

GOD

Enjoying Good Health and Wholeness

God, our loving heavenly Father, wants us to enjoy good health and wholeness. We know III John 2: “Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.” Our good health is high on God’s priority list. When we have good health and wholeness, we can not only enjoy our life to the fullest but we can be our best for God as we live His Word day by day. This is part of our more abundant life.

We’ll consider what God’s Word says about health and wholeness, and how we can manifest this in our lives as we believe God’s Word and trust in Him. We’ll also consider what to do when sickness or poor health arise, tempting us not to believe God’s Word, and how we can trust in God for total healing as we believably rise to those challenges by continuing to put God’s Word on in our minds and acting accordingly.

“Good health” can be defined as “soundness of body or mind; freedom from disease or ailment”. We want our bodies and minds to be “sound” – “in the best condition possible; robust”. Our bodies and minds are to be whole, because we lack nothing (Colossians 2:10 tells us that we are “complete”). All this is available to us, God’s sons and daughters, as we trust in Him and continue to believe.

The thoughts that we carry in our hearts are vital to maintaining good health.

Proverbs

17:22a A merry heart doeth good *like* a medicine...

Having a “merry heart” is good for us.

15:13a A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance...

Not only is having “a merry heart” good for us, acting like a medicine as it benefits our bodies, but it will show on our faces: we’ll be cheerful.

In both of these verses, the word “merry” is from the Hebrew word *sameach*, which although translated “merry” these two times is also translated “glad”, “joyful”, and “rejoice”. It’s translated “rejoice” the greatest number of times (10). We could read Proverbs 17:22 “A rejoicing heart doeth good like a medicine.”

What makes our hearts rejoice? We read in Jeremiah 15:16: “Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart”.

We get joy and rejoicing in our hearts from God’s Word. As we do, we reap the benefits, including good health. We can see this clearly in Proverbs, Chapter 4:

Proverbs

- 4:20 My son, attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my sayings.
4:21 Let them not depart from thine eyes; keep them in the midst of thine heart,
4:22 For they *are* life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh.

Keeping God's Word in our hearts gives us life. In the Septuagint, a Greek translation of the Old Testament, the word for "life" in verse 22 is *zōē*, meaning "life in all of its fullness". Good health for our bodies is definitely part of that. Look at the next verse:

- 4:23 keep thy heart with all diligence: for out of it *are* the issues of life.

The adversary is always trying to get us to doubt God's Word, so we need to be diligent to "keep", or guard, our hearts. We want to continue to enjoy life in all of its fullness with good health.

Proverbs

- 3:1 My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments:
3:2 For length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee.

This chapter begins with the benefits of peace and a long life when we keep God's Word in our hearts. Even though Proverbs was written to the believers in Old Testament times, God hasn't changed, and we can apply these truths in our lives today.

There's a verse in the Gospel of Matthew that provides some further insight:

Matthew

- 6:27 Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?

This verse at first looks like it's talking about someone wanting to add a cubit (about 18 inches) to their height. But there's a great Orientalism in this verse. A person's "stature" referred to that person's age: the greater your age, the greater your "stature". This question is asking: "Which of you by taking thought, by having anxious concern, can prolong your life a single moment?" You're not going to have a longer life by being filled with anxious concern about it. Instead, we find out how to live longer in verse 33:

- 6:33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

As we seek God first, putting His Word in our hearts and minds, we can believingly look forward to a longer life. But God doesn't just want us to live longer: He wants us to enjoy good health as we do so. Let's return to Proverbs, Chapter 3, where we'll pick it up in verse 5:

Proverbs

- 3:5 Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.
3:6 In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.
3:7 Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the Lord, and depart from evil.

Verse 5 tells us that we are to trust, to lean on or rely on, “the Lord”, Jehovah, God in His personal relationship to us. And we are to trust in God with all our heart. We don’t trust in, or lean on, our own sense-knowledge understanding.

We see a great benefit of trusting in God in verse 8:

3:8 It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones.

As we trust in God, we can expect good health. The word “navel” is a figure of speech for our entire physical body, and the word “health” is actually from the word for “healing” in the text. Trusting in God is healing to our entire bodies. “Marrow” is a figure for “life-giving moisture”, which will help vitalize and strengthen our healthy bodies.

Verse 7 tells us that we are not to “be wise in our own eyes”. We are not relying on our own sense-knowledge endeavors to be healthy. Now, this does not mean that we shouldn’t take care of ourselves. We can’t just sit there, ignore our bodies, and say “All I have to do to be healthy is put God’s Word on in my mind.” We still need to do our best to take care of our bodies. After all, even though we’re spiritually seated in the heavens with Christ (Ephesians 2:6), our bodies are still part of the natural world. John 3:6 says: “That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the spirit is spirit.” Ephesians 5:29 reminds us: “no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it...” Taking care of our bodies to maintain optimum health includes endeavoring to make the best choices for nutrition, practicing good, healthy habits, and getting the proper exercise.

