

HEALTHY CHRISTIANS - PART 4

Healthy Bodies

Dr. Derek Morris

Preaching passage: 1 Cor 6:19-20
Subject: How we should live since our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, bought with a price
Complements: we should glorify God in our bodies.
Exegetical idea: Since our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, bought with a price, we should glorify God in our bodies.
Homiletical idea: **Honor God with your body.**
Purpose: To challenge my hearers to glorify God by caring for their body temples, abstaining from that which is harmful and participating in that which is good.

Introduction

Do you honor God with your body? No, I haven't been checking your grocery cart! Or evaluating your exercise program, or lack of it! And I didn't see you fall asleep in church last week! But I still want to ask the same question. Do you honor God with your body? Some people in our throw-away culture treat their bodies like cheap disposable containers to be used, abused, and then discarded. What about you? How do you treat your body?

We're continuing our series on Healthy Christians. We've been talking about healthy lifestyles, healthy finances, healthy relationships. You can listen to any of those messages on our website at www.forestlakechurch.org. Today, we're talking about healthy bodies..and more specifically, honoring God with our bodies.

The apostle Paul challenges the Christians in Corinth to honor God with their bodies. And the Word of God challenges us to do the same. We can read Paul's counsel in 1 Cor 6:19-20. I'm reading from the NIV. "....."

The believers in Corinth were facing some very specific challenges. One of their greatest challenges was to avoid the sexual immorality that was rampant in their city. In this famous Greek city, promiscuity was not only prevalent, it was encouraged, endorsed, recommended. A prominent religious gathering place in the city of Corinth was the pagan temple of Aphrodite. Here, cult prostitutes were available so that sexual immorality could be practiced as an act of worship. As you can imagine, the reputation of Corinth spread far and wide.

And the moral pollution had not only affected the secular culture, but the Christian community in Corinth was also affected. A careful reading of First Corinthians makes that abundantly clear. But it wasn't only in the area of sexual conduct that the Apostle Paul challenged the Corinthian believers to honor God with their bodies. A little farther on in the same letter, we read in 1 Cor 10:31, "Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." Do all to the honor of God. In other words, honor God with your body no matter what activity you're involved in.

Honoring God with your body means actively caring for your body so that you can experience the best possible health in the imperfect situation in which we find ourselves. We may still deal with sickness and infirmity. But we actively care for our bodies so that we can experience the best possible health in the imperfect situation in which we find ourselves.

So, how do we do that? There are some natural laws of health that have been an important part of what many Adventists call "our health message." Several acronyms have been developed to help people remember these natural laws of health. I remember them by the acronym NEW START. So let's review these natural laws of health together as we continue our journey as healthy Christians.

The N in NEWSTART stands for nutrition. Not any kind of nutrition, but wholesome, balanced nutrition. The way some of us eat, it's a wonder that we are still alive! I was standing in a college cafeteria line some years ago. Around me was a plenty supply of fruits and vegetables. There was a delicious salad bar only feet away from where I was standing. Behind me was a young college student. He had a Kudos, some cookies and a soda. I made some comment about the need for good nutrition and he replied, "Oh I'll be OK, I had fruit loops for breakfast!" I bit my tongue. He wasn't listening anyway. But I ask you, does that kind of diet honor God?

So what is the ideal in terms of good nutrition? In one sentence—get the healthiest diet that is available. If you're interested in an excellent resource to help you with good nutrition and the other natural laws of health, I would recommend this book by Neil Nedley, *Proof Positive*. Dr. Nedley is a graduate of Loma Linda School of Medecine. You'll discover that the original diet in Eden was a pure vegetarian diet. Adam didn't have to run around clubbing the newly named animals in order to eat lunch. We can read about his original diet in Gen 1:29. "....." In some countries of the world, it's easy to eat a balanced vegetarian diet of fresh fruits, nuts, grains, and vegetables. You can go to the market or to the grocery store and with the money that you have available you can find everything that you need to enjoy a healthy and balanced vegetarian diet. In other countries, it's virtually impossible. When I was in college at Newbold College in England, I had a friend from Iceland who paid 5 times the amount for a lettuce back home than I had to pay at my home in Brighton, England. He couldn't possibly afford a huge fresh salad and lots of fresh fruit every day. So what did he eat? Fish. The freshest, healthiest fish he could find. Caught fresh every day from the ocean. Was God more pleased with me than

