

We Must Take Care Of The Body God Has Given Us

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It's been a long time since I've given a sermon on health. It's been several years. When you don't speak on a subject, some people begin to think it's not important. Obviously our health is very important. In fact, when I came into the church, the Worldwide Church of God stressed health so much it was often to the point that it became a religion to itself. People were judged or it was a measure of peoples' conversion or obedience as to whether they were sick. If they were sick, people would wonder what their problem or sin is. It became almost a religion unto itself.

In the past thirty years or so in God's church, as is usual, the pendulum has gone completely to the other ditch. It's kind of, "Hey, eat, drink and be merry and don't worry about your bodies." The fact is that God desires that we be in good health.

Let's look at 3 John 2 and see that. The Apostle John is talking to the brethren and, by extension, to us today. Notice what he says.

3 John 2. Beloved ...

In other words, "Those of you I love."

2b) I wish above all things that thou may prosper and be in health, even as your life prospers. (KJV)

Now this was John's wish, but since it's been canonized in the Bible, it obviously is God's wish also. But this is not God's world. In 2 Corinthians 4:4, it lets us know that Satan is the god of this world who has blinded the minds of all the people in the world. Looking at world conditions today, it has never been more obvious.

Look at what Satan has provoked humans to do. He has provoked humans to pollute the most beautiful world that could be created, to pollute it in every way possible. Man pollutes the air. David Fricke went to China for a month on business. He was there for thirty days and he saw the sun four days. Three of those days, the only way he could see the sun was to look straight up through the clouds. In those thirty days he saw the horizon once because of the awful pollution. Man has polluted the water, the soil from which comes all of our food stuffs, hence the food that we eat. The inside of our homes, the inside of our cars, our office (if we work in an office space) is all polluted because of the gassing off of the paints, the adhesives, the carpets. Our whole environment is polluted and we live right in the middle of that.

Then on top of that Satan has provoked huge lifestyle changes in the last thirty years in the United States, Canada and the western world. Today people are largely sedentary, meaning they largely sit. In 1900, forty-one percent of the population worked on a farm. Today, less than two percent of the population works on a farm and even then it is highly mechanized as compared to a hundred or even fifty years ago. Seventy-eight percent of Americans are not meeting the basic activity level recommendations by all of the health organizations. Twenty-five percent of Americans are completely sedentary. They do not exercise at all.

Edward C. Archer, who is a nutrition and obesity researcher of the University of Alabama, put sensors on almost two thousand people to see what they did all day. I'll just quote one sentence from the report.

“Unfortunately, we live most of our life going from chair to chair to chair.”

The majority of people do that. Satan has provoked that, and we will see why in a bit. Satan has also provoked radical changes in the eating habits of Canadians and Americans and in the western world over the last thirty years.

On any given day, one quarter of the entire American population eats in a fast food restaurant. That's seventy to eighty million people. The entire American population eats at McDonalds every fourteen days. That is well over three hundred million people. Every month, ninety percent of the children, age three to nine, eat at McDonalds. The average American every year eats twenty-eight pounds of fast food French fries. That's not just whole potatoes, this is fast food French fries. Every year, the average American drinks over forty gallons of soft drinks. Do you know what that equals in teaspoons of sugar? It equals 4,600 teaspoons of sugar a year for those who drink forty gallons of soda pop. Think of what 4,600 teaspoons of sugar does to your insides.

The problem today is that because we are sitting more and more, we are burning 600 to 700 less calories than fifty or one hundred years ago. At the same time, we are consuming 1,900 more calories than people did thirty-seven years ago. 1,900 calories more a day, burning 600 to 700 less, and guess what the result is. Because of this sedentary lifestyle and an increase of food intake, people are getting heavier and heavier and heavier. In 2012, sixty-one percent of the U.S. population was overweight, and fifty-nine percent in Canada. In 2012, thirty percent of the children were overweight, because they're just as sedentary as their parents. They have video games, computers, cell phones, etc.

So as a result of the pollution, overeating, sedentary lifestyle, guess what? The U.S. and Canada is filled with sick people, very sick people. Just some examples: cancer. Last year in the USA, 580,000 people died from cancer, actually over that. Last year new cancer cases were 1,660,000. Of course, a sizeable number of those will die.

Heart disease: In the USA over 920,000 people (almost a million) will have a heart attack this year. Think about that. Over a million die every year from heart disease.

Guess what that costs? It is expected this year that heart disease alone will cost this country a half of a trillion dollars.

Two thirds of all the health related deaths in the USA are self-inflicted. We do it to ourselves. Half of those are smoking related, and we understand all of the dangers of that and thankfully when we came into the church, people who were smoking stopped.

But the other half of these health related deaths are lifestyle related, in other words inactivity, overweight, drug abuse and alcohol abuse. We do it to ourselves and that should not be. You see, Satan is setting up an environment where people suffer, and he gets great delight in causing people to suffer. The modern nations have swallowed it hook, line and sinker. People today suffer and suffer and they don't feel well.

