

Some years ago, while driving from Missouri to Ohio, smoke began to pour out of the engine of my car. Pulling over, I called my older brother who knew something about cars. "Did you check the oil," he asked, to which I replied, "Check the what?" Unlike my brother, I knew basically nothing about cars and sure enough, as I checked, there wasn't a drop of oil registering on the stick. Finding a bottle in the trunk, I started filling the oil only to find, to my dismay, that I had been pouring transmission fluid in the tank. While most of us would shudder at such a mistake, we often do the same thing to our bodies. No, we don't drink transmission fluid, but we often put things in our bodies that are detrimental to our health and yet our health is about the most valuable asset we have.

A millionaire with a debilitating disease once said, "I would give all my money for good health," yet many take health for granted until it is too late and we are diagnosed with cancer, heart disease, diabetes, or are afflicted by some other health crisis. We often bring health problems into our own lives by our forks and knives then expect God to fix them. While God will not always heal our self-inflicted diseases, He will at times intervene and restore our health on the condition that we obey the health laws laid out in the Bible. If you or someone you know is afflicted with health issues, why not give God's health plan a try.

God's initial health plan was a vegetarian diet. In the beginning God said, "I have given you every herb that yields seed which is on the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed; to you it shall be for food" (Gen. 1:29). Notice that God's original diet did not include meat. While God later permitted people to eat meat, this was not really in God's original plan. We see this later when God takes His people out of Egypt and offers them bread from heaven, promising, "If you diligently heed the voice of the Lord your God and do what is right in His sight, give ear to His commandments and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you

which I have brought on the Egyptians" (Ex. 15:26).

While God later permitted meat eating, He gave strict rules regarding what kinds of animals could be eaten. God said you shall not eat "those that chew the cud or those that have cloven hooves" (Lev. 11:4), which includes pork. Among the birds, we are to basically avoid birds of prey and of the fish, we are told that "whatever in the water does not have fins or scales," such as catfish and shrimp, "shall be an abomination to you" (Lev. 11:12). While some feel at liberty to eat such meats today, we must consider a few questions. Why did God give restrictions? Were these arbitrary rules or were there actual health risks? And are they still unhealthy today, after the cross?

The modern attitude of Christians towards eating meat that God forbids has been a detriment to the health of believers everywhere. Speaking of forbidden dietary practices God said, "You shall not eat it, that it may go well with you and your children after you" (Deut. 12:25), and yet many ignore the plain instruction of the Lord. As a result of eating these forbidden foods, we are now suffering the same diseases that the rest of the world is suffering and yet God tells us that if we will just return to His original diet, "the Lord will take away from you all sickness, and will afflict you with none of the terrible diseases of Egypt" (Deut. 7:15). If we will obey God in all things, including a return to the health plan laid out in the Bible, we may experience vibrant health.

Today many Christians believe that the cross somehow changed the nature of food, claiming that God's dietary laws are no longer required. They quote Paul when he said we "may eat all things," but ignore the parallel passage which identifies Paul's reference to "the eating of things offered to idols" (Rom. 14:2; 1 Cor. 8:4). They reference Peter's vision of unclean animals as an excuse to eat unclean meat, but ignore the context where Peter said, "God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean" (Acts 10:28). After this, Christians didn't start

eating pork, but the gospel went to the Gentiles (Acts 11:18).

The fact is many pastors twist the scriptures to suggest God's dietary laws are no longer in effect today, leading masses to dig early graves with their forks and knives, but God is calling His people back to the most precious gift of health and vitality. If we will only return to God's health laws He repeatedly says, "I will bless your bread and your water. And I will take sickness away from the midst of you" (Ex. 23:25). God longs to bless us, but He cannot do so as long as we ignore the laws He has laid out for us. The Bible says, "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap" (Gal. 6:7). God has given us guidelines and when we ignore them we must face the consequences. Still, in spite of our poor decisions, God does not hold a grudge. The Bible says, He who "forgives all your iniquities, who heals all your diseases...has not dealt with us according to our sins" (Ps. 103:3, 10).

If we will humble ourselves and return to God's health laws He says, "I will restore health to you and heal you of your wounds" (Jer. 30:17). God longs to heal us, but we must take the first step and put God's word to the test. While trapped in Babylon, Daniel and his friends were urged to eat the delicacies of the land, but they refused because they knew what many of us have forgotten; that if we obey God's health laws He will bless us. So Daniel appealed, "Please test your servants for ten days, and let them give us vegetables to eat and water to drink" (Dan. 1:12). After ten days, the Bible says "their countenance appeared better and fatter in flesh than all the young men who ate the portion of the king's delicacies" (Dan. 1:15). And we may have the same experience if we will simply put God's health laws to the test.

So often we search out doctors while ignoring the greatest Physician ever known to man. We end up like the woman with a flow of blood who "had spent all her livelihood on physicians and could not be healed by any" (Luke 8:43). While physicians are needed, we

sometimes place a little too much faith in physicians. We act like king Asa when "in his disease he did not seek the Lord, but the physicians" (2 Chron. 16:12). While God has placed physicians on earth, they are not to take the place of prayer. Pray for health, pray that God gives the physician wisdom, and determine to obey God's health laws. We must learn to take everything to God in prayer then leave it in His hands, trusting He will do what is best for us. But we cannot expect God to work in spite of us. We must do our part by obeying the health laws laid out in God's word.

God's health laws and principles are simple. While God's original vegetarian diet is a great health benefit, we cannot expect it to be a 'cure all' if we neglect our other duties, like general nutrition, exercise, proper rest, drinking plenty of water, getting outdoors in the fresh air and sunlight, and spiritual exercises, including prayer and devotions. If we will follow God's guidelines we may receive the blessings of health and vitality. These blessings are available to anyone who will follow God's health plan.

Author of National Geographic Study, "Secrets of Longevity" Dan Buettner noticed that one Christian group seemed to live ten years longer than other groups. A Seventh-day Adventist group in California was noted to live ten years longer on average than others. What was the secret to their longevity? They maintain Bible health principles. Adventists enjoy a plant based diet, avoid smoking, caffeine, and alcohol, while setting aside a day of spiritual rest each week to spend with God. This seems to be a best-kept secret that the world is missing today, but these health principles are still available to all who wish to enjoy them. Aren't you tired of living a mediocre life? Don't you want vibrant health? If you will choose today to simply take God at His word and institute His health laws you will find a better life waiting on the road just before you. So what are you waiting on?

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