

## Maintaining Good Health (Part 2)

Cleanliness

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I am going to be continuing the sermon series that I began last Sabbath. The purpose of that previous sermon was to firmly establish our responsibility before God in this stewardship matter of maintaining good health, but I did not quite finish the thought. I ran out of time. So before I go into another aspect of this theme, I want to close that previous section a little bit more completely.

I learned something very valuable, to me anyway, from my general foreman when I worked at the steel mill back in the 50s and 60s. Even though I was able to do a particular job that I had been assigned the responsibility of doing, I complained to him when he came around to see how I was getting on, that I did not have the right equipment that I needed to do the job and to finish it as effectively and as efficiently as I felt I could.

At the time I could remember feeling that I had a very valid complaint. Today I do not remember what it was that I felt that I needed. But my foreman said to me, "Do the best you can with what you've got." Now he was not being sarcastic, stubborn, or mean. It was his way of telling me that his hands were tied too, and the situation was not going to change either then or in the near future. He meant, "Don't make excuses. Just get on with using what you do have."

I think of this occasionally in relation to Jesus giving up His glory and all of the perks and privileges that came with being God, to come to the earth in a very humbled circumstance of being a man, and He then had to deal with life as we do. He was not born into wealth and privilege, but I am absolutely certain, because I know His character, that He made the very best of whatever circumstance He found Himself in. That is essentially what God requires of us. "Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all of your might."

Very frequently this is puzzling and difficult, but break it down into a very simple overall element. God is creating us in His image. He is a Creator. He builds and beautifies. This establishes a general pattern for the path that we are to follow in the way that we do things. We are to dress and to keep, to build and to beautify in whatever circumstance we find ourselves. This is in direct contrast to Satan, who is an adversary. He is one who tears down, destroys, and corrupts. He too creates, but he creates degeneracy, filth of mind and body, spirit and environment. He is the master of disorder and clutter.

By way of contrast, Jesus said, "If you've seen Me, you've seen the Father." I am absolutely certain that if Jesus were reduced to circumstances where He was extremely poor, regardless of where He lived, it would be neat, it would be in order, and it would be clean. He would begin where He was, building, beautifying with whatever He had available, changing to be like God.

Now notice this warning to all of us that appears in Revelation 11.

**Revelation 11:18** The nations were angry, and Your wrath has come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that You should reward Your servants the prophets and the saints, and those who fear Your name, small and great, and should destroy those who destroy the earth.

The overall sense of this verse is one of judgment. It shows that God rewards individual people and nations for what they have done, whether good or evil. It is a concise but general expounding within a context of worldwide dimensions of "Whatsoever a man (or a nation) sows, that shall he (or it) also reap."

I want you to pay attention to two words in that verse: "destroy" and "earth." Commentators say that the word "destroy" can also be translated corrupt, profane, pollute; that is, to cause to bring into a state of decay. Rather than dressing and keeping, those who are going to be destroyed are those who promote decay, disease, and destruction. What is not in the image of God will be destroyed in the process of His cleaning up.

"Earth," in its broadest application of the biblical imagery, represents the entire material creation; therefore even including us as individual personalities. We were created of the dust of the ground. We are of the earth; earthy.

Now recall what I said last week regarding a major theme of Paul's writing, and that is, of individual responsibility, and that sooner or later we are going to have to give account for what we have done in the flesh. "Whatsoever we have sown, that shall we also reap." The warning therefore is, "Make sure that you sow in a way that will beautify or perfect."

This verse (Revelation 11:18), though it is not written by Paul, concisely sums the themes of his epistles. There is no escaping our responsibility to dress, cultivate, and to keep, maintain, and preserve. We are either with the program, choosing to sacrifice our

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lives to be in the image of God (who is a Creator—building, beautifying, and perfecting), or we are not, and thus we will be destroyed.

As we close this section I want to give a few reminders of our responsibility toward God, and this is just a little overview of the sermon that I gave last week.