Now we, as God's people, are not immune to these influences from Satan. We are not immune. Look at sickness of God's people in the Sabbath Update. We, if we are honest with ourselves, are influenced by the society we live in. The soda pop is there, the McDonalds is there, the sugar is there and the potato chips are there. We are all influenced by that. At one time or another, all of us have neglected our health. I'm as guilty as any. We all have neglected our health. We've gotten off track.

Please understand that I am not picking on anyone at all. I'm not pointing fingers at anyone except right here, because I need this reminder as much as anyone. We need it more and more as we get older. Teenagers can eat the Styrofoam box that McDonalds comes in and they are fine for a few years. They will pay for it down the road. But as you get older, you cannot do that anymore. So the reality is, in Satan's world, God's people have an uphill battle to retain our health. It's an uphill battle.

Now the important thing we need to understand, and this is all by way of introduction. God holds us accountable for our health. We can't blame it on the government. We can't blame it on the grocer. We can't blame it on the farmer. We can't blame it on the food processor. It is us that God holds accountable. The reason He holds us accountable is He has given the gift of the bodies we have.

Let's turn to James 1:17. This is a principle from God that we need to remember. Everything we have that is good and right and proper comes from God.

James 1:17. *Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. (KJV)*

One of those gifts He gives us is our bodies.

Now let's go to 1 Corinthians, chapter 6 and we will read verses 19 and 20. I'm sure you know what this scripture is and where we are going with this. Paul reminds the Corinthian Church, as messed up as they were, he had to remind them of this.

1 Corinthians 6:19. What? ...

He was just astonished.

19b) ... *know you not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which you have of God [another gift of God], and you are not your own? (KJV)*

Once we are baptized, we become God's property and our bodies house the holy spirit.

20) *For you are bought with a price [Christ's sacrifice]: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit ... (KJV)*

The Greek can mean *mind*, what you think and what your motivations are. So he says to glorify God in both your body and your mind.

20b) ... *which are God's. (KJV)*

This tells us that we can't neglect our bodies, what our body does, what it looks like, the health of our body, the stamina of our body and the strength of our body. We have an obligation before God to take care of the gifts He has given us, especially our bodies. It's the only one we have. We can't trade it in on a new one until we become spirit.

Let me give you an example of a man who did not do that. He was one of my heroes when I grew up in El Paso, Texas. I loved baseball and he was my number one hero. That was Mickey Mantle. He was a center fielder for the New York Yankees from 1951 to 1968. He hit the ball farther than anyone, even to this day. Even in the steroid era, he hit the baseball farther than anybody. He ran the bases faster than anybody. He was given a gift that very humans have been given. He was even tested and his muscles were different in his legs. He could run faster by far than anyone in his day. He was a young kid from Oklahoma and because of the lifestyle at that time in New York and the Yankees, he became an alcoholic. His liver was severely damaged because of the alcoholism. He developed Hepatitis C and eventually developed cancer. He died in 1995 of cancer at the age of 64. What a waste. Many of his feats in baseball were done while he was an alcoholic. You can just imagine if he took care of his body what kind of records he could have set. I'm quoting from him now. This was at the end of his life when he learned he was going to die of cancer. He said, "Don't do as I did. I'm living proof of how not to live." He also said, "If I had known I was going to live so long, I would have taken better care of myself." This is a big example for us.

But like Mickey, some of us don't put forth the effort to take care of the bodies that God has given. We don't work on it and don't put forth the effort. Then when they become sick, I get a phone call and they want anointing or a cloth and basically are asking God to wave a magic wand and make them well and heal them completely. They haven't done anything to help their health, but still want healing. God sometimes, I believe, replies, "Hey, you have the knowledge and the means and the tools, but you are not

doing what you can. Therefore, why should I heal you?" I think that is a reality why sometimes people are not healed because God is waiting for them to do their part and then He will step in and do what we cannot do once we put forth the effort.

Now the key to good health is to prevent becoming ill. It's like trying to shut the barn door after the horse is gone. You want to keep the barn door closed before the horse leaves. So we want to do all we can to prevent illness.

We have to understand that our health is more valuable than all the money in the world. Let's say we won the lottery, say fifty million dollars. You have three homes, a whole stable of automobiles. You have a home at the beach, a home in the mountains, a home in a big city, clothes, furniture and servants. You have everything you want. If you ache the whole time, if you hurt the whole time, if you feel weak the whole time, if you had no energy, do you think you might trade that wealth just to feel good? I think most of us would. But you see, changing life-long habits is hard. It's hard for all of us, but I'm going to ask you today to do just that. Most importantly, you see, when you do these changes, it will make us feel better. Every day we feel better. I'm not asking you to do anything I haven't done already or not currently doing now. So I'm not saying, "Do what I say, not what I do."

The title of the sermon is:

We Have To Take Care Of The Bodies That God Has Given Us

There are two major points.

First Point: We have an obligation to feed our bodies properly.

