

Faith And Healing (Part One)

Taking Care of One's Health

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We are going to begin this sermon by turning once again to Proverbs 22. I began the last two sermons with this verse.

Proverbs 22:3 A prudent man foresees the evil, and hides himself:
but the simple pass on, and are punished.

I am going to give you an example of some people who were warned of danger ahead, considered their options, and I believe acted prudently despite having to make considerable sacrifices during the Nazi invasion of Ukraine in the Second World War.

The January 2005 issue of *Reader's Digest* contains an almost incredible story of the survival of 38 ill-equipped and untrained Ukrainian Jews. They ranged in age from a 75 year old grandmother, to a toddler, all who experienced an almost desperate adventure for just a few weeks short of a year. These were people who received an advanced warning for potential disaster because news was leaking into Ukraine of what was happening to Polish Jews in Warsaw during the Nazi invasion of that country.

The group apparently did not all start out together, but eventually wound up together as they fled eastward, deeper into Ukraine and away from Poland, sometimes barely escaping with their lives. The driving force was one fairly large family. Of the others, some of them undoubtedly knew each other previously, but eventually all of them came together in one village.

When the news broke that the Nazis had invaded Ukraine and were driving eastward toward Russia, they did not sit around waiting for the Nazis to cart them away to some prison camp. They first talked among themselves, and then also sought advice from local non-Jewish village friends. One of these friends suggested that they take refuge in caves three miles outside the village. These were not caves into the side of a mountain, but caves

underground that came into being because over the centuries water had dissolved gypsum deposit below the surface. It was eventually found that the caves stretched for 77 miles away from an opening about the size of a fireplace in a sinkhole surrounded by wheat fields.

In early May of 1943, at a critical time when they felt very threatened, they gathered themselves together, along with their valuables, a small amount of bedding, clothing, tools, candles, kerosene, and flour on some carts, left their village and non-Jewish friends behind, and entered into the caves.

They took up residence in four caves approximately eight feet wide by eighty feet long, and connected by a series of body-width passageways. An underground pond, fed by water seeping from above, supplied their water needs. The caves maintained a steady 50 degree temperature summer and winter, but the humidity was very high—so high that they never felt dry as long as they were there. I might add that the floor of the caves was often muddy, and of course, except for the candles that were used very sparingly, it was always dark.

Early on in their stay in the caves, the men emerged at night to cut down trees, carried them into the cave, and devised makeshift furniture. On very few occasions they were able to barter their valuables in the village for food and also by gleaning potato fields following the farmers' harvest. In addition there was very little food for them to barter for because, remember, there was a war going on and Ukraine was by this time occupied by the Germans. Those trips out had to be done with the utmost secrecy because they were Jews, and to be spotted by the wrong eyes meant immediate death or imprisonment in an Auschwitz-like facility.

On one occasion some villagers who were not so friendly, because they feared that the Jews might stir more Nazi attention, dumped a load of rocky debris at the cave in an attempt to seal the entrance. They succeeded in doing so, but the Jews, in three days of digging, managed to reopen it.

Now what did they do all day? They mostly slept because there was virtually nothing to do most of the time. There was precious little light, so they could not read, and besides, they had very little energy because they had so little to eat.

Their self-imposed imprisonment ended only a few weeks shy of one year in April of 1944, and only when friendly villagers informed them that the Nazis had withdrawn. When they emerged, they were jaundiced and afflicted with scurvy because their meager diet of grain and soup lacked many nutrients one would normally ingest. They were caked with mud. Their clothing was in tatters, and they had lost at least one-third of their weight. But they were alive! Every single one of them survived.

Dr. Kenneth Kamler, the author of *Surviving the Extremes*, believes the combination of stress and sensory deprivation the families endured is almost without parallel. He felt that their experience was analogous to a long-duration space flight. Believe it or not, a few of them are still alive to this day. Following the war, they were shipped to a displacement camp, ironically in Germany, from which many emigrated to the United States or Canada in 1947.

