

Maintaining Good Health (Part 14)

Biblical Principles Regarding Food

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In the parallels between building and maintaining good spiritual and good physical health, there are so many that I think I could stretch this series out for several more sermons without too much difficulty, but I think that I have made my point. The point is that the principles involved in both are virtually the same, and if we can use them for one, there is no reason why we cannot use them for the other so that we are meeting our stewardship responsibility for both.

However, human nature being what it is, has a tendency to carry things out to an extreme, and thus what happens in real life, in real time, is that one or the other of them tends to be neglected. The spiritual of course is extremely more important, but this does not mean that the physical responsibility is unimportant, especially if one desires to live the kind of abundant life that God wants us to have.

On the contrary, how we take care of the physical area closest to us provides God with a very clear pattern from which to judge our appreciation of His many gifts. We all are fearfully and wonderfully made, and He provides all things necessary for life and breath, in addition to a very great hope for the future. But are His gifts appreciated? If they are appreciated, how do we show that appreciation? Do we use them in a way that is fitting to glorify Him?

In this sermon, I am not going to go into a detailed health regimen program because, as I showed at the very beginning of this series, they are all very generally similar, whereas at the same time all are specifically different to some degree or another. This is very easily shown in the way we all look different. Even though we are all human—we might be male or female—yet even children do not look exactly like their parents. Everybody is an individual before God, both physically and spiritually. Everybody is *not* exactly the same, just *generally* the same. Therefore, to come up with a

regimen that would fit everybody is impossible, because everybody is just a little bit different.

Each person has a responsibility before God to study his or her own body's needs and to search out the information that is available in the public market, and to control yourself to meet those needs while doing as little damage as possible while you are trying to find out what is right for you.

I know that anybody who has looked into this even to a small degree, that studying one's body and searching out what is available in the public, can be a daunting and time-consuming task, because there is so much information out there. There are so many hucksters attempting to convince us that their way and their product is the very best. But brethren, it is right here that there is a choice that has to be made. I want to remind you again that to do it well is well worth the time and the effort.

It is right here, in the Bible, that the education we have received from God through it and through the church all through these years that these can be a wonderful and a very helpful resource to draw upon, because the Bible and the church and the world of science have given us good principles that provide guidance that greatly shortcut much of the time that you would otherwise have to spend in looking for these things.

Even as daunting as that may appear, I believe that in the long run it would be far harder for you to control yourself day by day to persevere on a program than it will be to find helpful information. It is there, but to stick to it is very difficult. That is why I gave that sermon last week on faith and commitment. The reason that it is so difficult is not hard to understand. This is because the appetites that lure us from the truth that we do find are always with us, pressuring us to turn aside regardless of the cost that *will be paid* if we do not do it. It will be paid, because human nature is a gambler, and gamblers lose.

Let us begin with a very important-to-understand principle that appears in the book of Proverbs.

Proverbs 26:2 Like a flitting sparrow, like a flying swallow, so a curse without cause shall not alight.

This principle is a function of "whatsoever one sows, that shall he also reap." Right from the get-go we must understand that disease just does not mysteriously happen. It is caused, and the primary cause from our end is the neglect to follow right principles. I am using "neglect" in a broad sense. It includes our own ignorance of right principles, our ancestors' ignorance of those principles by which we are victimized, laziness, and the failure to believe what is true, because of a stiff-necked rebellion against law.

Somehow we have got to get it through our minds that we cannot avoid the effect of law. Laws always work. They work for good or bad. It depends on how they are used. They work, but human nature is a gambler. Human nature will convince, and it will justify your rationalization that somehow or another we can get away with it. You can say, "Well, that person got away with it," but that person is not you.

So, disease is caused. On the other hand, by the same token, blessing is also caused. It works both ways, and if the laws of God are followed, for example Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28, they will produce the good things. In this case we are talking about good health—physical and spiritual. If the laws are broken, they will produce the curses. And so God says, "See, I have set before you life on the one hand, and death on the other. Therefore choose life." The choice is there, and that is where Proverbs 26:2 comes in. It is just a little bit more specific, but "the curse [that is, diseases] causeless shall not come." Diseases are caused. What we have to know is that the blessings are also caused, and over this we have a great deal of control. It is in our power to choose to do the right thing.

Let us go to Psalm 139 where we have another, second principle that is important to make a part of our thinking. I am going to take off on this in a little bit different direction from what you might think.

Psalm 139:14 I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvelous are Your works, and that my soul knows very well.

Psalm 139:17 How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How great is the sum of them!

This is another foundational principle. Not only is each one of us a marvelous individual creation on our own, it is important to understand that we, mankind, do not stand alone from the rest of God's physical creation. Not only are we individually an awesome creation, but we have been created within, and are an integral part of the overall whole. We have been endowed by God our Creator with responsibilities to Him, to each other, and ourselves that pertain to the whole.