If we've been in the church any length of time, how many diets have swept through the church that were going to solve all of our problems? If you just eat this or take that or not do this or not do that, you'll have perfect health. We've all been there and done that. I've been guilty of that myself over the years. For the most part though, diets do not work on the long haul. They just don't work, because after the diet is over, the weight comes back and people go back to where they were before and then, down the road, nothing has changed. However, particularly if you're trying to lose weight, the up and down of gaining weight and losing weight over and over is hard on the body. The problem with these diets is that they cannot be sustained. You can do it for a few weeks, a month or two, but to sustain it is impossible. People can't do that. It is critical to understand that the solution is not a diet. The solution is a permanent change in what we eat and how much we eat. It must be permanent. It must be sustainable.

I've done a lot of research on this over the years. I've been through a lot of diets and the best advice that I have ever heard is so simple. Talk about the simplicity of Christ and how God's plan is so simple. It's only seven words. We're going to cover that in this point. It comes from Martin Collis, who is a retired University of Victoria

Physiologist. Just remember these seven words. “Eat food, not too much, mostly plants.” We’re going to cover those in this first point.

Point A: Eat food.

What does he mean? He means to eat real food. The food that is in the grocery store or restaurant is mostly not real food. What we need to do is to eat food that spoils and eat it before it does. In other words, don’t eat food that’s so filled with preservatives that it never spoils. You take a Twinkie and put out on your compost pile and go back a month later and it’s still there. That bright red maraschino cherry that’s on top of your sundae, put it onto the compost pile, and come back a few weeks later and it’s sitting there just as red as before. It’s full of chemicals. That is not food.

The Bible is not a physical health manual. It is a spiritual health manual, but not a physical health manual. However, it tells us what food is. It defines what real food is, and we know that it defines clean versus unclean meats. We understand that and will not go into that today. It also gives us certain examples, but it is not primarily a physical health manual. The fact is we must eat food that is real food. Fast foods are not real food.

About fifteen years ago, one of the major networks commissioned one of the well-known reporters to eat at McDonalds for thirty days, three meals a day. This was in New York City. They gave him a physical exam and weighed him before the experiment and then weighed him and gave him a physical afterward. During those thirty days he gained twenty pounds. His blood pressure went through the roof. His blood sugar went through the roof. His heart rate was up. They showed pictures of him and his eyes were puffy. He said he wasn’t sleeping well and he felt horrible because of what he was putting into his body. Fast food is not real food. Junk food is not real food ... potato chips, pastries, donuts, candy bars, cereals that are filled with sugar and highly processed foods and fried foods are not real food. They might taste good and look good, but it is not real food. They’re not real food because they do not nourish the cells of our bodies. Real food does. Anything with sugar in it is not a real food. So much of the stuff we eat today is loaded with sugar, especially high fructose corn syrup. I gave a sermon on that about three or four years ago. The problem with high fructose corn syrup is it does bad things inside our bodies. One of the things it does is it does not produce a chemical that makes us feel full. It prohibits that chemical from being formed, therefore, you can just keep eating and eating and you don’t feel as full as if you ate food that didn’t have high fructose corn syrup.

I was talking to Roberta Vinger the other day and Roberta has had Stage 4 kidney cancer. It’s been in remission for three years and has come back now in her spine. She was on a very strict anti-cancer diet. She’s back on that now. She made the point that one of the first things you quit eating is sugar. She said that sugar is like gasoline on a fire. The fire is cancer and the sugar is gasoline. You pour it on and the cancer

accelerates. It is rocket fuel for cancer. So one of the things we have to stay away from is anything with sugar as much as possible.

So, the first point is: Eat food, real food, food that nourishes the cells.

Point B: Not too much.

Twenty years ago in Yakima, about this time of year, we had a church picnic. A couple of ladies were taking pictures, and the next week they brought them to church. I was looking at them and I saw a side view, from the shoulder down, of some guy that had a belly. I thought to myself, "Who on earth is that?" As the thought was coming into my head, I realized it was me. They took a picture of me sideways. You know, when you're in front of the mirror, you kind of suck it in and it's not so bad. But it was bad. I was a T-bone shy of 200 pounds. The gut was out there.

Here's the reality. Most people after age thirty gain one to two pounds every year for the rest of their life. Why is that? If you have ever gone back to a high school or college reunion, we were all skinny back then, but now nobody is skinny. The reason it happens is that our metabolism, the engine or furnace inside us that converts food (our fuel) into energy, that engine as we get older begins to slow down. The fire begins to go down, so we don't convert fuel into energy as efficiently as we did when we were young. The problem is that we keep putting in the same amount of fuel or even more, but the body isn't burning it up. So what the body says is, "Hey, this guy is feeding me more fuel than I can use, so better save it for a famine. I better put it into the warehouse." Where is the warehouse? It's in our belly, our legs and our jowls and everywhere else. The body stores it, which is normal and natural. The storehouse is where we really don't need it.

In addition to that, some of us are genetically predisposed to be heavy. That is a proven fact. Also, as an aside, some of us are genetically predisposed to be diabetic, or get cancer. That's just another fact. But it is a special burden for people who are trying to keep their weight under control because they're getting older, if they are genetically predisposed to be heavy. I am one of those. My Dad was 5'9", weighed 230 pounds. His sister was the same height and weighed the same. He had another sister that was 5 feet tall and weighed 180 pounds. Both of my grandmothers were very heavy. It runs in the family. So those of us who have that predisposition have to battle that on top of getting older. It is something I battle every day.