Now what do you believe that their survival rate would have been had they procrastinated, wringing their hands, until the Nazi army showed up to cart them off to a prison? Sometimes, brethren, difficult circumstances require even *desperate* measures. Is it worth it, as God strongly asserts in this verse in Proverbs, that making even very difficult choices and sacrifices now in the present in order to live in a better way, another day in the future, should be done? That is something each person has to decide on the basis of whether what one holds to be right and true is worth living for. As Jesus stated in Matthew 9:29, "According to your faith, be it unto you." That is, according to what we believe, *we will act*. I think that I know what God thinks is the right thing to do.

Proverbs 18:9 He also that is slothful in his work is brother to him that is a great waster.

I used this verse in a sermon about a month or so ago, and said at that time that I wanted to spend a bit more time on its practical application. What peaked my interest was the translation as it appears in the *Amplified Bible*, combined with a comment in the margin that accompanied that translation. I want you to look in your Bible and follow me as I read it from the *Amplified Bible*.

Proverbs 18:9 [The Amplified Bible] "He who is loose {and} slack in his work is brother to him who is a destroyer, {and} {he who does not use his endeavors to heal himself is brother to him who commits suicide}."

You can see that they add a line that probably does not appear in the Bible that you are using. They then make this comment in the margin:

This verse so reads in the Septuagint [the Greek translation of the Old Testament]. Its statement addresses the problem of whether one has the *moral right* [emphasis ours] to neglect his body by letting nature take its unhindered course in illness.

I researched this verse in many other Bibles, and although all of them translated this verse essentially the same way as the *King James Version*, none of them added the extra line as the *Amplified* does, nor do any of them include any marginal comment. Nobody apparently knows for sure whether the Septuagint translators copied the Hebrew faithfully, or whether an added explanation of the first phrase was supplied by them in order to illustrate what the first phrase means. I feel that any argument over this is moot, because the added phrase catches the essence of a very clear biblical principle.

In this verse Solomon is saying that a person who is slothful—meaning lazy, slack, or careless about the way he does things—is a brother to a waster or a destroyer. The word "brother" is used here to express a relationship, but not a genetic relationship as having the same parents, but as being of the same *kind*, doing things in the same way or manner.

The verse is looking at the slothful person as though he owns a property of some sort. It could be land, a horse, a mule, oxen, a tool, a truck, or a natural ability, or whatever. He is in possession of something, but he is not using it to produce anything near what it could if he really applied himself to making it produce. Instead, he is allowing it to deteriorate or degenerate.

Now "waster" or "destroyer" is from *Strong's* #7843. This word looks as though it is pronounced *shakhath*. It is interesting, because this word is used

as indicating or pointing to the *cause* of degeneracy, destruction, ruin, or corruption.

In my edition of *Strong's* explanation of the word, it adds, "Could anything good be corrupted?" So they give some illustrations: "A lion can destroy life." [Boy, that is really corrupting life! But you see, the lion would be the cause there.] "Inappropriately spoken words can destroy a relationship, a friendship." "An angel, as with Satan, can destroy most anything if given the chance." "Laziness causes destruction."

They then add that, "the prophet uses this word in the sense of something or someone corrupting another morally." We have a common cliché here in America (maybe it is becoming uncommon, judging what is going on in the public) which says, "Evil communications corrupt good manners."

Thus the conclusion for this verse is that the lazy, slack, or careless person destroys, over a period of time, what comes into his possession just as surely as if he destroyed, wasted, or corrupted it outright at the beginning of the possession of the property or gift. It is just a matter of time. The destruction shows up later, but destroy he does.

Now why is a lazy person lazy? We might be able to come up with a hundred specific reasons, but the broad general reason is that a lazy person simply believes that he is better off doing nothing. "According to his faith," you see, and his actions, or lack thereof, give evidence of what he believes. It reveals his heart.

Let us go back into the New Testament.

Romans 8:18-20 For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creation waits for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creation was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him who has subjected the same in hope.

More about this context will be given a little later. It is enough at this time to know that the world that we live in is subject to vanity. Vanity means "futility," or to make it even more pointed, "decay."