1. It is all of mankind's responsibility to dress and to keep. (Genesis 2:15)
2. We sons of God, though, must always be guided by the fact that we are part of something much larger than ourselves. We might call it "the Kingdom of God," or "the body of Christ," and our first responsibility is to it. Some scriptures on that are: I Corinthians 3; I Corinthians 6; II Corinthians 6; II Corinthians 7; Ephesians 1; Ephesians 2. That only scratches the surface.
3. We should be quite cautious making judgments about the cause of people's illnesses. There is nothing wrong with speculating, but keep it to that. This is John 9:1-4. If we should be the one afflicted, we should not just stand there doing nothing, or waiting for God to do something. It is just another trial God has given us to deal with—a difficult one to be sure—but He expects us to take action *always* with Him in mind to better our situation, and at the same time continue to function within His Word, glorifying Him as much as we are enabled. For example, the apostle Paul in II Corinthians 12. He kept right on doing his work even though he had this "thorn in the flesh," depending every day for God to give him the strength to do it.
4. Good health is not an inherent right, but a privilege to be deeply cherished and humbled by. Remember the apostle John said, "I wish. . ." (III John 3) He did not look upon it as being an inherent right. We can look to other heroes of the Bible—great men and women of faith—but just as a reminder of Isaac, Jacob, Paul. None of them was healed of his affliction. They had to continue right on with whatever they had. Isaac was blind for a long time.
5. We must go to God, asking Him for forgiveness and the grace to overcome any feelings of being victims. Though there are truthfully elements of victimization in all of us, it is a great hindrance to growth, abundant living, and being a good witness to glorifying God. "God does not cotton to people who are on the pity-pot," is a rather common way of saying it. He has given us so much, and yet human nature always wants more. It always wants special treatment. You can add to this one also II Corinthians 12. Like Paul, we must learn to be content. He was very greatly humbled by his affliction,

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whatever it was, but he took it and went on.

It is right here that the sermon begins another section. Almost all of the spiritual teaching in God's Word is accomplished by the writers drawing parallels between earthly things, events, and relationships, and what we might call heavenly spiritual or godly things or events, and relationships. Thus Jesus will make statements like, "The kingdom of God (or the kingdom of heaven) is like. . ." He then proceeds to make a parallel between a common earthly thing and its spiritual counterpart—an application to life—in our relationship with God, the Kingdom of God, and each other. Every writer in the Bible did this. They did not all use parables as frequently as Jesus did, but they all used things in common to human life as the vehicle to illustrate spiritual responsibilities.

One we are very familiar with is that God is a family. We are very familiar with family relationships. He is our Father. Jesus Christ is our elder Brother. We are brothers and sisters from a Father. We are also to marry. The Bible is rich in imagery, and metaphors come at us like a tremendous tidal wave from the pages of His Word. Proverbs are drawn from close observation of human experience, and given us as practical applications of how God expects us to live wisely.

Today we are going to make use of a couple of these parallels while aiming to make our stewardship responsibility for maintaining good health clear and more specific. When I say "more specific," I want you to understand that I cannot get too specific, and I will show you a reason why.

Turn to I Corinthians 15. We ought to know right away that this is in the "resurrection chapter."

**I Corinthians 15:35-38** But someone will say, "How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come?" Foolish one, what you sow is not made alive, unless it dies. And what you sow, you do not sow that body that shall be, but mere grain—perhaps wheat or of some other grain. But God gives it a body as He pleases [Please take note of that.], and to each seed its own body.

It is interesting that we are the seed of Abraham. Think about the principle, the parallel that is involved here.

**I Corinthians 15:39** All flesh is not the same flesh, but there is one kind of

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flesh of men, another flesh of animals, another of fish, and another of birds.

In context here in verse 39, Paul is making a broad general statement in order to clarify his instruction regarding the resurrection of the dead. But as a result of technology available to us today, there is a great deal more than what on the surface will meet the eye.