Look at the huge portions that are served in restaurants. This author said, "Not too much." You go to a restaurant and get this platter that could feed three or four people. What Dorothy and I have learned is we cut it in half and take half of it home and Dorothy doesn't have to cook the next day, which she loves, and we don't eat as much. But it's in front of us all the time. So as we age, we need to reduce the amount of calories we take in because our metabolism is not churning as fast as it used to.

Let me give you three examples of how bad it can be. If you have one extra helping, it doesn't make any difference what it is, maybe mashed potatoes, the extra enchilada, or another handful of French fries. If you have one extra helping three times a week and do nothing else, you will gain nine pounds a year. If you have one extra soda pop a day, hopefully it is the soda pop, but if you add a soda pop every day for a year and you make no other changes, it results in gaining fifteen pounds a year. Now, like our police buddies do, if you had one glazed donut a day for a year, you would gain thirty pounds. One donut, and you didn't change anything.

Another huge problem is, because of the pollution we talked about and the soil and all of that, we constantly have toxins coming into our bodies from the air we breathe and the water we drink and the foods we eat. Toxins are stored in our fat. That's why when we fast we feel so horrible. When we are not feeding our bodies, our body goes to the warehouse and starts getting energy from our fat. The fat contains all these toxins and the toxins dump into our bloodstream and people feel miserable when they fast. So if we have less fat there is less storage space for toxins. That means since there is less storage space, the body flushes more of the toxins out through our elimination system. So the key is to stop eating before we get full. The problem is, in America, we don't do that. We are a nation that is fast paced and we eat fast and work fast. We do everything fast. When I went to military school, if you didn't eat fast, you didn't eat. You sit down and just scarf the food down. It's amazing, you can go through a whole Thanksgiving meal in just twenty minutes. Think about that. It takes all day to prepare, but most people can eat the whole meal in twenty minutes because we're shoveling it in. We should not allow ourselves to get to the point where you feel stuffed. We've all been there. You feel so stuffed you just want to puke. We can't allow ourselves to do that.

In more civilized societies, in Europe, their meals last two or three hours. You go to a restaurant and get a course, then you wait twenty or thirty minutes and you get another course, wait another twenty or thirty minutes and get another course, etc. The food has a chance to settle and then you have the chance of feeling a little bit full before you start shoveling in the next course. We need to slow down in our eating habits. We need to stop eating before we are full.

So point B is that we need to eat the right foods in the right amounts.

As an example of what can be done, Amber King who is here, over the last few months has lost thirty-eight pounds. Shilow Ensminger in Prosser has lost thirty-five pounds. As I said, when I looked at the side view of my belly, I said, "That's it. This isn't going to happen." As I said, I was just a bit shy of two hundred pounds. I stepped on the scale this morning and I'm 180. It's been that way for quite some time. I just brought it down over the years. If I can do it, anybody can do it.

So, eat food. Not too much.

Point C: Eat mostly plants.

Eat foods that come from plants. In other words, we need to eat a lot of grains, fruits and vegetables.

With that in mind, let's go to Ezekiel 4. We're going to break into the context where God told Ezekiel to lie down on his side for 430 days. He went on one side for 390 days for Israel and 40 days on the other side for Judah. Now here is a man where God is saying, "I'm going to ask you to do something that is not natural. You're not going to be moving. You're not going to have any physical activity, so you'll have a problem with elimination. You'll have a problem with keeping healthy." So what God did is prescribe him a diet. It's kind of instructive to look at the diet. Look at verse 9.

Ezekiel 4:9. *Now go and get some wheat, barley, beans, lentils, millet, and spelt, and mix them together in a storage jar. Use them to make bread for yourself during the 390 days you will be lying on your side.*

10) Ration this out to yourself, eight ounces [Clarke's Commentary says ten ounces] of food for each day, and eat it at set times. (NLT)

Clarke says they took the ten ounces and baked him a loaf of bread and he ate the whole loaf throughout the day.

11) Then measure out a jar of water for each day, and drink it at set times. (NLT)

Notice the recipe for bread was a variety of grains and a variety of fiber. Concerning water, the fact is today is that seventy-five percent of Americans are chronically dehydrated. I've been one of them. The lack of water is the number one contributor to feeling fatigued during the day. Five glasses per day of water will decrease your risk of colon cancer by forty-five percent. Think about that. Eight glasses per day will reduce joint and back pain for eighty percent of people who can drink eight glasses a day. I am guilty of that. I've suffered heat stroke from it, so I'm a water magnet now. I drink lots of water. I had to learn the hard way.

God is saying to Ezekiel, "Here is what I want you to do. I'm going to give you a diet that will preserve you, give you the nutrients you need, allow you to eliminate even though you're not moving around. The water will help do that and will help sustain you. So there is a lesson there for us on things that we should eat and drink.