Hebrews 1:10-12 And You, Lord, in the beginning have laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the works of Your hands: They shall perish, but You remain: and they all shall wax old as does a garment; and as a vesture shall You fold them up, and they shall be changed: but You are the same, and Your years shall not fail.

The author here is making a contrast between God and His creation. These verses confirm, in a broad way, just what we read in Romans 8:18-20. Verses 10, 11, and 12 are a simple example of the action of the second law of thermodynamics. We may not like it, but God built decay and deterioration right into this creation, and we must deal with it. That is something many of us do not like to do. We must deal with it. It cannot be avoided.

The second law of thermodynamics *relentlessly* breaks things down, and therefore this creation must be maintained. It has a lot to do with laziness or slothfulness. It matters not whether it is the soil that produces food, the minerals derived from it, products made from those minerals derived from it, or even relationships for that matter, for everything breaks down. Everything breaks down into a less useful, less beautiful, less productive, and less organized state of decay unless everything is maintained. This is a constant factor in all of this material creation.

In the United States right now, the economy, the morality, and virtually everything else important to social life, is breaking down. Are we going to stand around and break down *with* the world? This is important to our future, and we cannot be lazy about the way we approach life.

We are going to look at the application of Proverbs 18:9 and what it means in some general, common, but important situations every Christian faces. The essence of the wisdom of this verse is that God expects us—indeed He requires us—to do what we can to succeed. If we do not, then we have

produced failure from the very get-go, and are in effect a destroyer. Do you want to be classed with the destroyers of the earth, with the destroyers of God's creation? Boy, I do not want to!

Let us go now to the beginning of the Book.

Genesis 1:27-28 So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.

Genesis 2:15 And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress and to keep it.

The principle that is the subject of this sermon is among the first things that God addressed as He instructed all of mankind in the persons of our parents, Adam and Eve. The word "replenish" has the general sense of "fill"—to fill what is now empty. The earth was empty before them, and it was going to be their responsibility to fill it up. In order to fill it up, *that takes work*.

I want you to see what God established for mankind from the very beginning. God created man to be a worker, creating from what God supplied him or gave over into his possession. Remember Proverbs 18:9. The proverb is looking at the slothful man as though he has something in his possession, and so here it is as if God says, "Here is something that I have given you as a property, as a possession. Let's see what you can do with it." He just did not leave us with a more or less directional command. He reinforced Genesis 1:27 with "dress and keep" in Genesis 2:15. "Dress and keep" shows the general direction He wants mankind to take with what God put into mankind's possession.

As used here, "dress" means "to work in service of." That is incredible to think of! God put them in the Garden, and He says, "Work in service of this garden." Expand this out a little bit into more practical application and it

implies the building up, the edifying of the Garden, cultivating or embellishing it. It is as if God is saying, "Make this place even more useful and beautiful."

The word "cultivate" is an especially interesting synonym for this Hebrew word, because cultivate means, "to develop, improve, enrich, enhance, elevate." Can you see what I am getting at? God created human beings in His image, and He did it so that we could work.

The word, "keep," means literally "to hedge about." It essentially means, "to protect, guard, or maintain from deterioration." Mankind is to work lawfully within these general parameters. There is nothing ambiguous about these instructions, and it is going to take work to fulfill them, whether building something new, or protecting something already built or given, from deterioration.

Now that we know that the second law of thermodynamics is working against us, it is almost as if mankind is always going upstream. There is a constant force that he has to labor against, and brethren, this is good. God did this for our benefit so that we can be prepared for His Kingdom, if we are going to be like Him. We will see a little bit more of that later.

We are going to consider a possession that everybody has: life. We might narrow down the field somewhat by using the term "health." In the light of the combination of the verses "dress and keep" and "replenish" and so forth, we see that everybody has the responsibility toward God (since God is the Giver of life—everybody's life) to dress and keep, cultivate or embellish, and protect this possession. That possession is the life that we have been given.

We are most assuredly not merely to take it for granted but to work toward building or improving its present state into something better, and we must not be lazy, slack, careless, and/or irresponsible about it lest we be classed with those who destroy what they have been given. I think it can easily be concluded that one who takes little or no care of his health is destroying his life, and thus is committing suicide at a slow pace.