We see that exercise is beneficial in I Timothy 4:8, which says: “For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.” The first part of this verse more accurately reads: “For bodily exercise profits for a little while”. This verse is making a comparison between our time in our physical bodies (“a little while”), during which we do profit from bodily exercise, and eternity, during which we will always benefit from godliness. Exercise is profitable to help keep your body healthy all through this present life.

So, we are to take care of our bodies, doing the best we can to stay healthy. But as we’ve seen in Proverbs Chapter 3, we are not to trust in all this sense-knowledge care for our health: we are always to trust in God. Whatever we can do on our own, even though it is good, will always come up short: it is God who is our source of health and strength.

Proverbs 3, verse 7, in this context of trusting in God for our health, says: “Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear (respect) the Lord, and depart from evil.” We can gain more insight from the book of James, Chapter 1, verse 21:

James

1:21 Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.

Just like in Proverbs 3:7, this verse admonishes us to “lay apart”, or depart from, evil. We are to receive God’s Word with meekness, and put that Word on in our minds. James 1:21 then tells us that God’s Word is “able to save your souls”.

This verse in James, written to believers who were still zealous for the Old Testament Law, is not talking about getting born again. The word “save” is from the Greek word *sōzō*, the same word used in Romans 10 verse 9, which says “...if thou shalt confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.” Getting born again, receiving salvation, is the ultimate healing reality, but the word *sōzō* is also used to refer to physical healing where the receiving of soundness, or wholeness, is implied. Two examples are found in the Gospels of Mark and Luke. In Mark 5:23, Jairus, a ruler of the synagogue whose daughter was sick, asked Jesus to “come and lay thy hands on her, that she may be healed (*sōzō*).” In Luke 8:36, a man out of whom Jesus had cast a legion of devil spirits was seen by the people to be “healed” (*sōzō*). James 1:21 tells us that God’s Word is able to save, or make sound, our “souls”, referring here to our natural soul life. As we receive God’s Word with meekness, we can walk with soundness or wholeness.

Our soundness or wholeness includes a sound mind as well as a sound body. We know from II Timothy 1:7 that “God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.”

One great Old Testament record of people being in good health because they trusted in God is that of the Exodus of the Children of Israel from the bondage of Egypt. Psalm 105:37 refers to this event:

Psalms

105:37 He brought them forth also with silver and gold: and *there was* not one feeble *person* among their tribes.

Prior to their Exodus, the Children of Israel had carried out the commandments of God as spoken to them by Moses. Each family sacrificed a lamb, sprinkled its blood on their doorway, and ate its flesh. In this first Passover, the lamb’s blood represented the atonement, or covering, of their sins, and the flesh symbolized their physical wholeness. There was nothing “magic” in the lamb, but as they ate it with believing, trusting in God that He would take care of them, they were made whole. Their trust and believing allowed God to deliver them.

Many years later, Jesus Christ would give his life as the final Passover Lamb, making it available not only for us to be saved, with remission and forgiveness of sin through his shed blood, but for us to have physical wholeness, made available through his body which was beaten and crucified. Shortly before he was arrested in the events leading up to his crucifixion, Jesus Christ instituted the memorial of Communion, using wine to figuratively represent his shed blood and bread to figuratively represent his broken body.

Communion is not a “sacrament” (a religious rite with a mysterious meaning), and it is not any kind of transformation of wine and bread into the actual blood and body of Christ. The wine and bread simply represent Jesus’ shed blood and broken body. Jesus Christ instituted this

memorial using things people could see to help them remember the two significant aspects of what he would accomplish: our salvation from sins (the wine for the shed blood) and our physical wholeness (the bread for his broken body). Any time we remember what the accomplishments of Jesus Christ made available, we can claim both aspects, including physical wholeness. Many people today have lost track of the significance of the broken body. In fact, people in the First Century Church had already forgotten less than 30 years after Jesus instituted the Communion memorial. The Apostle Paul wrote a whole section on this in his first epistle to the Corinthian Church, recorded in I Corinthians 11:23-30.

We've seen that it is God's great desire that we be in good health, and He has made it available for us to enjoy good health and wholeness as we keep His Word in our minds and hearts, remembering the accomplishments of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ and what they mean to us. And, when we have good health, we can be our best for God.