The other thing we should do, when talking about mostly plants is that we need to eliminate our intake of red meat. I talked to church members before and they said, "Oh, the Bible talks about meat and we just have to have our steaks and roasts. One of the biggest proponents died of colon cancer a few years ago. What we need to understand is that the beef available in Biblical times was totally different than the beef that is available today. They didn't have growth hormones or antibiotics. They didn't have genetically modified food that they fed the beef, and they didn't have the pollution in the soil and the water that we have today. So today we cannot compare the beef today to the beef that was available to the patriarchs as an example.

Also, we must eat food that does not hurt us, that doesn't cause inflammation or irritation or that we're not allergic to. Jack Elder gave me permission to use this. Jack has been diabetic for decades. He used to be on insulin and pills. Finally he said that he had enough. He said, "I can control this through diet." He has been on a strict diet for two or three years. He uses no insulin. He uses no pills. He feels better than he has ever felt because he changed his eating habits, controlling your body through what you eat.

John Pollock, for the last several years has had incredible tendonitis in both elbows. A couple of times we had to take him off the speaking schedule because he couldn't type a sermon. The tendonitis was so painful. He and Shelly have started a diet that eliminates irritation and inflammation causing foods, and within a couple of weeks, as I recall, the tendonitis was gone. It stayed gone. No pills or operations, no drugs, but just finding out what foods irritate the body and stay away from them.

You see, the solution for eating right is making permanent changes in our eating habits, not diets, not fads, but permanent changes. We have to eat food, not too much, and mostly plant based, in a way that you can sustain. This is very important.

Okay, the first point was about what we put into our bodies.

Second Point: We must have an obligation to move our bodies and exercise.

God designed our bodies to work and to move. Look at the example of Jesus Christ. If you do the calculations, Nazareth was about sixty-five miles, as the crow flies, from Jerusalem. The males were required to be in Jerusalem three times a year. The road wasn't as the crow flies, but let's say sixty-five miles, so that's 3 X 130 that Christ walked to Jerusalem every year. We also know he was a carpenter. He didn't have a pick-up truck. He walked from job to job. Everybody walked. They didn't have, like the west, any horseback transportation or He didn't have a cart pulled by a donkey. He walked. Remember, He was a carpenter with no power tools. So Christ set us the example. He probably walked a thousand miles a year, eight hundred, nine hundred, a thousand or maybe more miles a year. He was in good health. He moved.

Martin Collis, the one that said, "Eat food, not too much, mostly plants", he says, "We come with a roughly one hundred year warranty, but you must read the fine print. You've got to move." Not chair to chair; we've got to move.

Let me explain for a minute what exercise does for our bodies. Our heart is a muscle. It starts beating when we're in the womb and doesn't stop until we die. Think about that. You think about the millions of times it beats. Somebody who is out of shape, their heart beats about eighty to ninety beats a minute, because it is so out of shape and so inefficient. So to get what the body needs, that heart has to pump eighty to ninety times per minute. Now somebody who is aerobically in shape, because as we exercise the heart muscle gets stronger and stronger, and then it gets more efficient.

So with each squeeze, it squeezes more blood. So somebody who is in shape, their heart beats forty-five to sixty times a minute. That's a third to a half of somebody who is out of shape. Think of the wear and tear on the heart valves and how you could reduce the wear and tear if your heart beats a third to a half as much over a lifetime. So exercise in general helps strengthen the heart.

Exercise also increases the blood flow to every part of the body. It delivers more oxygen, more nutrients to every part of the body, especially the brain. It nourishes the cells and it flushes toxins out of the body. Efficient exercise allows that to happen at double or triple time.

Exercise also induces an artificial fever in our bodies. That's why we sweat when we exercise. The body gets hotter and our body temperature goes up and we start sweating to cool the body down. So all that sweating eliminates toxins also. The toxins come out in our sweat. It's my speculation (I've never read a study on it) but I believe this artificial fever, when our body elevates two or three degrees and we are exercising hard, it kills bad bacteria and kills viruses. It kills cancer cells just like our body does when we get sick and we have a fever. That's the way the body fights, so it seems logical to me that when you exercise and generate your own fever it is helping you kill bad stuff in your body.

The nice thing for those of us who like to eat, if you exercise you can eat almost as much as you would normally and lose weight. What a concept. Now that's not true for everybody, but it can happen for many people.

But, guess what? Human nature resists exercise. I've said it before that if you get an urge to exercise, lay down on the couch and it will go away. That's true. Sometimes we just feel like we need to get out and move, well, act on it, because if you don't it will go away. The Center for Disease Control in the United States said 250,000 deaths every year in the U.S. are attributable to a lack of regular exercise. A quarter of a million people die unnecessarily.

Think of this. The Times Columnist which is the paper in Victoria British Columbia, had an article on December 17, 2003. The title was "Fruits, Vegetables, exercise are the key to avoiding cancer." The article was written by Dr. Terry Sullivan, the Vice President of Research with Cancer Care Ontario. He says, "I think we need to start thinking about diet and physical activity in the same way we thought about tobacco ten or fifteen years ago." Because the lack of physical activity does the same damage as smoking, and we know the damage smoking does. I was thinking of this as a joke. Years ago you couldn't be baptized if you were smoking. What if we used that same logic and say you can't be baptized unless you're exercising and eating right? We're not doing that, but the logic is there.