There are realities we must deal with, and that is that there are always going to be limits as to what each of us can do because of ignorance, genetics,

financial resources, age, or whatever. Everybody is not the same. Everybody is not gifted the same. Everybody is not called at the same time of life, but I believe that God shows us very clearly throughout the Bible, especially in the New Testament, that He judges all fairly, and in love, taking all these factors into consideration.

But do we see the general principle of God's requirement of us? All of mankind is required—indeed commanded—to be responsible builders, creators, and maintainers of life and health, and not destroyers. Though this principle is something required of all mankind, Christians bear a special responsibility. This is one that is over and above the general principle of God's requirement of us.

Let us turn to I Corinthians 6 and look at a responsibility that has come upon us simply because we are sons of God. Paul says:

I Corinthians 6:19-20 What? Know you not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which you have of God, and you are not your own? For you are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

This context actually begins in verse 9.

I Corinthians 6:9-10 Know you not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.

This sets the stage for what Paul talks about in the rest of this context. The overall subject is *moral*, and it is concerned with who is going to be in the Kingdom, and who is not going to be in the Kingdom. As this context ends, it becomes clear that the issue of this sermon is a *moral* responsibility. It is very clear that those who destroy, through sin, will not be there in the Kingdom of God, whether it be through carelessness, deliberate action, unconcern, or sheer laziness. Paul reminds them, and therefore us, in verse 13, that our bodies are not made by God for immorality. Let us read that.

I Corinthians 6:13 Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats: but God shall destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for fornication [or immorality], but for the Lord: and the Lord for the body.

This begins to get even more interesting. Paul says:

I Corinthians 6:15 Know you not that your bodies are the members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them the members of a harlot? God forbid.

When Paul says, "Do you not know?" he is implying that they should know this. In this case they should know that each individual Christian is a member of Christ's own spiritual body, and that we should not involve ourselves in immorality. Then in verse 16 he asks the same question.

I Corinthians 6:16 What? Know you not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? For two, says he, shall be one flesh.

Paul gives the strong impression again that he expected them to understand that sexual immorality has this very dire consequence. What he is alluding to—the dire consequence—are the psychological consequences that will work to destroy family life over and above what it does to one's relationship with God. Again, there is an element, a measure of surprise that they had not thought of this. In verse 19 he begins yet again with the same question, "What? Know you not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit?" and then he continues on in verse 20 that we are to glorify God in our body, as well as our spirit.

All of us must ask this question: "Does my body, as well as my actions, glorify God? If it does not, why not? And if it does not, what am I presently doing about changing that, or am I going to resolve to change that?" Here it is, January 1, 2005—a time for making resolutions (for the world anyway). It is just a coincidence that I am giving this sermon on this day.

Now why is this important? Well, because in this context Paul has emphasized, or reemphasized, an Old Testament teaching that what we do in our body, as well as *to* the body, involves morality and/or immorality. Remember that Jesus was called a drunkard and a glutton by the Jews of His day. Both of those activities are, in Hebrew, figurative expressions of immoral behavior. In fact, the Hebrew word for gluttony, which is *Strong's* #2151, the law says figuratively "to be loose morally; prodigal." Did you get that? In the Hebrew, to be a glutton is to be loose morally. On two occasions in the Old Testament this same word that is translated glutton, gluttonous, or gluttony is also translated "vile."

What we are looking at here is one of the more specific and personal "dress and keep" requirements each of us has, and God holds us responsible to Himself for this. He has given us this possession of life, and what are we doing about it?

Brethren, I understand that fighting the forces of decay and deterioration is a constant battle. God knows it far better than I, and as I stated before, He judges us all fairly, and in love. What I am trying to get across to us is that we cannot just toss this aside as not mattering at all, because God learns so very much about us through our dealing with decay. We cannot just pass this off because it is a moral issue. In other words, it involves sin. How do we take care of one of the most precious possessions God can give a human being: life and the opportunity to be like Him? Everything about the opportunity to be like Him hinges on whether we have life first as the gift, as a possession.