What I am getting at here is that God shows in His Word that we have to take a holistic approach to things in terms of us fitting into the overall creation, as well as being a marvelous creation of and by ourselves.

Genesis 1:27-28 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female He created them. Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.

That very clearly shows that though man is created *within* the creation as a whole, he also has a responsibility to do things for the benefit of that creation as well. The terms "subdue" and "dominion" are both terms indicating that we have a responsibility of managing both our environment and ourselves from within that environment. We can never take ourselves out from the environment. We are always a part of the environment that God created for us. God shows very clearly that He is taking a holistic approach to this thing.

The word "subdue" is an early (within the pages of the Bible) indication that without proper management of the environment, including ourselves, it has the tendency to degenerate into a state of disorder. That disorder has to be subdued so that there is order, because left to ourselves we will degenerate. It has to be managed. Health has to be managed. The environment, the earth, has to be managed. There is a responsibility to God in this, and mankind as a whole is failing in this responsibility, and we are suffering for it, and the curses are being caused.

The disorder and the disease is introduced through forms of sin, and that includes neglect. This is a very important point to grasp even in terms of physical health. The environment has been created specifically with us and God's spiritual purpose in mind. The environment has been made to serve us and that purpose, so at the same time we must serve it, ourselves, and others through proper management of that environment, because we are always a part of the environment. We are never apart from it. We are *in* the environment. We are *part* of the environment, and we are a part, unlike all the other parts that systematically destroy the environment through abuse and through neglect.

This particular point is no small thing. It is not insignificant at all in the eyes of God, and I want you to see this in the book of Revelation.

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.

That is a sobering, sobering statement. God is going to destroy those who are destroying the earth, whether it be through neglect or mismanagement. Remember, the earth is our environment. It includes us, because we are part of this environment. How we manage and how we take care of our environment, including ourselves, tells God very much about whether or not we really get what He is doing, because if we get it, we will vigorously do something about dressing and keeping the environment and ourselves.

Do you not think that if you were in the world and that you were going to inherit a piece of property, that you would be doing everything in your power to make sure that when you inherited that piece of property that it was going to be in good condition? The earth is our inheritance. The overall responsibility is definitely there. We have a broad stewardship responsibility right at the beginning of the Book, with some of the specific details given in other portions of the Bible.

We are going to go to the book of Isaiah to chapter 57 to another principle. These things are all tied together, and they all have something to do with our responsibility, sometimes specific, sometimes generally, about taking care of ourselves. This next point may be the most important one of all the principles that I am going to give you.

Isaiah 57:15 For thus says the High and Lofty One who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: "I dwell in the high and holy place, with him who has a contrite and humble spirit . . .

That in itself is a significant statement. God dwells with, He lives with, He walks and talks with those who are of a contrite and humble spirit. Now why?

Isaiah 57:15-21 . . . to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones. For I will not contend forever, neither will I be always be angry; for the spirit would fail before Me, and the souls which I have made. For the iniquity of his covetousness was I angry and struck him; I hid and was angry, and he went on backsliding in the way of his heart. I have seen his ways, and will heal him; I will also lead him, and restore comforts to him and to his mourners. I create the fruit of the lips; peace, peace to him who is far off and to him who is near," says the LORD, "and I will heal him. But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace," says my God, "for the wicked."

Isaiah 58:7-8 Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and that you bring to your house the poor who are cast out; when you see the naked, that you cover him, and not hide yourself from your own flesh? Then your light shall break forth like the morning, your healing shall spring forth speedily; and your righteousness shall go before you; the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard.

This provides a foundation for this principle, because I think you can see that it is God's intent to heal, to give health, and to restore. This principle is that it is our relationship with God that is the keystone and the fountainhead of

good physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health. He is the source of every good gift enabling us to meet our stewardship responsibility, and there is no way that I can overestimate the importance of this relationship.

"Every good and perfect gift comes down from the Father of lights," including God's help, including peace of mind, including right attitudes and ways of thinking. He has the power to make things right, and with Him as the central issue in our lives, things will always be moving towards making things right. That is the way He is. That is what the Bible study was about this morning. God is always moving, even through calamity, to bring things right so that out of every move He makes comes righteousness—the right doing of His own actions, as well as moving us toward righteousness.

Romans 8:28 is very comforting and encouraging, but it does not always mean that we will understand what is going on in our lives, but we must still exercise our faith in Him, that He, by His Spirit can empower us to make even His decisions that seem to be calamitous on our part, more acceptable so that we can have peace.

Let us go to Isaiah 43. We are going to add to this, and there is a principle that will arise in these next three sections that we go to.

Isaiah 43:1-3 But now, thus says the LORD, who created you, O Jacob, and He who formed you, O Israel: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name; you are Mine. When you pass through the waters [meaning troubles], I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, neither shall the flame scorch you. For I am the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior; I gave Egypt for your ransom, Ethiopia and Seba in your place.