Let me give you an example of an event that changed my life. I worked in Boston. We were the largest specialty manufacturer of loud speakers in the United States at the time. We got into financial difficulty, and we spent a lot of money on research and

development and it didn't pay off as fast as we thought, so our cash flow was in the toilet. I came to work every day knowing that if I didn't sell "X" number of loud speakers that day, the bank would call our loan. We had six hundred employees and all of us would be out on the street. During that time, I began to develop tension headaches. I didn't know what a tension was, but it was like your head was in a vice. It started in the morning and ended when I went to sleep and then the cycle started all over. It lasted for weeks. Finally I saw a doctor in the area who came highly recommended. I was in my early thirties, and my guess was he was in his early forties. He was bald as a Q ball and skinny as a rail. He sat me down and I explained my problem with the tension headaches. He said, "Do you smoke?"

I said, "No, I've never smoked."

He said, "Good, because if you smoked you couldn't be my patient. I don't deal with smokers."

I thought, "Hey, I like this guy."

Then he said, "Do you exercise regularly?"

I said, "No, I play basketball maybe once a week or once every other week."

He said, "Okay, you have a choice. Either you start exercising tonight when you get home and you can be my patient, but if you refuse to do so, you cannot be my patient."

I thought, "I like this guy."

He said, "I am not going to treat people who don't do their part. I refuse to treat people that aren't going to do what they need to do. If you want to do your part, we can start a relationship and I can help you, but if you don't I'm not even going to charge you. Just leave."

I exercised that night and I started exercising every night when I got home from work and within two weeks the headaches were gone because of the benefits of exercise.

The New England Journal of Medicine said in 2002 regarding a study, "The study found that the greatest predictor of death, other than age, among more than 6,000 men (this was a big study) was a low level of cardiovascular fitness. That is how much aerobic exercise they got." "Age is the greater predictor of death because obviously the older we get, the more likely we are going to die. Of all those men, if you want to predict their death, pick the ones that don't get any aerobic exercise. That is what the study showed.

In a Newsweek article called "Running for Your Life" in March of 1986, the study looked at 17,000 Harvard graduates. This was another huge study. I'm quoting from the article, "While previous studies indicated that exercise protects from heart disease

(which we all know) Harvard's is one of the first studies to show a favorable effect of exercise on mortality from all diseases." From cancer, diabetes, it didn't make any difference. It goes on to say, "Men who improved from unfit to fit reduced their risk of death as much as smokers who quit smoking, just by getting aerobic exercise." Exercise reduces the risk of heart disease. Harvard University Nurses' Health Study said walking a mile --- fifteen to twenty minutes for three hours a week cuts the risk of heart disease by forty percent.

What if you could take a pill that would reduce the risk of heart disease by forty percent? People would be flocking to it. But going out and walking, no we can't do that. That takes too much time. It really doesn't.

A Duke University Study said that regular exercise including walking reduces the risk of stroke by a third. Just regular walking; go out and walk.

Exercise reduces the risk of diabetes. The Joslin Diabetes Center in Boston, Massachusetts found that thirty minutes of moderate exercise every day reduces the risk of diabetes by fifty-eight percent. This is the magic pill, as much as there is a magic pill.

Exercise reduces the risk of colon cancer. A University of Arizona Study found that walking for an hour a day dramatically lowered the risk of colon cancer, and they found out why. The constant bouncing while you walk, the moving of your body hurries the food through your digestive system so the carcinogens and toxins don't stick and stay close to the lining of your intestines long enough to change the lining into cancer cells. It hurries the food through the body by the jostling of the exercise.

Exercise also increases your brain function and your memory. Exercise can make you smarter. John Ratey, Associate professor of Harvard wrote a book, The Revolutionary New Science of Exercise and the Brain. He discovered in his research that there is a protein that builds and maintains the circuitry inside brain cells. It's a specific protein. He called it "Miracle Grow for the brain". Guess what increases this protein, exercise. He says, "Researchers have studied how exercise affects things like improved memory, academic performance and executive function at work. The connection is powerful." Isn't that interesting.

Exercise also reduces anxiety. University of Illinois Study found that out. A Queen's College in the United Kingdom found that regular exercise reduces the anxiety level of people.

Exercise also reduces sleep problems. The National Sleep Foundation Survey found that people that exercise regularly had fifty percent fewer sleep problems than people who were sedentary.

This is just scratching the surface, but we see that God designed our bodies to work.

Let's go to 1 Timothy 4:8. I'll read it from the NIV. Paul is instructing young Timothy and giving him some advice.

1 Timothy 4:8. *For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come. (NIV)*

So we see here that Godliness helps us not just today, but in the life to come. What he is saying is physical training helps us today, but Godly exercise helps us both today and in the world tomorrow.