Because there are some similarities between men's flesh and pig's flesh, men have attempted to put a pig's heart in a man. But it did not work. In short order, the human body, despite the medications given the man to overcome the human body's attempt to reject the strange flesh that had invaded its territory, successfully rejected the pig's heart, and the man died. Those two fleashes, though there are a lot of similarities, are so different they cannot be joined together.

In the last twenty-five or thirty years, as a result of studies into our chromosomes, genes, and DNA, men have discovered that there are multiple billions, perhaps trillions, perhaps even quadrillions of possible genetic combinations, thus making every human being a specific biological individual. So thus, at one and the same time, we all generally look alike. We look human. We are not pigs. That is very obvious, yet we are specifically different to some degree.

We all have fingers, but everybody's fingerprints are unique to them. We all have voices, but everybody's vocal patterns are different. You often hear of surgeons searching for just the right match for a heart transplant, or a kidney transplant, and yet even then anti-rejection medication must be given to keep the recipient's body from rejecting the transplanted organ that it considers an invader. There is no such thing as an absolutely perfect match, because every human being is unique. Every one one of us is a slightly different flesh from everybody else.

In practical application in regard to health, we must understand that everybody is largely dealing in generalities, with averages that are garnered from statistical research, and thus whether we are dealing with medication, with herbs, or diet, everybody's assimilation of, or reaction, will not be exactly the same as the person right next to them, even in the same family. What works for one may not work for another. What causes an adverse reaction in one can be used without reaction in another.

The broad generalities, the averages, are close enough that a fairly wide spectrum of people fall within the average, so that people like dietitians and doctors of all stripes are able to diagnose with a fairly high degree of accuracy within their profession. But

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brethren, all of these people, as expert as they are, really are playing nothing more than an educated guessing game, because everybody is specifically different. Nobody has the absolutely correct answers but God. That is why I have to speak in generalities.

I am a strong believer that we can use biblical principles toward better physical health, because God has given us a number of clear parallels between good and bad spiritual health, and good and bad physical health. For example, everybody has heard that "cleanliness is next to godliness."

There is a fairly large number of professional people who say that the major cause of the longevity of people today is neither medication nor better diet. They say that it is due to a much higher degree of sanitation, combined with a steep decline in infant mortality that they say is also largely due to better sanitation during childbirth.

That specific phrase that "cleanliness is next to godliness" appears nowhere in the Bible, but where did it come from? It came right out of the Bible. It is a conclusion gathered from a comparison of a very large number of scriptures primarily dealing with spiritual sin, but the parallel with the physical becomes very apparent.

Let us go back to the book of Leviticus, and I am going to read through a series of scriptures in Leviticus 13, 14, and 15 without a great deal of comment until we are done. Remember, Leviticus is the book written to the priesthood. We are a priesthood forming. We are going to be priests in the Kingdom of God, and we are learning to be priests, so this is important to those of us who are in training to be kings and priests.

**Leviticus 13:1-7** And the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying: "When a man has on the skin of his body a swelling, a scab, or a bright spot, and it becomes on the skin of his body like a leprous sore, then he shall be brought to Aaron the priest or to one of his sons the priests. The priest shall examine the sore on the skin of the body; and if the hair on the sore has turned white, and the sore appears to be deeper than the skin of his body, it is a leprous sore. Then the priest shall examine him, and pronounce him unclean. But if the bright spot is white on the skin of his body, and does not appear to be deeper than the skin, and its hair has not turned white, then the priest shall isolate the one who has the sore seven days. And the priest shall examine him on the seventh day; and indeed if the sore appears to be as it was, and the sore has not spread on the skin, then the priest shall isolate him another seven days. Then the priest shall examine him again on the seventh day; and indeed if the sore has faded, and the sore has not spread on the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him clean; it is only a scab, and he shall

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wash his clothes and be clean. But if the scab should at all spread over the skin, after he has been seen by the priest for his cleansing, he shall be seen by the priest again.