with my friend because I was able to eat a pure vegetarian diet? Of course not. So what's the principle? Honor God with your body by eating the healthiest diet that is available. If you live in an environment where you need to eat meat, eat the healthiest, freshest meat that is available. Don't eat the scavengers and the garbage collectors. Educate yourself about the healthiest diet that is available to you. Honor God with your body by getting the best balanced nutrition that you can. That's one natural law for better health. That's one way to honor God with your body.

The E in newstart stands for..... exercise. Now in some occupations, you don't need to schedule exercise time. If you work on a farm, or in a job that involves hard physical labor you may not need to schedule extra exercise.

Yesterday, we had some new carpet put in our house. So on Thursday, which is my day off, I spent the entire day emptying the contents of 6 rooms. Needless to say, I didn't need to head over to the gym after supper! I'd been working out all day and I was exhausted!

Unfortunately, or fortunately, most of my days aren't like that. Many of us live more sedentary lifestyles. We get worn out by the stress of the day, but we don't get much strenuous exercise at work. Am I telling the truth? If you're part of that group, you need to schedule some exercise time. Get a brisk walk. Go for a jog, hopefully out in a natural setting where you can enjoy God's beautiful creation. Take a swim. Extended cardiovascular exercise is important for all of us. Don't view it as a chore. Don't regard it as a pill to swallow. Consider exercise a privilege. You are taking care of the body that God has given you. Why? Because you want to honor God with your body. Getting regular exercise is another way that you can honor God with your body.

The W in NEW START stands for water. Water on the inside and water on the outside.

What a blessing to live in a country that has an abundance of fresh water. And even if you don't want to drink the tap water, you can buy distilled water for 67cents a gallon!

When Bodil and I led a mission trip to Kenya, we had to filter all of our water. Most of the local people got water from the river. They also did their laundry in the river. And other things in the river. And a bottle of water cost the equivalent of a day's wages for a laborer. How would you like to pay \$40-50 for a bottle of water! I came home deeply grateful for an abundance of clean drinking water.

And yet many of us don't take advantage of that tremendous blessing. How much water do we need to drink each day? Does anyone know the answer to that question? 6-8 glasses a day. Minimum. Is there a formula based on your body size? I've heard the recommendation of ½ ounce for every pound of body weight. Some of us need to drink a lot more water! You can weigh yourself and do the math. Chances are, you'll discover that your body needs more pure, fresh water. How many people listening this today regularly drink 6-8 glasses of fresh water? We're not talking about beverages that include water. Just pure water. How many of you make an effort to drink a minimum of 6-8 glasses of pure water every day? Good for you. My wife often reminds me to drink more water. Sometimes I become so busy during the day, that I forget to drink a healthy amount of water.

And then there's water on the outside. Taking regular showers or baths, staying clean and fresh is more than just a good social practice. It's a responsible way of caring for our bodies. It's a way that we honor God our creator. So water on the inside and on the outside is good for your health. That's another natural law for better health.

The S in NEWSTART stands for sunlight. That doesn't mean that you need to cover

yourself in coconut oil and lay outside in the blazing sun until you are fried to a crisp. In fact, my good friend, Dr. John Chung, a dermatologist in Dalton, GA, encourages his patients to wear sunscreen whenever they expose their skin to direct sunlight in order to protect themselves against skin cancers. So we're not talking about burning your skin under the blazing sun. But plenty of sunlight is good for your health. Don't spend all of your time in a dimly lit dungeon. Open up your mini-blinds, pull back your curtains, and let the sunshine flood into your homes.

I've met people who get really depressed if they don't have enough sunlight. Do you know anyone like that? But the truth is, we all benefit from an abundance of light. It's good for your disposition. It's good for your health.

