribed by the Canadian nephrologist and fasting counselor Dr. Jason Fung. But she also warned me that I must permanently

(not just a couple weeks before the blood test) change my entire lifestyle regarding my diet in order to do something about my compromised kidneys and fatty liver—or else look forward to possible strokes, congestive heart failure, neuropathy, amputation of limbs, dialysis, etc.

Before I asked one of God's ministers to anoint me for "kidney failure," I knew that God Almighty was not obligated to take away the consequences of my sins against the temple of His Holy Spirit than He was obligated to save the life of the son which King David had conceived in adultery with Bathsheba. Proverbs 19:3 (Amplified) teaches us that "the foolishness of man undermines his way [ruining whatever he undertakes]; then his heart is resentful and rages against the Lord [for, being a fool, he blames the Lord instead of himself]." Why is the not Lord healing me when I ask Him?

Gratefully, at my May 20th blood draw the previously dangerously high numbers dramatically turned around. But I continue to realize that the intense struggle which Richard described in his Self-Discipline sermon last week, the agonizing struggle to bring my appetites under control will require a life-time commitment, a day-by-day struggle, in order to be a faithful steward of the temple of God's Holy Spirit.

Thankfully, I have been able to reach out to a number of spiritual siblings, with related though not necessarily identical issues, for needed support and counsel, as James 5:16 teaches—"Confess your trespasses to one another, that you may be healed." The Amplified renders this passage: "Confess to one another your faults (your slips, your false steps, your sins) and pray [also] that you may be healed and restored [to a spiritual tone of mind and heart]."

Regarding the control of appetites—or combatting gluttony—I want to be crystal clear that I dare not point a critical finger at anyone in this congregation. I am preaching primarily to myself with all four fingers pointed in this direction.

Paul has made it abundantly clear that to compare ourselves among ourselves is not wise, but highly foolish and unproductive (II Corinthians 10:12), remembering that when we attempt to remove a speck out a sibling's eye, we could easily ignore the humongous railroad tie in our own eye (Matthew 7:5).

Dave Maas, over the past 77 years, has had no problems with tobacco, street drugs (including marijuana, crack cocaine, or LSD), no desire to gamble, no desire for expensive cars or expensive houses, and has no desire to keep up with the latest clothing fashions, but has had considerable other struggles or issues which have been uncomfortable or downright embarrassing to share, including an intense craving for food—rendering me a veritable recovering “foodaholic” though some in this room may take issue with the recovering qualifier. We have elaborate smorgasbord-like potlucks here in the Colton congregation—and taking a tiny piece of everything from the serving table could possibly brand one as a glutton, showing lack of self-control.

Tim Badal, in his article, “Gluttony: When Too Much of a Good Thing Becomes Sin,” relates an anecdote about two famous religious leaders Dwight L. Moody and Charles Spurgeon:

D. L Moody was the rock-star pastor from Chicago revolutionizing the church in America. Charles Spurgeon, the “Prince of Preachers,” was in London, where they couldn't find a building big enough to accommodate all the people who wanted to hear him preach at the Metropolitan Tabernacle. During one of his visits to Great Britain, Moody said, “Before I go, I want to see the great Mr. Spurgeon and meet the Prince of Preachers. Where does he live?” He was told where he lived in London. Moody approached the door and knocked, and Spurgeon was smoking the biggest, fattest, most robust cigar Moody had ever seen. Aghast, Moody said, “Oh, my Lord. The great Charles Spurgeon is given to the use of tobacco!” To which Spurgeon took his cigar out of his mouth, took the butt of the cigar and pushed it into Moody's stomach and said, “The great D.L. Moody is given to the sin of gluttony. I will gladly put my cigars away if you put your spoon and fork away.”

In her article “What Does the Bible Say About Gluttony?”, Mary Fairchild defines gluttony as the habitual giving in to a greedy appetite by overindulging in eating and drinking.” Gluttony includes an excessive desire for the pleasure that food gives to a person. Now, God is both the Creator of pleasure and the sole means to satisfy pleasure. Pleasure and godliness are not or should not be mutually exclusive. To be sure, Proverbs 21:17 says that “He who loves pleasure will be a poor man; he who loves wine and oil will not be rich.” Paul warned in II Timothy 3:4 that in the last days many would obsessively focus on satisfying tissue needs becoming “lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God,” making pleasure and pleasure-seeking an idol. Paul makes a pointed warning to the Philippians about those who make gods out of their bellies.

Philippians 3:19 whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is their shame—who set their mind on earthly things.