It is "Savior" that I am going to focus on here. God is our Savior. Do you know what He does? He delivers. That is what the word means. He delivers us from the troubled waters. He delivers us from the trials and tribulations. He delivers us from bad health. He delivers us into good spiritual health as well, and it takes a Savior, and it takes the relationship with Him to be able to accomplish this.

Isaiah 43:11 I, even I, am the LORD, and besides Me there is no savior.

Isaiah 45:15 Truly You are a God, who hide Yourself, O God of Israel, the Savior!

Isaiah 45:21-22 Tell and bring forth your case; yes, let them take counsel together. Who has declared this from ancient time? Who has told it from that time? Have not I, the LORD? And there is no other God besides Me, a just God and a Savior; there is none besides Me. Look to Me, and be saved [be delivered], . . .

It is the relationship with *Him* that is the key to good health for us. "Look to *Me* and be saved [be delivered]."

Isaiah 45:22 . . . all you ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other.

Isaiah 63:7 I will mention the loving kindnesses of the LORD and the praises of the LORD, according to all that the LORD has bestowed on us, and the great goodness toward the house of Israel, which He has bestowed on them according to His mercies, and according to the multitude of His lovingkindnesses.

God wants to give, give, **give** whatever is needed to bring us into His Kingdom, and that includes good health.

Isaiah 63:8 For He said, Surely they are My people, children who will not lie. So He became their Savior.

God is a Deliverer, and that is what Savior means. For one thing, He can deliver us so that we have peace, and therefore are able to maintain a good attitude. Maintaining a good attitude is a **major** element in good health. Attitudes such as depression, cynicism, negativity, incredulity, irritability,

worry, anxiety, criticism, resentment, double-mindedness, distress, guilt, excessive grief, hopelessness and despair, are precursors of disease. They are tremendously stressful, and they lead to breakdowns in the immune system.

Turn now to John 14.

John 14:15 If you love me, . . .

See, we are in a relationship. Do we really love Him? He says "Prove it." Here is how you can do it.

John 14:15-17 If you love Me, keep My commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.

John 14:26 But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I have said to you.

The key word for our purposes here today is "Helper," and I think we all know that this comes from the Greek *parakletos*. *Parakletos* means *one called along side to help*. The word indicates *to get assistance, to comfort, to guide*. God says He will give us a Helper. I want to connect that thought with what Jesus said in Matthew 7, because with the gift there is responsibility, and one of our responsibilities is stated here in verses 7 through 11.

Matthew 7:7-11 Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. [How positive that is!] Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him?

You put that admonition there together with a promise that is given to us in John 14, and you will find that there is great hope there for those who exercise their faith, that they will receive whatever is needed to maintain and to build good health; but [we must have] patience, patience, patience, and commitment. Human nature wants instant gratification and results.

God is going to use our requests to build things that are going to last for eternity. But on the other hand, He promises to be the source of whatever it is that we need to make it there, and to do it while living an abundant life. He is not going to withhold any good thing. He is not going to withhold anything that is going to help us to make it, while He creates what He wants within us.

That is where the patience comes in, and that is where the commitment and the perseverance comes in, because human nature wants to trick us into believing that if God does not answer instantly that He is not going to answer at all. To build good health is something that cannot be done overnight. By the time that God called most of you, you had been destroying your health for twenty-five or thirty years.

I can give a personal experience from our family, and it is a good thing that either we were so dumb that we did not know any better, or God was blessing us with whatever it was that we needed. When we came into the church in 1959 we had just as bad a diet as anybody had that God calls into the church. We were doing what we thought was normal, but what we were doing was still not right, and so Evelyn decided that we were going to start making switches, and I went along with it.

We were going to change the white bread for whole wheat. No white rice—brown rice. We started getting rid of sugar and all those things. Do you know what happened? When Evelyn started switching our diet, **we got sicker** for about a year. We can look back on it and understand why, because when you start getting good food once again your body needs a while to adjust to that good food. At the same time that good food begins to purge out an awful lot of the garbage that is within you, and it makes you sick for a while. It did not come instantaneously.

I know that in our case God chose to respond slowly and gradually so that the patterns of doing things more in alignment with His will, with the food laws and so forth, would become a part of our character, and that it was not just something that was "flash in the pan" gift that He provided for us.

I mention this warning for what it is worth because I think that in most cases God is going to respond that way so that His will and His way is internalized as a part of us rather than just something that we do one or two times, get a good blessing out of it, and then forget about it. He made us stick with it. It did not come quickly, but it has been built slowly. I think God has blessed us very greatly as a result of that.

Christianity is not merely a moral way of life, but rather Christianity is a way of life whose basis is in a family relationship with God. Christianity is a way of life in which a person is *made* spiritually, morally, physically, mentally, and emotionally healthy because of the relationship. In every aspect of health, we draw upon God by means of His Spirit because He has drawn us into the relationship. That relationship has to be protected and worked on and intensified. *That is the secret right there.*

It is God who empowers us to believe as we do. It is God who gives truth, whether in physical areas, health areas, or other spiritual areas. It is God who gives love. It is God who grants repentance. It is God who guides our choices.