The first T in NEWSTART stands for temperance, that means partaking in moderation of that which is good and abstaining from that which is harmful. Nutritious food, for example, is good. But too much nutritious food....is intemperate. A few nuts may be part of a healthy diet. But eating a whole can of nuts while you impersonate a couch potato is bad for your health. Exercise is good, but too much exercise can deplete your life forces or lead to debilitating injuries. Water is good, but too much water could drown you or make you look like a prune. Sunlight is good, but too much sunlight could blind you or give you skin cancer. Do you get the point? We need to be temperate, partaking in moderation of that which is good.

Temperance also means abstaining from that which is harmful. Some people feel their body like this pot. They say, "This is my body and I can treat it however I want to." I can abuse it if I want to." Even some Christians have that attitude. After all, they say, "I'll get a new body when the Lord returns." But your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. And the Word of God says that we should not destroy this temple. So abstaining from anything that will harm your

body is temperance, and that's a natural law for better health.

The A in NEWSTART stands for air, fresh air, and lots of it.. In some parts of the country, fresh air is hard to find. When our family lived in southern California, we were taking a walk one morning and we saw a dark blanket ofsomething, laying heavy in the valley. I was so thankful to live at an elevation of 3000' above sea level! Some cities of the world have pollution alerts, warning people not to go outside and breath the air. If you're blessed to live in a place where the air is clean, open up your windows, open up your lungs and take some deep breaths. Proper breathing is essential for good health. Don't stay in a stuffy environment when you can get outside and enjoy wonderful fresh air. Plenty of fresh air promotes good health. It's part of honoring God with your body.

And the R in NEWSTART stands for..... Rest. I was reading a recent study about sleep deprivation and the findings suggested that most people need 7-8 hours of sleep per night. I know, some of you might think that's impossible. You don't have 7-8 hours to spare. But is it possible that you would get more done, you'd be more productive during your waking hours if you got an adequate amount of refreshing sleep? Of course, you can get too much sleep. Listen to Solomon's counsel in Proverbs 6:9-11. "....." It doesn't bring honor to God to sleep your whole life away. We need to be involved in productive activity, using that health and strength that God has blessed us with.

And whatever we do, that final T in NEWSTART is important: Trust in God. A trusting relationship with our Creator is vital to enjoying fullness of health. The Bible teaches that we are wholistic beings. The physical and the spiritual and inextricably linked together. You can't enjoy fullness of health if you are spiritually sick. A trusting relationship with God is vitally

important and gives God the honor that is due only to Him.

Following those natural laws of health are a positive response to Paul's admonition in 1 Cor 6:20 where he says, "Honor God with your body."

At this point, someone might be thinking, "Why are you making such a big deal about caring for our bodies? Doesn't the Bible teach that we will receive new bodies when Jesus Christ returns in glory? Didn't I read somewhere that this corruptible will put on incorruption and this mortal will put on immortality?" You're absolutely right. These bodies that we have are marred by sin and are subject to decay and death. When Jesus Christ returns, those who are raised from the dead will be given glorified bodies, just like Jesus when He was raised from the dead. And those Christians who are living when Christ returns in glory will receive glorified bodies. We can read about that glorious day in Paul's same letter to the Christians at Corinth. 1 Cor 15:51-55. "....."

So, if we are going to receive glorified bodies when Jesus Christ returns in glory, why should we be concerned about caring for these mortal, corruptible bodies? Why worry about honoring God with our bodies? Isn't it enough to simply believe in Jesus? The apostle Paul gives us the answer. Again, in the same letter, in 1 Cor 3:16-17. Notice what Paul tells us: "....."

What's the answer? Why should we honor God with our bodies? Why should we avoid harmful substances and activities? Why should we care for our bodies by positive health practices? The answer? Because our bodies are the temple of God. The Holy Spirit dwells in us. Do you remember the promise of Jesus given in the Upper Room? It's recorded in John 14:15-17. "....."