**Leviticus 13:11-13** It is an old leprosy on the skin of his body. The priest shall pronounce him unclean, and shall not isolate him, for he is unclean. "And if leprosy breaks out all over the skin, and the leprosy covers all the skin of the one who has the sore, from his head to his foot, wherever the priest looks, then the priest shall consider; and indeed if the leprosy has covered all his body, he shall pronounce him clean who has the sore. It has all turned white. He is clean.

**Leviticus 13:34** On the seventh day the priest shall examine the scale; and indeed if the scale has not spread over the skin, and does not appear deeper than the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him clean. He shall wash his clothes and be clean.

**Leviticus 14:8-9** He who is to be cleansed shall wash his clothes, shave off all his hair, and wash himself in water, that he may be clean. After that he shall come into the camp, and shall stay outside his tent seven days. But on the seventh day he shall shave all the hair off his head and his beard and his eyebrows—all his hair he shall shave off. He shall wash his clothes and wash his body in water, and he shall be clean.

**Leviticus 15:1-8** And the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'When any man has a discharge from his body, his discharge is unclean. And this shall be his uncleanness in regard to his discharge—whether his body runs with his discharge, or his body is stopped up by his discharge, it is his uncleanness. Every bed is unclean on which he who has the discharge lies, and everything on which he sits shall be unclean. And whoever touches his bed shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening. He who sits on anything on which he who has the discharge sat shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening. And he who touches the body of him who has the discharge shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening. If he who has the discharge spits on him who is clean, then he shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening.

**Leviticus 15:31-33** 'Thus you shall separate the children of Israel from their

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uncleanness, lest they die in their uncleanness when they defile My tabernacle that is among them. This is the law for one who has a discharge, and for him who emits semen and is unclean thereby, and for her who is indisposed because of her customary impurity, and for one who has a discharge, either man or woman, and for him who lies with her who is unclean.' "

What I want you to notice is the terminology: clean, unclean, cleansing, wash, rinsed, running water, separate. Do you begin to get the drift that what we are looking at here are laws pertaining to sanitation, quarantine, containing disease?

The next thing to understand is this term "leprosy." It is a rather generic term. It should not be thought of leprosy as we think of leprosy today. The Hebrew word is a general word indicating any number of skin diseases. However, and this is interesting, besides that use as a skin disease, it is also used to indicate mold or mildew in a fabric, dry rot in buildings, and mineral eruptions on the walls of buildings. Leviticus 15 covers any number of discharges from the body.

The important element in terms of this sermon is not the specific disease, but rather God's intent in using general terms as an illustration indicating filthiness, or disease, or possible contagion when these outbreakings occurred on a person, a fabric, or a building. At the very least He is saying, "Be careful!" It is a warning that these things are potentially hazardous as a source of infection, something to be avoided and separated away from, or quarantined.

Now let us turn to Ezekiel 36, and I am going to give you another fairly long series of scriptures pretty much without comment, because the intent that you will see here is pretty clear.

**Ezekiel 36:25** Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you [That is what you do with something that is diseased. You rinse it. You wash it.], and you shall be clean. I will cleanse you from all your filthiness, and from all your idols.

This is in a spiritual context, but remember we are looking at a physical/spiritual parallel.

**Isaiah 1:5-6** Why should you be stricken again? You will revolt more and more. The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faints. From the sole of the foot even to the head, there is no soundness in it, but wounds and

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bruises and putrefying sores; they have not been closed or bound up, or soothed with ointment.

**Isaiah 1:15-16** When you spread out your hands, I will hide My eyes from you; even though you make many prayers, I will not hear. Your hands are full of blood. Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; put away the evil of your doings from before My eyes. Cease to do evil.

Do you see what Isaiah is doing here? He is applying common understanding regarding physical cleanliness to that which is spiritual, because there is a parallel between the two. Just as Jesus said, "The kingdom of God is like. . ." Isaiah is doing the same thing. Jeremiah did the same thing. Ezekiel did the same thing. They all did the same thing. They drew parallels in the way that filth and disease is to be treated in the physical realm and applied it to the spiritual because the principle applies.