Now referring back to John 14 again, just before that verse 15, where it says, "If you love Me, keep My commandments," Jesus says in verse 12:

John 14:12-14 Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also, and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father. And whatever you ask in My name, I, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you shall ask anything in My name, I will do it.

What do we mean here by "the works of God"? It is the works of God that His will be worked out in our life. Remember, I said that everybody is a little bit different. God's will is not the same for exactly every person. It is not specifically the same.

What if God chooses to not heal you of some kind of a physical debility, yet at the same time He heals your heart, your mind, your attitude perfectly? Which would you rather have? In the eyes of God, He has fulfilled the promise, and of course the final fulfillment will come at the resurrection. He *will* restore the health completely and totally.

But like I said earlier, everything He does is going to be with this thought in mind that *His* will is worked out in our lives, and what He is first going to work on is the heart, the mind, to make sure it is healed so that His way is inculcated within us and inscribed in our hearts. As we go along that way, the physical health is going to follow in almost every case.

I said earlier that His will is not exactly the same for everybody, and so we have here in Mark 14 a very vivid example of that.

Mark 14:36 And He [Jesus] said, "Abba, Father, all things are possible for You. Take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not what I will, but what You will."

That has to be our approach. "**Your** will be done."

Let us go to a reaffirmation of something that we read before, but this time in the book of Luke.

Luke 11:9 So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.

That is a promise concerning this subject. This is why I say that because we have this relationship with God, this search for good health can be very greatly shortcut, because we have God who is there and is willing to turn our minds to where truth is regarding ourselves.

Luke 11:10 For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks, it will be opened.

We carry out our responsibility, and God is going to respond.

Luke 11:11-13 If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? Or if he asks an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?

God **will** give the gifts of His Spirit, including the health necessary.

Let us go on now to the next principle. Like I said, I think that overall this is the most important one and it is the keystone to every other step, to every other principle that I am going to give you here.

Genesis 2:7 And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.

There are a number of principles that arise from this truth that are pertinent to good health. In another place it states that we are from Adam, and therefore we are of the earth. We are earthy.

You will recall from the section that we just read on being "fearfully and wonderfully made" I said that we do not stand apart from the rest of creation. We have been created within it, and we are an integral part of it. Now how far does that go? Well, we are made from the water and the minerals of the earth, and all food specifically designed for man ultimately comes from the same water and minerals from the same earth, only God packaged them in a different form. God's approach is holistic.

When we eat broccoli, or cabbage, or apples, or avocados, or even meat, what are we getting? Earth and water. Earth and water, though God's creative processes are changed, are transformed into another form. That is how much a part of the creation we are.

It is important to understand this, because far too many of us have been convinced that good health lies in taking vitamins and minerals isolated from the vegetation that they are found in. It is essential to understand what you

are dealing with whenever you go to the local drug store or health food store, or wherever it is you get your vitamins and minerals.

Are you aware that these products are essentially pharmaceuticals? They are prepared for consumption following the same basic manufacturing procedures that drug companies use to sell drugs and medication, and that is those active ingredients such as Vitamin A or Vitamin C, are essentially isolated and sold over the counter stripped from the entire support system originally created into the fruit or vegetable created by God.

What you need to understand here is this. When I say it is stripped of its support system, I am talking about other vitamins and minerals and enzymes necessary for proper assimilation and use by the body. I am not saying that taking vitamins and minerals isolated from the whole cannot help, but they are nowhere near as good as when they are ingested from good whole food.

Genesis 2:16 And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat."

Genesis 9:3-4 Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. I have given you all things, even as the green herbs. But you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood.

Verse 3 in this chapter is of course qualified by Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14. Meat is in no way forbidden by God. In fact, one must be careful here, because if one refuses to eat meat on the basis of religious grounds especially, that one is skirting right along the edge of doctrines of demons.

I Timothy 4:1-3 Now the Spirit expressly says, that in the latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their conscience seared with a hot iron, forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.

There is enough recorded in secular history, as well as inferences in the Bible, to make it clear that the meat or the foods mentioned here in I Timothy 4:1-3 is *flesh*.

Colossians 2:20-23 Therefore if you died with Christ from the basic principles of the world, why, as though living in the world, do you subject yourself to regulations—do not touch, do not taste, do not handle, which all concern things which perish with the using—according to the commandments and doctrines of men? These things indeed have an appearance of wisdom in self-imposed religion, false humility, and neglect of the body; but are of no value against the indulgence of the flesh.

I will not go into this in any detail, but what Paul is referring to here are tenets of certain sects of Nicolaitanism, and Gnosticism that were impacting on the church. It was asceticism and the commanding to refuse to eat meat. Those religions, though they are not called by those names anymore, have never fully gone away. They are still around.