That's why, as followers of Jesus Christ, we want to care for our bodies. That's the reason why we want to honor our Creator by way we care for our bodies. Because our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit. We don't want to damage that body temple. We don't want to deface that body temple. When Jesus Christ is your Savior and Lord, you will want to honor God with our bodies. Whether you are running a 3 hr marathon or running a 3 minute errand, honor God with your body. Whether you are preparing for a national examination or preparing lunch, honor God with your body. Whether you are watching TV or watching your calories, honor God with your body. Whether you are in the midst of a celebration or in the midst of a chemotherapy treatment, honor God with your body.

How are you caring for your body temple? (use visual aid of clay pot) Are you using and abusing it? How about a few sleepless nights? How are you caring for your body temple? Are you damaging and defacing it? What about those harmful substances and practices that steal your health and sap your strength? How are you caring for your body temple? Do you recognize that even these mortal, corruptible bodies of ours are very precious to God? We were bought with a price. God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. That makes us very precious. Even now. The glorified bodies are soon to come, when our Lord Jesus Christ returns in glory. But until then, let's care for our body temples. They are the dwelling place of the Spirit of God. Let us honor God with our bodies.

Does anyone recognize the individual in this picture? He was born of missionary parents in the north of China. He grew up with a deep desire to honor God with his body. This young man had a special gift. He put it this way: "God made me fast, and when I run I feel His

pleasure.” While still in his teens, Eric acquired the nickname of the flying Scotsman. By the time of the 1924 Olympic Games in Paris, Eric Liddell held the British record for the 100 yard dash, a record that would stand for the next 35 years. He was expected to come home with the gold medal. But Eric discovered that the heats for the 100 meters would be held on his Sabbath. And honoring God with his body was more important to Eric Liddell than winning a medal. He did compete in the 200 meters event and earned a bronze medal. But something truly amazing happened in the 1/4 mile final. Eric Liddell had barely qualified in the heats that led up to the final of the 400 meters event. Before the race, Eric shook hands with all of the contestants. Then, when the starting gun sounded, he sprang into action. His running style was unorthodox. Arms thrashing. Head bobbing and tilted toward heaven. Feet rising high from the ground. He was once asked how he knew where the finish line was located and he answered, “The Lord guides me.” He wasn’t running for Eric Liddell. He wasn’t running for Scotland. He wasn’t running for Great Britain. He was running to honor God. He was honoring God with his body. And so I supposed it’s really unimportant where he finished in the race. What was truly important was this: Eric Liddell honored God with his body. But in case you are interested, Eric finished 5 yards ahead of the silver medalist, setting a new Olympic and world record. And Eric Liddell’s life of honoring God didn’t end there. The next year he returned to China and served as a missionary until his death in a Japanese internment camp in 1945, just a few days before his 43 birthday.

Eric has been an inspiration to me. At different times and in different ways, Eric sought to honor God with his body. And the Word of God challenges each one of us to do the same: Honor God with your body. Not to make a name for yourself, but to honor your Creator, who

redeemed you at an infinite cost by sending Jesus Christ to die for your sins, and who honors you by making your bodies the temple of His Holy Spirit.

I have a very specific challenge this morning for the young people of our church family. Some of you may realize that you need to make a definite commitment to honor God with your body. You realize that you need to make a definite commitment to abstain from those substances and practices that will damage and destroy your body which is the temple of God's Spirit. I want to invite you to make that commitment today. Honor God with your body. Some of you may be convicted today that things need to change in your life. Damaging practices need to be abandoned. New healthful practices need to be adopted. Make that decision today. Honor God with your body.

If you are convicted today to make that definite commitment, to recognize that Jesus Christ is Lord of all, including your body temple, and that you want to honor God with your body, I want to challenge you to affirm that commitment by coming up to the front of the church and getting one of these small clay pots. I want invite you to let this small clay pot be a symbol of your commitment to honor God with your body. You're rejecting the idea that you can just use and abuse your body temple like a cheap disposable container. You are recognizing that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit of God, purchased at an infinite cost by the death of Jesus Christ our Lord. And every time you look at this little clay pot, whether you place it in your bedroom or in your office or in your kitchen or in your classroom, remember your commitment today: Honor God with your body.