The Greek word for "physical training" Thayer's says is, "*the exercise of the body in a school of athletics.*"

The Greeks were famous, and they invented the Olympics. They put a lot of stress on physical fitness. We would say today that the school of athletics would be a gym. Paul says that going to a gym has some value.

Let me give you two examples, both good and bad of exercising and not exercising. Dorothy's older sister announced fairly dramatically about five years ago that she was done walking. "I've earned the right to sit." She was seventy-five or so, and said, "I'm just done walking." She didn't walk. She would go down the elevator of the condo and get in the car and go to the parking lot of the grocery store. Walking to and from the grocery store is about the exercise she got. Five years later she had a knee replacement. Her muscle tone was so bad and her ligaments and tendons were in such bad shape that she had a horrible recovery. She is still not totally over it and it's been about a year. She also has early onset of dementia because she isn't getting circulation to her brain.

Then contrast that with a guy named Hans that I know in Victoria. He's in his mid-eighties. I first saw him at an exercise facility. I exercised for an hour and a half. When I got there he was swimming laps back and forth. When I left he was still going back and forth. I had a chance to meet him a few months later in the change room. I introduced myself and I said, "You really exercise!"

He has a very thick German accent. He said, "Ya, eighty laps a day."

I said, "Why are you doing that?"

He said, "Well, my goal is to swim the equivalent of Victoria to Hawaii."

I looked it up and it's 2,670 miles. I would come there and he would be swimming back and forth. In 2012, I saw him and said, "Hey, Hans, have you reached Hawaii yet?"

He had a grin on his face and a glint in his eye and said, "I'm on my way back."

What an example!

Edwin C. Archer, of Nutrition and Obesity Research at the University of Alabama says this: "How you spend your day determines whether you store food as fat or store your food in your muscle healthfully." It's up to us. It is our responsibility.

So there are two ways to exercise properly and we have to do both. One is aerobic exercise. That's the kind of exercise like walking, running, getting your blood flowing.

Dr. Peter Mason who is an M.D. at Harvard University says: "Walking may be as close to a magic bullet as you will find in modern medicine. If there was a pill that could lower the risk of chronic disease like walking does, people would be clamoring for it."

The Times Columnist in Victoria in an article in December of 2011, titled "Activity, not Weight is the key to health."

Paul VanWiechan is the Director of Exercise Physiology at the Cleveland Clinic in Canada. Since 1970 he has studied two groups. He studied fit people who were overweight and he studied skinny people who were not fit. He found that the fit people who were overweight performed better in almost every health category when compared to skinny people who were not fit at all. That's encouraging to many of us who are genetically predisposed to be a little hefty. The idea is if you can be fit you can be a little overweight and have all the benefits of being healthy.

Charles Hillman did a study at the University of Illinois and there was an article in Newsweek in 2007 titled, "Stronger, Faster and Smarter." The article says, "Hillman's study is part of a recent and rapid movement in science showing that exercise can make people smarter. There are clues that physical activity can stave off the beginnings of Alzheimer's Disease and other cognitive disorders. No matter your age, it seems a strong active body is crucial for building a strong active mind. Aerobic exercise helps the heart pump more blood to the brain along with the rest of the body. More blood means more oxygen and thus better nourished brain cells." We have trouble remembering and we get forgetful, so exercise. Get the blood flowing to the brain.

So the first is aerobic exercise.

The second is strength training, building muscles, legs, arms, back and chest. The fact is that after age fifty, if we do not exercise, we lose ten percent of our strength, ten percent of our muscle mass every year. So in the ten years between fifty and sixty you lose ten percent a year, you're about three quarters less strong than you were ten years ago, if you do nothing.

Dr. Pat O'Shea who is Professor of Exercise and Sport Science at Oregon State University says: "People don't go to nursing homes because they are cardiovascularly fit. They go there because they lack the strength to lead a functional home life. It doesn't do you much good to have a strong heart if you lack the strength to get out of a chair or if you can't get from your car to the super market."

Dorothy's mom, in her old age, the muscles were just gone. It was very difficult to get in and out of a chair, and once you lose it you can't get it back. So the key is, don't lose it. The key is to exercise for the rest of one's life.

Dr. Stanley Birge who is a Director of The Program on Aging at Washington University at St. Louis said, "We now understand that what we have ascribed to aging is simply for the most part, due to inactivity." It's due to inactivity, not getting old. "If we don't stress our skeletons we are going to lose them."

So when we exercise, we build not only the muscles, but the bones in our arms and legs. That's almost like a break. The body builds the bone back bigger and stronger as it builds the muscle bigger and stronger.

Dorothy and I had the privilege of visiting a lady who owned a ranch east of Roswell, New Mexico. We would go to Roswell once a month or every three weeks from Lubbock when we lived in Texas. We would stop at her ranch house. She was probably seventy-five or closer to eighty. The first time we drove into her yard and went through the gate, I saw her in the field. She had a post hole digger and she was manually digging post holes and putting up a fence. She was sweating like crazy. We walked over and she invited us into the ranch house and fixed some tea or lemonade. I mentioned this before; I looked up into the rafter. It's an old ranch house. There was a beam over the top with a big pulley. She saw me looking up there and she didn't say anything. I said, "What on earth is that for?"