Reading these verses without a view of the context may lead us to disparage pleasure at all costs, regarding it as an intrinsic evil, something that would hinder our spiritual growth. But if satisfying pleasure or appetite is evil, why has God Almighty developed the drive-reduction mechanism as one of the most ubiquitous repeatable designs and patterns throughout creation from the single cell to the multi-cellular organism? The marvelous drive-reduction mechanism (satisfying thirst, hunger, sex, sleep, or some other tissue needs) reflects an aspect of God’s very mind (referencing Romans 1:20) providing many types for spiritual lessons. God has created tissue deficits and desires to motivate us and keep us productive. Frequently, God will allow a deficit or state of dissatisfaction to endure a long time in order to create an intense desire or hunger for something positive.

The Great God of the Universe, as the designer of cravings, has no intention whatsoever that we denigrate pleasure or disparage pleasure, something He pronounced good and wholesome (Genesis 1:31), but merely the wrong or perverted use of that pleasure. The Puritan minister Cotton Mather exclaimed, “Wine is from the Lord, but the drunkard is from the Devil.”

God has designed both the craving and the means to satisfy the craving. How we control and direct those physical appetites provide valuable insights as to how to attain their spiritual counterparts. God's Word provides the only instructions for the legitimate satisfaction of these cravings.

In his *Dictionary of Biblical Themes*, Martin Manser explains that “scripture condemns gluttony as an excessive greed for food. Its unrestrained self-indulgence often leads to deeper iniquity and represents a rejection of godly moderation. Gluttony is a form of idolatry and therefore condemned as offensive to God.”

Mary Fairchild, in her article “What Does the Bible Say About Gluttony?”, concurs with this assessment, adding that when the desire for food and drink becomes important to us, it is a sign that it has become an idol in our lives. Any form of idolatry is a serious offense to God. Consider the Paul's warning:

Ephesians 5:5 For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.

In the *Amplified Bible*, the passage reads: “For be sure of this: no immoral, impure, or greedy person—for that one is [in effect] an idolater—has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God [for such a person places a higher value on something material other than God].”

In his article “Gluttony: When Too Much of a Good thing Becomes Sin,” Tim Badal makes a compelling case that our original Mom and Dad were undermined more by the sin of gluttony than anything else, stating “by looking carefully at the story of Adam and Eve, we will learn that the issue of sin wasn't a sin of violence in the Garden. It wasn't a sin involving sexual immorality. It wasn't the sin of a lying tongue. The sin of Adam and Eve was that although they had been given all they needed to live and prosper, enough just wasn't enough. Did you know that the sin of gluttony is what threw us into sin as humanity?”

Sadly, we as the offspring of Adam and Eve, have also sought to go our own ways. Instead of enjoying the things God has given us, we say, “Lord, I know You said I could have this, but I want more of it. I want something different than what You’ve given.” And our gluttonous hearts keep us from the abundant life God wants us to have.

Sadly, Adam and Eve’s, Noah’s, Abraham’s, Isaac’s, and Jacob’s children have a history of failure to control their appetites. Our forefather Noah has the dubious distinction of being the first man in the Bible to succumb to intoxication or drunkenness (Genesis 9:20-21). Ted Bowling, in his June 5th message “Lessons from Esau and Jacob,” reminded us of Esau’s tragic, careless, and foolish decision to forfeit his birthright for a bowl of lentil soup, the event recorded in Genesis 25:29-34. I will read this to you from the Amplified version:

“Jacob had cooked [reddish-brown lentil] stew [one day, when Esau came from the field and was famished; and Esau said to Jacob, please let me have a quick swallow of that red stuff there, because I am exhausted and famished.” For that reason Esau was [also] called Edom (Red). Jacob answered, “First sell me your birthright (the rights of a firstborn.” Esau said, “Look, I am about to die [if I do not eat soon]; so of what use is this birthright to me? Jacob said, “Swear [an oath] to me today [that you are selling it to me for this food]”; so he swore [an oath] to him, and sold him his birthright. Then Jacob gave Esau bread and lentil stew; and he ate and drank, and got up and went on his way. In this way Esau scorned his birthright.”

Paul, in Hebrews 12:16, equated gluttony with the sin of adultery. In Deuteronomy 21:20-21, gluttony is similarly linked with the sins of drunkenness, idolatry, rebellion, disobedience, wastefulness, and laziness, leading to capital punishment. Consider verse 20: “And they shall say to the elders of his city, ‘This son of ours is stubborn and rebellious; he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton and a drunkard.’ Then all the men of his city shall stone him to death with stones; so you shall put away the evil from among you, and all Israel shall hear and fear.”