Let us go back to the beginning again. Turn to Genesis 3. If you want to think about how important this is, remember again what Paul said in Romans 8:20. The creation had this put on it, and so the creation is personified just for a moment or two there, and it was not willingly. In other words, it is like the creation is saying back to God, "No! Don't do this!" But God is sovereign, and He did it anyway. And why? He tells us right in the same verse: "By reason of *hope!*" God is going to get something out of this that is far better than if the creation had not been made subject to futility and decay.

He gave us something to struggle against all the time, and that produces good things for His Kingdom if we will learn the lesson and give ourselves over to it.

Genesis 3:17-19 And unto Adam he said, Because you have hearkened unto the voice of your wife, and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, saying, You shall not eat of it: cursed is the ground for your sake; in sorrow shall you eat of it all the days of your life: Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to you; and you shall eat the herb of the field: In the sweat of your face shall you eat bread, till you return unto the ground: for out of it were you taken: for dust you are, and unto dust shall you return.

Adam and Eve sinned, and in response God cursed, and this appears to be the time when God made the earth subject to futility, and decay began. In this Adam and Eve did no worse than anybody else who has ever lived, but unlike everybody else's sins, we are the innocent victims of Adam and Eve's sin, and God requires that we have to deal with its results.

In like manner, we are also the innocent victims of our immediate ancestors' sins, and whatever else they passed onto us genetically, psychologically, financially, or the condition this world is in. We also have to deal with it. We can become the innocent victims of other peoples' sins besides our own ancestors'. But it is right here that another factor enters the scene.

At the time of God's calling and conversion, we are the victims of our *own* sins. In this case, though, we are not its innocent victims. That is a major difference here. In the other cases, other people sinned, we got caught in it, and we have to deal with it, but in the case of our own sins, *we are responsible*.

We are going to go back to the New Testament again and look for an explanation regarding something.

Romans 2:10-16 But glory, honour, and peace to every man that works good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile: For there is no respect of persons with God. For as many as have sinned without law [or apart from the law] shall also perish without [or apart from]

law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law: (For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified. For when the Gentiles, which have not the law do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: Which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;) in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.

I am not going to go through every verse there, but just give you a *Reader's Digest* version of what Paul said. He is saying that because God is impartial—there is no respect of persons with God—He can judge both the unconverted Jews who possessed the law, and the unconverted Gentiles who do not know the law, on the basis of their *works*. Verse 11: "For there is no respect of persons with God." And then in verse 13 he mentions works.

Why are works important?

Revelation 20:12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God: and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the Book of Life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

This makes it very clear that everybody—Jew or Gentile, converted or unconverted—is going to be judged according to their works

Revelation 20:13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them; and they were judged every man according to their works.

Everybody is judged according to their works and shall receive either reward or cursing. But the question that remains to be answered is, why is everybody judged according to their works? Whether Jew or Gentile, whether converted or unconverted, everybody is judged according to their works.

Let us go back to Matthew 15.

Matthew 15:19-20 For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: These are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defile not a man.

Sin resides in the heart, but what is done on the outside is what is in the heart already. Here comes the answer to this question as to why everybody is going to be judged according to their works: Because works demonstrate the heart's true condition. In other words, a person's works cannot be refuted. "He did it!"

There is no doubt that the Jews will receive the sterner judgment because of possessing the law; therefore more is required of them. But even the unconverted—the Gentiles who do not formally possess the law—are not excused, because God has built within each person a conscience on a framework of right and wrong. Even though they do not have the law formally, that conscience, which God put in them, which they did not follow, condemns them because their works of sin condemn them. So God does not require as much from them, but they nonetheless sin.

Do you understand what I am saying? God can hold everybody guilty; therefore none of us is a completely innocent victim of his own sins and what they have done to him, and so none of us can go before Him and plead that we were completely innocent. This is why we all need to be justified by and through the blood of Jesus Christ.

It is right here that the rubber hits the road. What do we do? How do we react when knowledge of our responsibility toward God comes to us now that we are converted? Our health is a major area of concern because it is an up-front, close-and-personal "dress and keep" responsibility. *It is right there*, and we cannot dodge it. God requires that we "dress and keep" our own body.