There are products available on the market prepared from whole foods in which the vitamins and minerals are *not* isolated away from the surrounding supporting material God created to be ingested and assimilated *with* the vitamins and the minerals. The best overall solution is to find good food. This is rather difficult, because the plant-producing food is dependent upon good soil to feed it, and since there is no holistic approach the soil is largely depleted, especially in the United States. The result is that we are eating foods that are nowhere near as nourishing as they used to be.

It has been within the past several months that I became aware that records exist to show that red meats eaten today have only between one-half and two-thirds of the protein red meats had in the early 1900s. But the feed is no good. The animals, like us, are what they eat. If they are not eating good grass, if they are not eating other good grain, it is not going to turn into good meat, as good of meat that our ancestors had to eat.

What is so sad here is that the same basic levels are also true for the fruits and the vegetables that we are eating, and the result is an ever increasing incidence of malnourishment. Brethren, we are being set up by our own

mismanagement of the creation by not restoring good health to the soil. The result is we do not have good food to eat.

Everybody in here, everybody within the sound of my voice, knows the difference between a supermarket bought tomato and one that is grown in your back yard. That is only one tiny example that everybody experiences, and it is very likely that everything in your diet is deficient in the same way as those tomatoes that you buy at the supermarket. They do not even have anywhere near the acid in them that tomatoes had twenty years ago, because the soil is no good.

That malnourishment in turn means that we are gradually becoming more susceptible to disease as our immune systems become weaker. The solution is to find and prepare properly and eat the best food possible. I am not about to claim that everything labeled "organic" truly is organic, but I do believe that you have a much better chance of finding truly nourishing food by going that route than just going to the supermarket. Sometimes it is very difficult to find good food. This has led me to form what I call a "Hierarchy of Food Values."

Now consider this. We live in this world's system created by Satan and his demons. It is they who are the true shadow government being used to deceive human beings into doing their bidding. One major aspect of their system has been to lure people into cities to live. It is not that cities are inherently evil, but they do present a better environment to control people in an evil system.

This is what Nimrod wanted to do, and so he started building these cities with walls all around them way back there in the early part of Genesis. All that results from that is that people become dependent upon human government for services, for protection, and in addition to that, a very complicated production and delivery system, because they need those things in order to live. People in cities do not grow enough food in their little gardens to feed themselves all year long. They might have a couple of tomato plants.

God's general command is for mankind to scatter across the face of the earth. Much closer to this ideal is each man living under his own vine and fig tree.

This indicates, among other things, private ownership of property and the growing of one's own food. There are many spiritual, moral, mental, emotional, and physical benefits that come from this, because it tends to produce a far greater independence, and at the same time, greater and more frequent contact with the things of God rather than the creations of man.

However, we are not in that kind of a situation now, are we? So what should we do? This system—Satan's creation—that we are pretty much subject to forces choices on us, that given a different circumstance, we would not have to face.

Here is another principle from Herbert Armstrong. He suggested that we should always buy the best quality we can afford in our circumstance. There are different qualities of virtually everything in life: clothing, automobiles, furniture, food. My "Hierarchy of Values" really says this: Always choose the best food available in any given circumstance. You are not always going to be presented with the very best. Sometimes there will be a variety that you can choose from.

When you go to a restaurant there is quite a variety of things you can choose from. What are going to be the choices that we make when confronted with a situation where there is the possibility of getting something that might be downright bad?

There is one person I am thinking of right now whom I have eaten with. This person is not of you people here, and is somebody that is not in the Church of the Great God. The very first thing this person would look at was the dessert menu, and then everything else followed the choice of dessert. In her hierarchy of values, sweetness came first. You see, that came first. Everything else was secondary. By the way, this person is not doing too good health-wise, as we have been able to watch this for quite a long period of time.

My "Hierarchy of Values" rule says always choose to eat the best food available in any given circumstance. Notice I did not say what you think is the best-tasting food available. For instance, a lot of deep-fried foods taste

very good. They are yummy! It is all that fat that is there, you know. You are far better off avoiding them and eating the same thing baked. Do you get the point?

If the opportunity is presented to you so that you can choose between anything containing hardened oil, then avoid that product with the hardened oil like the plague, because that stuff is downright dangerous. Do you know what I am talking about? If a product contains a hardened oil the label will be marked that it is "hydrogenated."

Hydrogenation is a major player in producing clogged arteries, heart attacks, and strokes, because our bodies cannot fully digest the stuff, and so it floats around in us until it lodges in some small place and gradually produces a blockage. This is where the blocked arteries are coming from. The fats are playing less of a role in producing this than hydrogenation is. This includes products like peanut butter, Crisco, margarine. Multitudes of processed foods contain it because it increases shelf life.