There are times, however, when we may get sick or suffer from poor health, even with chronic conditions that may last for years. When these challenges come, we must be diligent to keep in mind where these attacks on our health are coming from. Some people erroneously think that a sickness they have is God's way of "testing" them, or "punishing" them for something they did wrong, but we know that sickness and disease in any form is never from the true God. I John 1:5 clearly states: "...God is light, and in him is no darkness at all."

The ultimate source of all sickness and disease is the devil, our adversary, who works through the world's systems to bring about these things.

Acts

10:38 How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost (with holy spirit) and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.

All sicknesses and diseases are "oppression from the devil" and are never from the true God. Also, God never causes death, the ultimate sickness. Hebrews 2:14 clearly states that the devil is the one with "the power of death".

One thing that is very important to keep in your mind is that should you become sick or get a chronic, long-term illness, it does not mean that you are out of fellowship with God. That line of thinking – that a person is sick because they have sinned – only leads to condemnation, which will not help you to become healed. If you read the Gospels, you will find records of Jesus Christ first forgiving peoples' sins before healing them. One example can be found in Mark Chapter 2 verses 1-12, the record of the man who was sick of the palsy whose helpers let him down through the roof. The reason that Jesus first told people that their sins were forgiven was to get rid of any condemnation that they might have had that would have negatively affected their believing to be healed.

Today in this Grace Administration, if we're condemning ourselves for sins, we forgot how easily we can get back into fellowship (I John 1:9). Romans 8:1 says "*There is* therefore

now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus”. Condemnation can keep us from believing fully for the deliverance we desire.

I John

3:21 Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, *then* have we confidence (*trust*) toward God.

3:22 And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.

One of the things that we can ask God for, and believingly expect to receive as long as we are not condemning ourselves, is healing for all sicknesses and diseases. The word “receive” in verse 22 is from the Greek word *lambanō*, to receive into manifestation. We will manifest healing as we believe without condemnation.

We’ve seen that sickness and disease are not from the true God. They are temptations by the adversary to try to get us to doubt God’s Word, to try to get us to not trust in God to take care of us. We need to continue to keep our focus on God’s rightly-divided Word and to trust in Him no matter what health challenge we may face. As we continue to trust in God with all our hearts, we will manifest the healing deliverance that we desire.

Through the accomplishments of Jesus Christ, we can claim and take our healing. This was foretold in Isaiah 53: 5, which says “But he *was* wounded for our transgressions, *he was* bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace *was* upon him, and with his stripes we are healed.” When this was written, the fulfillment of this prophecy of the coming Messiah was still future. Today, after the crucifixion, resurrection, and Day of Pentecost, we can refer to I Peter 2:24, which says: “Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were (past tense) healed.” This verse says that our healing is a reality now.

As we put God’s Word on in our hearts and minds and trust in Him, we can believingly expect to manifest healing in our lives. God is the one who brings that healing to pass. In Exodus 15:26 God declares: “I *am* the Lord that healeth thee.” Here are a few verses from Psalms that can help stimulate our believing, showing us that God is the one who heals:

Psalms

107:20 He sent his word, and healed them, and delivered *them* from their destructions.

30:2 O Lord my God, I cried unto thee, and thou hast healed me.

103:1 Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, *ble*ss his holy name.

103:2 Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits:

103:3 Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases;

Also, our being healed is a need, and Philippians 4:19 states: “But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.”

God has delivered us from the power of darkness (Colossians 1:13), so we don't have to accept sickness or disease or ill health in any form. As we believe God for healing, remember what it says in Philippians 2:13: "...it is God which worketh (energizes) in you both to will and to do of *his* good pleasure."

A major key to realizing our healing is believing. In Mark 11:24 we read: "...What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive *them*, and ye shall have *them*." This definitely includes healing and good health. Hebrews 11:1 in the King James Version reads: "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen", but a literal translation according to usage of this verse is: "Faith (believing God) is the title deed for things prayed for, the evidence they are yours before they are seen." The word "prayed", "hoped" in the King James Version, is actually from the Greek word *elpizō*, more accurately translated "trusted". When we pray with believing, we are trusting God that He will bring it to pass. This applies to being healed and to enjoying good health. Even if we don't see immediate healing results and need to seek medical attention, we need to keep believing, never letting any condemnation creep in. No matter how long it may take, we never give up as we continue to trust in God. He alone is the only true source of wholeness, health, and healing.

We have seen that it is God's great desire for us to be in good health, and have seen that the key to good health is to keep God's Word in our hearts and minds. We have also seen that at those times when we may be challenged with sickness or disease, we need to continue to trust in God and believe that He will heal us.

As we keep our hearts and minds on God's Word, we can believe to enjoy good health and wholeness.

- Dr. Rick Batt