Did you ever stop to think that the Garden of Eden, in a very broad sense, represented the Kingdom of God? It does. According to Colossians 1:13, we, upon conversion, have been transferred into the Kingdom of God, and that God, in effect, has said the same thing that He did with Adam and Eve: "Now that I have called you, and now that you have access to Me, the walls

into the Garden of Eden have been broken down to allow you to pass through. You are in the Garden. You are in My presence. Now dress and keep it."

The *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery* states on page 315: "Throughout the Bible the garden, as a well-watered space set apart for the intense cultivation of plants, is an image of both nature and sacred space, and next to heaven it is the preeminent image of human longing."

Brethren, how many people have been invited into God's presence? Figuratively, metaphorically, we are right in the Garden with Him! We, brethren, are to be cultivated, dressed, and kept.

On page 316 it states: "If the Garden of Eden is an image of divine provision, it is paradoxically also a place of human labor. Gardens, after all, require cultivation. Genesis 2 tells us that God took the newly created Adam and put him in the garden to till [to cultivate] and to keep it. In addition to its status as an image of nature and relaxation, therefore the garden is also an image of human industry, work, and striving. The garden is a place prepared for humankind, but also a place requiring on-going human upkeep." That is beautiful!

A major question for us is this: Now that we have been admitted into the Garden, into God's presence, are we going to choose to submit to the principles and laws of His way of life and live by them? Are we going to strive to work to come out of Babylon, or continue in the way of sin and death, and be kicked out? Are we going to choose to eat of the Tree of Life, or continue eating the fruit of the Tree of Death as we always did before conversion?

Let us go back to Deuteronomy 30 to those very familiar scriptures and look at them now in this light.

Deuteronomy 30:15 See, I have set before you this day life and good, and death and evil.

Before we were invited into His presence, and before we were allowed to go into the Garden where He walks about, as it were, we had no choice. Now we know what to choose. Are we taking advantage of it?

Deuteronomy 30:16-19 In that I command you this day to love the Lord your God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments and His statutes and His judgments, that you may live and multiply: and the Lord your God shall bless you in the land whither you go to possess it. But if your heart turn away so that you will not hear, but shall be drawn away and worship other gods, and serve them; I denounce unto you this day that you shall surely perish, [There comes destruction.], and that you shall not prolong your days upon the land whither you pass over Jordan to go to possess it. I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both you and your seed may live.

The main illustration for this particular sermon is one's health. I chose this because it is so personal and specific and easily seen because we are living it every day. Upon conversion, the taking care of and working to improve our general health is one of the broadest and most basic of all God-given responsibilities in this world of constant decay.

How are we going to know what is right, because there is a great deal of confusion and controversy about many things pertaining to health? In addition to that, the problem is made even more difficult because though we are all built according to similar design, there are subtle differences from one person to another. This quest is not easy, and it is time-consuming; but nonetheless we must be diligent and patient. For starters, there are quite a number of principles in the Bible that, if followed, will be of great help.

The effect of this reality that we are required of God to build up ourselves is that each person has to study to find out what works best for him. A simple example is that I seem to be able to eat almost anything with little or no reaction. Evelyn, on the other hand, is very sensitive to many foods to which she reacts. She may eat them and then break out in hives, or blotches, or get an upset stomach. The exact same food does not affect me at all.

If a person has diabetes or low blood sugar, it is something which that person has to deal with. Each person has to analyze what course of action irritates his condition, and then do not do it again. This is not easy because we are addicted to our habits, and our preferences, but our habits and our preferences might be destroying us.

Daniel 12:4 But you, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.

This increase of knowledge includes knowledge regarding how our bodies work. Men have learned a great deal, especially in the last fifty years. Based on our own personal experience in daily life, plus every day in newspapers, in magazines, on television, on radio, we are confronted with things regarding health issues. But there is a virtue, a quality that we must use.

II Corinthians 5:7 For we walk by faith, not by sight.