What does John Ritenbaugh's "Hierarchy of Values" say here? Use what God created. Use peanut butter in its natural state, without hydrogenation. The oil in the natural peanut butter separates away, but you have to stir it! Tell me, which would you rather have? Good health and peanut butter? Or bad health and hydrogenation? You see, you make a choice. Always choose the one that is going to produce the better health. Peanut butter is fine. Peanut butter with hydrogenation is not fine. It will weaken you, so use what God created.

Butter is beautiful stuff! It is a good thing. There is butter, and good oils like olive oil and Safflower, and the other golden oils. Butter especially has been given a very bad rap. God created butter with a perfect balance of cholesterol in it. Cholesterol is a natural product needed by the body, and if we do not get it through the food, our body will make it. It is that vital to health. But see, through processing and unbalanced eating, we ingest far more than our body can process, and so the combination of hydrogenated things and over-ingesting of fats produces clogged arteries.

Water is another one. It is not frequently mentioned in sermons on health and diet, but it should be. Consider this. Remember, we just read in Genesis 7 that man was made from the earth. The earth is seventy percent water. You

body is seventy percent water. That is not an accident. I am sure that God did that in order to remind us, because we mirror one another, that we are of the earth. It is easily seen in the earth what happens to any area that gets little or no water. It withers and dies. It becomes a desert.

An abundance of good water is just as important to our bodies as it is to the earth. The statistics today are that seventy-five percent of Americans are chronically dehydrated. Our bodies are turning into deserts. Dietitians report that a lack of water is the number one trigger of daytime fatigue. Do you get tired in the day? It may be because you are not getting enough good water.

They also report that a great deal of back and joint pain result from an insufficient amount of water, and that many people's thirst mechanism is weak, that they eat rather than drink water, which is what they should be doing, and they add to the general problem of overweight. Do you know that water depresses appetite? If you drink water, you will not be so hungry. If you are not so hungry maybe you will not eat food, and if you do not eat food maybe you will lose weight.

Let us go to a couple of scriptures here, because they tend to show another area where water is so important.

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

John 7:37-38 On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me, and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water."

It is no wonder that God chose water to be the primary symbol of His Spirit, because without water our body withers and dies far more quickly than it does without food. Every one of the billions of cells in your body is largely composed of water and needs water every day to keep it from failing. Each one of those cells needs water every day. In like manner, without the water of God's Spirit, we wither and die spiritually.

Water is *the* major ingredient of purging and cleansing our body from the inside out of its waste products. If water is not available to the body to do this, we become quickly diseased. Even if we lack water for short periods of time, we can die very quickly of toxemia. By sheer volume, water is the single most important thing that we ingest into our body. I want you to think about that. It is *water* that you need everyday in abundance, just like you need the Holy Spirit *EVERY DAY*. It is that important, and you need it in abundance.

How good is the water you are drinking? How much are you drinking? The latest volume we are hearing is to divide your weight by two and then transfer that number into ounces. If you weigh 150 pounds, you divide that by two and the figure you come up with is 75. You need 75 ounces of water per day. That is *not* an easy figure to reach. I am beginning to see why these dietitians say that we are chronically dehydrated. You can add to that the problem with the city waters we are drinking that look sparkling clean and bubbles up and everything, but it is holding tremendous numbers of, I will call it "things" in suspension within it.

In 1977 or 1978, Bill and Debbie Gray, who are on line with us here, convinced Evelyn and me to get a distiller. We got a distiller, and I can guarantee you brethren, that once you distill your city water in a good distiller and you see the stuff that is left behind, you will not drink that water again willingly. I kid you not. When we were in South Carolina the water was not really bad, but when we moved to Chicago, I will tell you, it was terrible. It looked like black taffy was coming out of that water. That is what was left behind, held in suspension, that you could not see in that water.

Unfortunately, what is happening in this country is that many people are substituting soft drinks like Coke and Pepsi for water. Dangerous business! One Coke contains twelve teaspoons of sugar. Besides that, it contains large amounts of both citric and phosphoric acid, and has a corrosive effect on the body, draining it of essential nutrients. Coke's pH (a symbol for the degree of acidity or alkalinity of a solution) is 2.8. A healthy human's pH is 7, and that highly acid pH is extremely difficult for the body to neutralize. It is no wonder that the people who drink that stuff are so often sick with one ailment or another.

Right up there in importance with water are minerals. Vitamins have gotten all the publicity, but enzymes, for example, are equally important as vitamins, and minerals are more important than both. How do I know this? Because we are *of the earth* ! We are made of water and minerals. It is that simple. The earth and our body are water and minerals, not vitamins.

Vitamins are made from minerals. Enzymes are made from minerals. If the body is receiving a good supply of assimilable minerals and water, then the body is equipped to manufacture all by its own most of the amino acids, enzymes, hormones, and digestive fluids that it needs. But it has got to have the raw material to work with, and the better and bigger the supply, the better off we are. But again, good food is the best source of assimilable minerals.