Gluttony still exacts the death penalty in modern Israel, but it comes incrementally on the installment plan as it did to our original Mom and Dad after their gluttonous eating from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. While it took 930 years to expire, their offspring (which includes us) at least from the time of the Exodus, on the average take 70 or 80 years to run down. Our forebears on the Sinai continually kvetched and bellyached about the lack of variety of food, demanding that God provide them meat. God obliged them, but did not hold back consequences of their rebelliousness.

Numbers 11:31-34 Now a wind went out from the Lord, and it brought quail from the sea and left them fluttering near the camp, about a day's journey on this side, all around the camp, and about a day's journey on the other side, all around the camp, and about two cubits (which converts into three feet or one yard) above the surface of the ground. And the people stayed up all that day, all night, and all the next day, and gathered the quail (he who gathered least gathered ten homers) [that works out to about 1900 birds, weighing about 475 pounds. The Lord had rained down over a billion quail]; and they spread them out for themselves around the camp. But while the meat was still between their teeth, before it was chewed [these folks must have been inhaling and gorging themselves as if there were no tomorrow], the wrath of the LORD was aroused against the people, and the LORD struck the people with a very great plague. So he called the name of that place Kibroth Hattaavah [meaning graves of craving], because there they buried the people who had yielded to craving.

Today, the descendants of Jacob's children have still not learned their lessons about omnivorous unhealthy cravings, adding swine flesh, crabs, lobsters, and now synthetically created "meat" to their culinary repertoire. Modern Israel, exporting their Standard American Diet (SAD), genetically modified junk food overloaded with processed carbohydrates and refined sugar to the rest of the world, has bequeathed obesity, insulin-resistance diabetes, heart disease, and strokes to the far reaches of the earth, where relatively malnourished populations are desirous of imitating the over-indulgent habits of the Western world.

One of the most criminal acts that the United States Department of Agriculture, along with the World Health Organization, committed was the publishing of the famous Food Guide Pyramid in 1992, which caused some horrible dietary choices by people who thought they were being health conscious. But just like the faulty pseudo-science behind the Covid-19 bio-weapon vaccine, the original Food Guide Pyramid which debuted in 1992 was built on shaky ground. Research from around the world questioned the truthfulness of the alleged claim that the base of the pyramid (the majority of the diet should consist of refined carbohydrates, the middle should consist of meat and milk, and the very tip a tiny insignificant amount of fats (including butter and cheese), which were falsely assumed to create cardiovascular blockage.

In her informative article, “How Did the Government Get the Food Pyramid So Terribly Wrong?”, Chaunie Brusie, former Registered Nurse-turned writer specializing in health, encapsulates what the pyramid got wrong, explaining, “Today, we know that fats are not necessarily “bad” and that eating low-fat foods often causes its own problems. In fact,” she continues, “researchers were puzzled to see that in light of the information the general populous was exposed to, consumers readily replaced the high-fat foods that were allegedly endangering their heart health with highly processed, low-fat junk food. People came to [and still do to this day] equate “low-fat” as “healthy” and that, of course, was not 100 percent true. Adding to the problem was the Food Guide Pyramid model’s success in encouraging Americans and other Western nations to make food choices that prioritized consuming carbohydrates, which often resulted in diets dominated by excess calories, sugar and starches.”

Those of us who have struggled over the years with maladies like type 2 diabetes, insulin resistance, neuropathy, blurred vision, congestive heart failure, kidney failure, and renal failure have not only carnal human nature to contend with, but also a mendacious government publishing food pyramids that would be more effective if they were turned completely over. Thankfully, some highly articulate and responsible whistleblowers from the medical community, such as the Toronto-based nephrologist (a kidney specialist) Dr. Jason Fung. Dr. Fung is perhaps the world’s leading expert on intermittent fasting and low carb diets, especially for treating people with type 2 diabetes with all of its attendant complications such as obesity, insulin

resistance, fatty liver, and fatty pancreas. Dr. Fung has published three best-selling health books focusing on obesity, diabetes, and cancer, and has posted more than 50 highly informative videos both on his website and platforms such as YouTube and Twitter. He is also a co-founder of The Institute for Functional Medicine, which also has a formidable presence on the Internet.