This faith issue is important to this principle and this responsibility that I am talking about. I realize it is very difficult to sort out the information available on this subject of health, and I warn you that in one sense it will be a seemingly endless search because men keep learning more and more, and publishing it. Very often yesterday's truth becomes tomorrow's untruth. This is because further investigation reveals yet more, nullifying the old, and ushering in the new.

Another simple example is that there was a period of time about 20 or 30 years ago they were telling you not to eat eggs. They said eggs were deadly, that they would clog up your arteries, and that you would die if you ate eggs. Well, at least some people had the sense to keep on experimenting, and they found out that eggs are not devastating to your health at all unless eating them is overdone. Eggs possess within them the very thing needed to hold everything in balance so that they do not clog up your blood vessels. Now they are telling you to eat eggs, that they are good for you. That is what I mean.

What I am talking about is something that requires a great deal of effort and study, analyzing and experimenting and so forth, and knowing that not everything you are going to find is going to be true, but not everything is going to be untrue either. God requires that we search after these things and begin to put into practice what will help us maintain good health. You can always make adjustments as you go along, but you have to have the faith—not the faith in what men say, but the faith that you are following what God requires of you. So you keep driving yourself toward perfection in that area, knowing for sure you are never going to reach it.

This process requires a great deal of honest analysis, self-examination, determination, and discipline. But be patient. Do not allow yourself to get discouraged because you see little or no improvement at first. In making changes toward doing things right we might have to reverse many years of doing things wrong, and it takes a while for the adjustment to be made by the body.

Evelyn and I experienced this with our children when we made major changes in our diet back in 1960. We spent a year getting sick on far better food than we ever ate before. Our bodies could not take that good stuff, but we hung with it, and things began to change and our health improved. So change or improvement may take a while, and what is most important to us at this time is that we live by faith. Involve God in this project. Show Him that you are determined to "dress and keep," and let your works exhibit your faith in the principles established in God's Word. There is an awful lot in the Bible regarding health.

In the case of this sermon, our faith is that this principle of caring for our bodies and being diligent about it is indeed what God requires of us.

Let us go back to Romans 8 once again.

Romans 8:18-20 For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creation waits for the manifestation of the sons of God. [Why? Because the creation is going to be released from being subject to decay and futility.]

For the creation was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him who has subjected the same in hope.

That has something to do with our growth and with our overcoming, for our being prepared for the Kingdom of God. That is God's hope, that this working against decay will actually help us to grow far more than otherwise.

Romans 8:21-25 Because the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and travails in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man sees, why does he yet hope for? [This is why we need faith. We can have hope, but we need the faith to keep us going.] But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.

The subject of this sermon is no insignificant responsibility, so whether we see any immediate progress is, in the long run, less important than that we are submitting to the principles laid down in His Word. We must understand that God is most interested in whether we are learning and practicing the processes that produce success. That, brethren, is the issue. Laziness produces destruction. Working in the right direction produces success, and the right direction is patterned in God's Word.

The process that God is interested in is that of coming out of sin, of becoming holy in all aspects of life, changing from doing things wrong to doing things right. It is this process which prepares us for the Kingdom of God.

Taking care of our bodies, brethren, is something that is with us every day, all the time. There is always something to do towards God's Kingdom with our own life. That is why it is so important. It is right there all the time. If we are following, indeed living the principles of the truth that God reveals to us,

whether it be in spiritual things or things material, it is something that we must give evidence of. God must be convinced by our works that we are never going to turn aside from the way of doing things right.

Brethren, I should not have to convince you that mankind has been doing things wrong for so long that virtually everything is in such a mess it cannot be straightened out as it is. It must be scrapped, and the whole process begun all over again. But the next time (and this is where Romans 8 comes in), this earth is going to be dressed and kept by the sons of God who will now have the glorious liberty of the children of God who have already proved themselves by their works while they were still in the flesh, that they will do things right. They will be prepared to do what has to be done, and there will be a great deal to do.

The whole world will be in shambles, and it is going to have to be reformed and built into places of peace and beauty. Right now there is nothing closer to straighten out than ourselves. We need to get to work "dressing and keeping" with diligence.