Not all the minerals found in bottles that one might buy at a health food store are easily assimilable by our body, and in that form they are not surrounded with the other elements necessary for use in the body, just like the vitamins. They are isolated. Some minerals have to work together, like calcium and magnesium. It is necessary that they be together in order for them to work properly within the body.

If you buy calcium tablets and it does not say on the label on the bottle that it at least has magnesium in it, you may as well throw it down the toilet. It is not going to work in your body very well, if at all. The best place to get it is in vegetables, in foods. You have to remember that those minerals are prepared for consumption, just like pharmaceuticals, and apart from those minerals that are derived directly from the whole food source. I would say probably the best thing that you can buy on the market are colloidal minerals. In a colloidal mineral source the minerals are suspended in a liquid, and your body has a much easier time assimilating them. Often the source of those colloidal minerals will be from a glacier, and so it has a pretty good source from where to get it.

Turn now to Psalm 104. This is very important to one's health, and it is very possible that some of you are suffering from problems that are directly attributable to insufficient oil. I know that I was. Someone once said to me, "Why don't you try taking cod liver oil," and I did, and my problem went away, never to return. All I needed was a grease job. I suffered with a stiff

neck for years and years and years, and all I needed was to give my body some oil to work with, and the problem went away.

Psalm 104:15 And wine that makes glad the heart of man, oil to make his face to shine, . . .

This is not talking about oil that you rub on the outside of your skin. Your face shines from the inside out, and it is oil that makes that possible. Oil. Olive oil. Safflower oil. Corn oil. Cold-pressed corn oil is the better higher value. How do I know that it is not oil that is rubbed on the outside of the face? Because of what the verse says about wine, and what it says about bread. You put wine in your stomach. You put bread in your stomach. It is talking about putting oil in your stomach.

Oil and water together are the major images used in the Bible as symbols of God's Holy Spirit. Both symbols, used physically, are absolutely essential to obtaining the very best physical health. Again, olive oil, Safflower oil, and cold-pressed corn oil rank high in my "Hierarchy of Values."

Do you know what one of the lowest is? Canola oil. Do you know what "Canola" stands for? Canadian Oil Company. I am not kidding you. It stands for Canadian Oil Company. Canola oil is extracted from the rapeseed, and it is not good oil compared to olive oil or Safflower oil, or the corn oil. I think that if you look on labels, and do it diligently, you are going to find Canola oil listed on almost any label of a baked product, and many other things besides. Do you know why? Because it is cheap. In other words, you are getting gypped in terms of health. They take that kind of oil and they hydrogenate it besides, and you have trouble in River City.

Now what about milk? This is so interesting, because of the way men look at things. It is not biblical.

Exodus 3:8 So I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good land and large land, to a land flowing with milk and honey.

There are at least another dozen or two scriptures that say virtually the same thing. When God wanted to describe the Promised Land in glowing terms,

just like it is the Kingdom of God, I guess. He used the term "milk and honey." Milk and honey are the biblical symbols of everything good. They are symbols of prosperity, of overflowing abundance, something that is good for you to eat.

Today many people have come to believe that there is something inherently wrong with milk. Some would have you believe that it is for children only and adults should not be drinking it at all. There is nothing wrong with it, except what men have done to it. There is the problem. In Genesis 18:8 Abraham served it to God, and butter besides—two 'no-nos.' Well, it was not bad. He served Him milk and butter and a calf, and he knew full well whom He was serving it to, and you know very well that he wanted to impress them with the very best things he had.

Man has destroyed much of milk through pasteurizing and homogenizing it, and feeding cows with growth hormones. Our children grew up on raw milk. That is all they had when they were little kids. The trick, brethren, is for the farmer to keep his cows clean and healthy. It is still possible to find pretty good milk, cheeses, and yogurt too. It does take some effort to get raw milk, and it is probably going to cost more too.

By and large, people in Israelitish countries have become convinced that food has to be processed, and so you have sugar, and salt, and flour, and bread, and rice, that they must all be white. But none of these products in their natural state is white. As we see in the "Hierarchy of Values," none of those is white. Notice that I said that they are *products*, and that is what they are. They are the product of processing. They are refined products of the natural thing. None of them has a great deal of nutritive value.

We find that white sugar has absolutely no nutritive value at all. Nothing. Zilch. It is empty calories, and it is dangerous because it is a pure corrosive acid that leaches the body of real nutrition. The per capita consumption in America is now an incredible 152 pounds per person per year. That even includes little babies that only weigh nine pounds. They are in the count. There are some people who are eating incredible amounts of sugar. Where are they eating it? They are eating it in small amounts almost in everything that they ingest. It is *everywhere*. It is like a cancer that has been scattered in food all over the place.

Yesterday we ate in Bennigan's in Calumet City with our daughter Virginia. I picked up the Heinz ketchup bottle because I had been told at one time while listening to a radio program that ketchup has more sugar in it than ice cream. I looked at that label and I saw that there were two different kinds of sugar listed on that label. Two refined sugars in ketchup. If you read the labels, you are going to find that sugar is listed as being in almost every product. Evelyn and I have seen some products that have four and five different sugars in them. That is where the 152 pounds is. It just keeps adding and adding up over the course of the year. It is something that our body cannot handle in that quantity, and we are paying the price.