Another physician who has seen the light about the causes and solutions to the horrible spike in obesity-diabetes following the disastrous food pyramid propaganda, is Dr. Ken Berry, a former family physician in rural Tennessee, who for over a decade has battled the epidemics of obesity, insulin resistance, and diabetes one patient at a time, and has now determined to wage an all-out war against type 2 diabetes through his informative books and instructive videos on the ketogenic diet.

Back on July 3, 1976, right before the US Bicentennial, Bill Swanson, pastor of the Rapid City Church of God, warned the congregation that the enthusiasm which many originally had for God's physical health laws at their calling or conversion had considerably waned much the same as the first love had waned in the Ephesian church. Even such commonsense principles such as "eat food that spoils, but eat it before it spoils," which I heard the late Sherwin McMichael counsel the Minneapolis congregation repeatedly, has sadly gone by the board as modern science has tried to embalm our precious foodstuffs with harmful, indigestible chemicals.

As stewards of God's temple, we need to realize that if we live for the present, with the sole focus on satisfying our tissue needs, we lose sight of our dazzling future as spirit beings. Living exclusively for the present is idolatry. Paul addressed this hedonistic carpe diem tendency in I Corinthians 15, reminding the congregation that God's people must be preparing for eternity as well as the here and now, declaring:

I Corinthians 15:32 If, in the manner of men, I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantage is it to me? If the dead do not rise, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die!" [echoing the oft quoted maxim of the Hedonistic pleasure-seeking philosophy well understood by the Corinthian congregation]

As stewards of God's holy temple, when we are dying for that meal as Esau lusted after the lentil soup, we run the risk of forfeiting the future for elusive fleeting joys of today. It is idolatry and it is sin.

In addition to sacrificing the future for the fleeting moment of the present, Esau also traded something of immense value—his birthright and responsibility as leader of the family. As stewards of God's holy temple, we also have a birthright to protect, far greater than any material possession we could ever attain. As Ted Bowling instructed us in his message on Esau and Jacob, we must struggle as mightily as our forefather Jacob to protect that incalculable blessing of our birthright as God's firstfruits.

In Matthew 22:36-40, Jesus counsels His followers, then and now, to love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, and our mind, and our neighbor as ourselves. Tragically, gluttony militates against both of these great commandments, as well as the great commission, because it serves us exclusively rather than demonstrates outgoing concern for others.

There is nothing inherently wrong with food, drink, sleep, sex, or any kind of pleasure. The controversy God has with us is the means by which we attain them. God has deliberately designed our nervous systems so that they are not satisfied with impermanent or short-lived things.

God expresses concern about the consequences of setting our hearts upon temporary pleasures, among which are the dangers of excess, or the danger of being distracted, from a more permanent source of pleasure. If we love pleasure and devote our entire beings toward its pursuit, we will not be satisfied with a little pleasure. Like an addict, we will always crave more and more without being satisfied, "The eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing," observes Solomon (Ecclesiastes 1:8).

If we love sleep, we will not be satisfied with a little sleep. We will crave it increasingly more until the cumulative effects are realized (Proverbs 24:30-34). Setting our minds and hearts on anything per se, whether it is money, pleasure, power, or position, may actually distract us or prevent us from what we actually crave in our heart of hearts.

God's spiritual gifts have the capacity to satisfy us, to fill us up without the unpleasant after-effect of being overcome with guilt, feeling sick and bloated, or developing an abhorrence for those things. Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ says we are to develop a thirst or craving for God's Holy Spirit: "If any man is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink" (John 7:37). The food that Jesus craved, He says in John 4:34, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent me and to finish His work"—would fill us up so that we would never go hungry again (John 6:35). He tells us that, if we hunger and thirst for righteousness, we truly will be filled (Matthew 5:6). We are admonished to set our hearts and minds on the pursuit of wisdom. The consequences are protection, discretion, length of days, riches, honor, peace, and life (Proverbs 1:4; 2:10-11; 3:2). What more could we want?

Psalm 37:4 Delight yourself also in the Lord and He shall give you the desires of your heart.

Once God has called us and placed His precious Holy Spirit within our minds, spiritual hunger—our deep-seated need for a relationship with Our Creator—can never again be satiated with a material substitute like food or possessions. Only God can fill this humungous gaping appetite which no amount of food can ever fill.

If peace and tranquility, the feeling of being totally filled or fulfilled, are our heart's desires, we need to channel our affections on those things that will bring about those consequences, ones that will bring us closer to God. David points the way: "You will show the path of life; in Your presence is fullness of joy; at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore" (Psalm 16:11).