**Jeremiah 4:14** O Jerusalem, wash your heart from wickedness, that you may be saved. How long shall your evil thoughts lodge within you?

Vain thoughts corrupt a person, and the mind—the heart—has to be cleaned.

**Jeremiah 13:27** I have seen your adulteries and your lustful neighings, the lewdness of your harlotry, your abominations on the hills in the fields. Woe to you, O Jerusalem [the church in biblical imagery]! Will you still not be made clean?

**James 4:8** Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, . . .

Is that not a law of sanitation? You keep from spreading disease by keeping your hands clean. You apply that principle to spiritual things. What do the hands represent? Spiritually they represent work. I don't mean necessarily work in the mill. I'm talking about the work of obedience in the keeping of God's commandments.

**James 4:8** Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify [unpollute, clean up] your hearts, you double-minded.

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Go now to John 15. Jesus is the speaker. We go right to the Chief. Speaking to His disciples, He says:

**John 15:3** You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.

God's Word cleanses our mind. Believe it or not brethren, despite the fact that I am giving you one scripture after another, I am only scratching the surface on this parallel that I am using here to instruct you regarding how important sanitation is.

**Hebrews 10:22** Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

**Ephesians 5:26** That He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word.

Let me give you an alternate translation. This is kind of interesting I think. "That He might perfectly sanctify the church, having cleansed her by the gospel, accompanied with the washing of water [which may be an allusion to baptism]."

We are going to go back to the Old Testament again, to Deuteronomy 23, continuing on this theme of cleanliness. I kind of get a kick out of this one. I get a kick out of it because it's so human, but it's applied to God, and you wonder that this busy God up there would think of a thing like this.

**Deuteronomy 23:9** When the army goes out against your enemies, then keep yourself from every wicked thing.

I want you to see what God calls "wicked."

**Deuteronomy 23:10** If there is any man among you who becomes unclean by some occurrence in the night, . . .

Do you know what that is? Men? Ladies? It is an nocturnal emission. Do you know what that is?

**Deuteronomy 23:10-14** . . .then he shall go outside the camp; he shall not come inside the camp. But it shall be, when evening comes, that he shall wash with water; and when the sun sets, he may come into the camp. Also you shall have a place outside the camp, where you may go out; and you shall have an implement [a shovel] among your equipment, and when you sit down outside [defecate], you shall dig with it and turn and cover your refuse. For [This is the thing that is so interesting] the Lord your God walks in the midst of your camp, to deliver you and give your enemies over to you; therefore your camp shall be holy, that He may see no unclean thing among you, and turn away from you.

God does not want to step on it. You get my drift? Of course we know that He would see it and not step on it. It is just the idea, the intent, that He is getting across. Some may think this trifling, but it shows a number of things important to sanitation, and our relationship with God.

First of all it shows through the illustration of God walking through the midst of the camp how close our relationship is with God. He is the God who is there.

Even in rough conditions of war, sanitation measures were a necessity. There is nothing that will debilitate an army like disease, rendering them unable to fight. Disease is in the midst of fecal matter. It is also a reminder that we are not animals. Common decency and cleanliness, even in warfare, must be maintained.

In verse 14, cleanliness and holiness are used synonymously for each other. Cleanliness *is* next to godliness. They are used synonymously; one in the physical realm, the other in the spiritual realm. When God says, "Be you holy," He could just have well say, "Be clean."

(I think this is the most important one). This series of verses implies a principle that God will not abide uncleanness, either physical or spiritual. (Follow my drift here.) Only the clean can approach the Lord in worship.

Turn back to Exodus 3. Our God is high. He is mighty. He is pure beyond anything that we can imagine. He has glory that would burn our eyes, and yet He thinks about things that are as human and common as cleanliness, and He is concerned.

**Exodus 3:5** Then He said [to Moses], "Do not draw near this place. Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground."