She said, "Oh, that's my arthritis machine. See that rope over there? I get on this ladder and put the rope over the pulley and when my shoulders are hurting, I tie a knot in each end of the rope and I just do this. Then I do this and I do this. I work my shoulders and work my shoulders. It takes five or ten minutes and the pain goes away. I've been doing it for years."

What a concept, moving the body.

The Yakima Herald Republic had an article in 2012 in December, and the title was "Strength, Power and Friendship". "A study released in April by the University of British Columbia links strength training to better brain function. What's more, older women already demonstrating signs of dementia showed improvements in memory, attention span, problem solving, decision making after six months of weight training. Countless other studies have shown that strength training increases bone mass and density in the elderly.

Let me ask the question. How would you like to lose weight sitting on the couch? Obviously all of us would. We can do that through weight training, because when you exercise and lift weights, you feel that burn in the biceps for example. The muscles in the bicep are being torn ever so slightly and that's what causes the burn and it causes the bone to move. Then what happens when you quit exercising and you're on the

couch, the body uses the food, the fuel, the energy you take in to repair the muscle and repair the bone. So if you can exercise thirty minutes a day, lifting weights, you will lose weight and burn calories while you're sitting around and the body repairs the muscles and bones that you stressed when you exercised. So for both aerobic exercise and strength training to work, you have to do it a minimum of twenty minutes a day, three or four days a week.

People say, "I don't have the time." Twenty minutes a day, three or four days a week is one percent of your time that week. We can afford it. We can all make time.

I'm not suggesting you do something that I haven't been doing for years. After I went to that doctor, I started exercising aerobically. The only way I could overcome my back problems was through a physical therapist that got me on a weight lifting program. So today I exercise about an hour and forty-five minutes, four to five times a week. I do forty-five minutes of aerobics, thirty minutes of weight lifting and about ten minutes of stretching. That equals five percent of my week. It's an investment. I'm telling you that if I didn't exercise, I wouldn't have the energy to do the job that I'm doing today at age seventy-two. I just couldn't do it. It wouldn't happen.

You don't need a gym membership. Thankfully we have a gym membership. It costs about \$400 a year, but you blow that in the first visit to a doctor for some weird thing or an emergency room. You don't need a gym membership. Just go out and walk. In the kitchen, sit in a chair and grab a couple of soup cans and start doing this, and start doing this, and start doing this. Get a bag of beans or something and do some squats, and over time, build up. When you first start walking, maybe walk around the block once and go little farther the next day, a little farther and a little farther. Make those soup cans weigh a little more, and if you want to buy a dumb bell at a store, you can do that. They cost \$10, and it's no big deal. You don't need a gym to do that.

We all remember Jack Lalanne. He was a fitness and health expert. I remember seeing him on television in the mid-fifties. In his fifties he swam from Alcatraz Island to Fishermen's Warf in San Francisco. Alcatraz Island is a mile out in San Francisco Bay, and it is generally regarded as escape proof. No one ever escaped from it because of the horrible currents that are around that island. A fit man could not swim from Alcatraz into Fishermen's Warf. When Jack Lalanne was in his fifties, they shackled him, his legs together and tied his hands behind his back, threw him in the water at Alcatraz and he swam to Fishermen's Warf. To mark his sixtieth birthday, he did the same thing a second time, handcuffed and shackled and towed a thousand pound boat from Alcatraz to Fishermen's Warf. For his seventieth birthday he towed seventy boats with one person in each boat across Long Beach Harbor with his hands tied behind his back and his feet shackled together. Think about that. He died at age ninety-seven healthy and fit. He could do pushups like you wouldn't believe at age ninety-seven. He could do pushups and sit-ups, but he worked every day. What an example.

Now let's think about this in conclusion. Let's say you walk into a Starbucks, and we're dreaming here. Let's say you order a latte and it costs a dollar. You order your latte

and you give him a dollar. He makes the latte, brings it back and he gives you two dollars. Think you might go back? I think we would, because not only do we get the latte, but we get the extra dollar. That's exactly what happens with every minute you invest in exercise. For every minute you exercise, you expand your lifespan two minutes, and during the minute you exercise, you feel better. You feel really good. You have more energy, you have more attention, there is a spring in your step and you don't have the aches and pains.

So let's remember that our bodies are the temple of God. They are where God resides, not only with His holy spirit, but in our minds. Our bodies are an example to other people about the fact that we are part of God's church. We are living the life that God wants us to live.

Now how would God react if we pollute that gift (our bodies) that He has given us? How would He react if we don't take care of the gift that God has given us?

So I hope today that you will be inspired to take greater care of your body. Eat food, not too much, mostly plants. Keep moving throughout the day. Exercise throughout the day. Keep active every day. If we do that, we will be doing our part. Then when we get sick we can go to God and ask for healing with a clear conscience.

So let's remember to take care of these wonderful bodies God has given us so we can fulfill our destiny, our calling and we can serve others in the church.