This morning we turned on the headline news to watch for a few minutes before we came over here, and they told us that diabetes is now the seventh highest killer of people in the United States. They said it is arising alarmingly because of sugar and obesity—the two of them going together. So we are paying the piper, and the worst is yet to come because Americans do not seem to moderate their consumption of sugar products.

Proverbs 14:13 Even in laughter the heart may sorrow, and the end of mirth maybe grief.

Proverbs 25:16 Have you found honey? Eat only as much as you need, lest you be filled with it and vomit it.

Proverbs 25:27 It is not good to eat much honey.

God is telling us there to eat honey, which is undoubtedly the best sweetener that there is. It is a sweetener that is loaded with minerals. Those little bees go running around and they pick up the pollen, and with it come minute amounts of minerals, and we take that stuff into it. It is good. You do not get anything like that from white refined sugar. Not only that, honey has vitamins in it. God will still warn you that too much honey is not good. Even honey, the very best of the sweeteners, from God's point of view if you eat too much, it will make you vomit. That is a signal that it is going to make you sick. You are going to suffer from doing that.

Let us look at salt now. Despite what men say, Jesus says salt is good.

Mark 9:50 Salt is good.

Do you know that symbolically every offering that went on the altar had to be salted? There are symbolic reasons for that, part of which is that salt is a preservative. But also we can pick up on that, which is showing that every meal God ate was salted. There is something to be learned there.

The very best salt is not white in color. It is gray (or pink), and it sometimes does not look very attractive to American eyes, but the very best salt is gray in color. Again, it is loaded with minerals. If you get the refined white stuff that you buy in the store, you will find it has sodium chloride in it, and that is about it, because everything else has been leached out of it. But if you get good salt, you are going to find that it has a lot of other minerals in it besides sodium and chloride. I will tell you this, that it is also a great deal saltier than that white Morton salt that you buy, and it does not take as much to salt what you want to salt.

Let us go to Isaiah 55 and we will finish up with this thought.

I probably had more anguish over this sermon than any sermon that I have given in this series. The reason is because the subject is so big that all I can do is skim across the top, because I want to get off the subject. It gets too big. So I have given you a few principles that I think are helpful, and they are all found within the Bible itself. The Bible gives its endorsement of salt. It gives its endorsement to milk. It gives its endorsement to honey, and to oil, and on and on. We can pick up principles like on the water and how important minerals are to us, because we are of the earth.

Isaiah 55:1 -2 Ho! Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat. Yes, come buy wine and milk without money and without price. Why do you spend money for what is not bread? And your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good [There is the "Hierarchy of Values."], and let your soul delight itself in abundance [meaning, prosperity].

This verse contains a strong implication that eating is going to demand choices be made, and we are strongly advised by God to eat that which is *good*, both physically and spiritually. It is counsel from God that wisdom is available.

Proverbs 1:20 Wisdom calls aloud outside; she raises her voice in the open squares.

Wisdom is not just found in the pages of the Bible. There is wisdom regarding other things apart from the Bible, including this thing concerning health. I said it is out there. It is available. You can ask God for His guidance for what you need to take care of your particular responsibility. It is out there. Ask for His guidance.

Proverbs 1:20-22 Wisdom calls aloud outside; she raises her voice in the open squares. She cries out in the chief concourses, at the openings of the gates in the city she speaks her words: How long, you simple ones, will you love simplicity? For scorers delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge?

We are going to meet people who reject the counsel of God in the Bible. They will reject this sermon on the basis of this, that, and the other thing, but God asks the question: "How long?" How long will we do that?

In verses 23 through 30 there is a strong admonishment that those who turn away from what is available are going to find that God turns from them. He is referring to wisdom.

Proverbs 1:31 Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled to the full with their own fancies.

Think of that in reference to the first verse we used—Proverbs 26:2—"a curse without a cause shall not alight." If we do not pay attention to law, whether it be biblical law, physical law, or whatever it is, then God is warning that we are going to pay the piper.

Proverbs 1:31-33 Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled to the full with their own fancies. For the turning away of the simple will slay them, and the complacency of fools will destroy them; but whoever listens to me will dwell safely, and will be secure without fear of evil.

Brethren, there is no escaping law. There is no escaping from the laws of God, whether they are in nature, or whether they are spiritual laws listed in God's Word.

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 are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

We absolutely have a spiritual responsibility. We ignore it at our own risk, possibly even of our salvation, because in ignoring it, we ignore God and His ways.

I want to again emphasize that this is not easy, but it is part and parcel of the difficult and narrow way. The rewards are well worth it because we have gone a long way in pleasing God, and in the end, eternal life.