Moses was a shepherd. Pray tell, what do you think that there was a pretty good chance that Moses stepped in? There is a great deal more though to this and that which we will see as we move on.

**Exodus 19:10** Then the Lord said to Moses, "Go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their clothes."

What is clothing used in the Bible as a symbol of? What is the imagery there? "Clean linen, pure and white" is a symbol of the righteousness of the saints. Dirty clothing indicates evil, sin. The people had to wash their clothing because God was going to come down on the mount, and even though they were not allowed on the mount, they had to learn a lesson. This is an admonishment to you and me, that we have to approach to God *clean*.

**Exodus 19:11** And let them be ready for the third day. For on the third day the Lord will come down upon Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people.

**Exodus 30:17-18** Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: "You shall also make a laver of bronze, with its base also of bronze, for washing."

This is instruction for the making of the laver, which was nothing but a great big pot filled with water, that those who were going to serve as priests making the sacrifices had to wash their hands and feet in before they were permitted to do their job.

**Exodus 30:18-21** You shall put it between the tabernacle of meeting and the altar. And you shall put water in it, for Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet in water from it. When they go into the tabernacle of meeting, or when they come near the altar to minister, to burn an offering made by fire to the Lord, they shall wash with water, lest they die. So they shall wash their hands and their feet, lest they die. And it shall be a statute forever to them—to him and his descendants throughout their generations."

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Remember, we are a priesthood in training. Like I said to you, even though I am giving you quite a number of scriptures, I am only scratching the surface here. It is a huge subject that God pays a great deal of attention to because of its spiritual value, and of course its physical one as well.

**Psalm 51:7** Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

**Psalm 51:10** Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.

One of the reasons that I have been paying a bit of attention to this is because there is a direct connection between these parallels and Passover. Let us go back to John 13.

**John 13:10-11** Jesus said to him [Peter], "He who is bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all of you." For He knew who would betray Him; therefore He said, "You are not all clean."

**I John 1:7** But if we walk in the light [the feet moving] as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

The principle is this: Not only is physical cleanliness important physically to one on its own, but it also tends to promote spiritual cleanliness *when* one understands the truth. Conversely, when one understands spiritual cleanliness, it tends to promote physical cleanliness. Jesus would not live in filth. His home would be clean.

Now let us just put a bit of a cap on this section with II Corinthians 7.

**II Corinthians 7:1** Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

Cleanliness of the flesh is part of holiness. Holiness and cleanliness go together. They are companions. When I say "cleanliness," I mean there physical cleanliness. They go hand in hand.

This metaphor here in II Corinthians 7:1 is drawn from physical life. It is applied to the spiritual, because people understand that filth, unsanitary conditions, and their fruit—disease—was frequently the result of not making the effort to do things right and good physically. They also understood that there was a degree of possibility that it would infect others as well.

There is no other area pertaining to health that God gives so much space to in His Word as to what we might term "sanitation." There are literally scores and scores of passages in the Bible pertaining to cleanliness. A fair measure of attention is paid to diet. Very little direct attention is paid to exercise and rest. A parallel is very evident. The general idea is, whether spiritual or physical, that filth defiles and endangers health.

What is virtually ignored, especially in nominal Christianity that is all around us, is the clearly stated biblical fact that spiritual filth is a cause of physical disease, whether of the body or of the mind. Besides that being stated so clearly in the second commandment, it is really emphasized in Deuteronomy 28, and I want you to turn there so that you get this verse firmly in mind. All of us ought to understand that Deuteronomy 28 is the "blessing and cursing" chapter.

**Deuteronomy 28:58-59** "If you do not carefully observe all the words of this law that are written in this book, [talking about spiritual things here] that you may fear this glorious and awesome name, THE LOORD YOUR GOOD, then the Lord will bring upon you and your descendants extraordinary [awesome, terrifying] plagues—great and prolonged plagues—and serious and prolonged sicknesses.

Have you ever seen a person toward the end of his bout—his run—with AIDS?

Think about today brethren, and what is going on in the world in the area of health. I read a statistic that caused me to wince when I read it. I believe it was in *Time* magazine. It was in a brief article about the AIDS epidemic in Africa. They gave a statistic that every minute of every day worldwide, not just in Africa, five young people are contracting AIDS. *Every minute of every day.* "The LOORD will make your plagues wonderful." I think you understand that AIDS is fed upon unclean, sinful, perverted acts.

**Deuteronomy 28:60-62** Moreover He will bring back on you all the diseases of Egypt, of which you were afraid, and they shall cling to you. Also every sickness and every plague, which is not written in this Book of the Law, will the Lord bring upon you until you are destroyed. You shall be left few in

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number, whereas you were as the stars of heaven in multitude, because you would not obey the voice of the Lord your God.

Spiritual sin creates physical illness. Spiritual filth creates physical disease. Filth—physical or spiritual—promotes disease. Those who do not take steps to be sanitary both physically and spiritually, are going to be the ones who corrupt the earth, according to Revelation 11:18. We have a responsibility to be clean.

Now to this point I have pretty much alluded to personal cleanliness in terms of being clean as a result of washing, but this principle extends far beyond this one application of personal external cleanliness. It extends into things like the meat packing and food processing industries. Every one of us is aware of the potential dangers of E. Coli infection, because many have become infected in recent years and have died.

Are you aware that E. Coli only showed up in the seventies? And so E. Coli did not even appear on the American scene until the seventies, but the media has made sure of public awareness by warning us that such-and-such a product may be contaminated. It is polluted. "It's unclean," as we would say in biblical terminology.

These E. Coli infections are the direct result of poor sanitation, poor handling, or poor inspection of the product, which is usually meat, but sometimes, as in the recent outbreak in Canada, it was in the public drinking water system. We must understand that E. Coli infection is a possibility from anything that is ingested into the body.

I recently received an article from John Reid when he heard I was going to be speaking on this subject of cleanliness. In this article it showed the extent that a meat-packing plant in Shyler, Nebraska (the second largest one in the United States) works to prevent contamination of the product that they process. They have never had a recall of any product. I am going to read a small portion of this article so that you will see the extent that they go to in order to be sanitary so that they will not be sued. I read this so that you get some sort of an idea about being careful.

The Excel Plant's kill-floor is a vast, brightly lit room as long as a football field, and nearly as wide. To give the white-coated workers room, a special circulation system is designed to keep dust and bacteria from spreading from the freshly slain cattle to exposed carcasses. Behind the wall of one corner of this floor live cattle are killed one by one and hoisted onto a conveyor that carries them through the plant's beauty parlor where carwash-like scrubbers remove mud and bacteria-carrying manure from the hide. This is because

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the E. Coli is largely on the hide, on the outside of the cattle. From the beauty parlor the cattle are bled and then skinned. The hide is removed piece by piece to avoid contaminating the exposed flesh. At one point the tail is bagged in a plastic sheath to prevent it from flopping forward and contacting the skin's belly. The carcasses are then rinsed with an organic acid, eviscerated, steam-vacuumed, sawed in half, washed again, and finally scalded with steam before heading to the cooler.

I bring this up because just this week I heard a news report here in Charlotte of a university study group who set up TV cameras and observers in the kitchen of apparently a fairly large number of homes. Their object was to find what kind of sanitation measures people used in their homes. The report said that the researchers were shocked—that is the word they used—at how carelessly about one-half of the people handled raw meat as they were preparing dinner.

The most common potentially hazardous thing people did was to lay raw meat on a counter top, or on a platter, where it usually sat for a period of time prior to putting it into the cooking utensil. Then after placing the meat in the cooking utensil, they would then place something like a salad, that is to be eaten raw, on the very same spot or platter that had been occupied by the raw meat, thus transferring the bacteria to the lettuce, to the carrots, and other raw vegetables for the salad.

The next most common thing people failed to do was to wash the salad greens at all. The next after that was undercooking the meat. A lot of people like their meat rare. Very rare. My brother used to eat hamburger raw. I do not think he is doing it anymore. He got some smarts somewhere along the line, but when he was young, he did that.

Now I bring this up because this is barbecue season, and I personally have invited disaster a number of times by doing something common to many, and that is, placing the raw hamburger patties on the plate, grill them on the grill, and then the grilled meat patties are placed back on the same plate from where the raw patties had just been taken, without washing the plate. At least what we can do is use waxed paper if we are not going to wash the plate!

This next section of uncleanness I am going to touch on is much more difficult for people to avoid because of the world, and that mankind, in its grasping greed, has permitted Satan and his demons to create.

**Micah 4:4** But everyone shall sit under his vine and under his fig tree, and

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no one shall make them afraid; for the mouth of the Lord of hosts has spoken.

This is a prophecy for after Christ returns. It indicates an ideal in which each family has its own property, and implying that it is growing its own food. Such a condition is virtually impossible today because of the culture that we have been born into, and at the same time are victims of. Satan has crowded us into cities where we are much more easily controlled and conformed into his image. He has, with our willing assistance, made us dependent upon the highly industrialized, mechanized, and electrified system.

In terms of food, it means that food must be shipped long distances from where it is grown and harvested, to where it is processed and packaged, and then it is shipped again to a huge central warehouse, and then shipped yet again into huge supermarkets where it will sit on a shelf until purchased by individual consumers. All of this requires time, and during that passing time the food is subject to spoiling through natural processes.

In order to protect his investment in food that he has purchased from the farmer, the business man has turned to science to protect his investment by injecting the processed food with chemical preservatives. This greatly lengthens the food's shelf life, but at the same time it renders the food "unclean" in terms of God's original intention for our body's good health.

Herbert Armstrong gave us a very simple instruction regarding the ideal to seek for in food. "Eat foods that will spoil, and eat them before they do." He meant that one should eat foods that are as uncontaminated by preservatives as possible.

God has created a body that is wonderfully constructed and able to defend itself quite well by purging itself of many of the destructive elements that attack it daily, but it is not impervious to damage from these things forever, and a price is being exacted inch by inch in regard to our health. This daily invasion of anti-life pathogens is now impossible to evade, and there is undoubtedly a great deal of fraud involved in calling products "organic" that are not truly organic.

But remember this: God does help those who help themselves, as long as they do it lawfully, as long as we do not make a god of it, as long as it is done in faith to glorify Him.

Remember Daniel. I am certain that God added what was lacking in that short ten-day

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trial, and there is a wonderfully helpful principle there, and that is that the blessing was due more to God's sovereignty and mercy in rewarding the youthful faithfulness of those four young men than it was of any diet that they insisted upon. Always draw God into these things, seeking His guidance and blessing, and do what you can do, trusting Him that He will add what we lack.

Let me give you the conclusion for today's sermon.

1. All human flesh is not exactly the same. There are broad generalities in which all are alike, but each of us at the same time is specifically different. It is therefore each person's responsibility to study his own body, and learn his body's requirements.

2. Cleanliness *is* next to godliness. The parallels in the Bible between physical and spiritual are remarkably close. Being clean spiritually and physically is a major contributor to good spiritual health and good physical health. Physically this involves both external sanitation and order, as well as the cleanest food and water that we can ingest.

3. Remember Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Their faithfulness to God resulted in God blessing them by adding what they lacked, and giving them favor even in the midst of Babylon; in fact right where Satan's seat was located.

Let us finish in Isaiah 52.

**Isaiah 52:11** Depart! Depart! . . .

In its broadest application, He is talking about "Run!" "Get out!" "Get away from Babylon, and the way Babylon does things."

**Isaiah 52:11** Depart! Depart! Go out from there, touch no unclean thing; go out from the midst of her, be clean, you who bear the vessels of the Lord.

Perhaps brethren, there is more here than we might have thought at first reading.