

“God So Loved The World” Bible Study

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. John 3:16 (NIV)

Study #19: Health Reform

The original sin of Adam affected mankind in three ways — spiritually, morally, and physically. Christ came as Saviour of the world to save humanity from these threefold effects of sin. Therefore, when we by faith receive Christ as our Saviour, we are to surrender to His transforming grace in all these three areas.

While we will not experience total salvation from the effects of sin until the second coming of Christ, in this study we will consider what the Bible has to say about our bodies and how we should take care of them while we wait for His return. This, too, is part of Christian living, the fruits of the gospel.

The reason why Christians must take care of their bodies is twofold. In the first place, when we believers experience the new birth and are indwelt by the Holy Spirit, we become the temple of God (see 1 Corinthians 3:16). Therefore, we must treat our bodies as the house of God.

Secondly, as Christians we are ambassadors of Christ, called to witness Him to the world. In order that we may fully represent Christ and be used by His Spirit to glorify our Saviour, we must take good care of our bodies. The Holy Spirit can use us only in direct proportion to how healthy our bodies are.

Based on these twofold reasons, the Bible gives counsel on healthful living. When Israel was a theocracy (totally under God’s rulership), God gave them all kinds of guidelines, not as a requirement for salvation but for their own good as His witnesses. Among these guidelines were many health principles or laws.

Since we are made of the same material as the Jews, these health principles and laws are just as valid today as they were in ancient times. In this study we will consider some of the basic health principles and laws laid down by God in His Word as the fruits of salvation in Christ.

1. According to Paul, how much of the believer does God want to sanctify?

1 Thessalonians 5:23 _____

Note: Since sin has affected the total person, God also plans to rescue the total person from the sin problem — spirit, soul, and body. This is part and parcel of His saving plan through the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

2. How does this total redemption affect our Christian living in terms of eating and drinking?

1 Corinthians 10:31 _____

Note: Before our conversion we ate and drank as we pleased, often abusing our bodies. But now that we belong to Christ and have become the temple of the Holy Spirit, God wants us to eat and drink for His glory. The principle of “not I, but Christ” also applies to what we eat and drink.

3. As Christians, who do we belong to and live for?

Romans 14:8 _____

Note: Because Jesus redeemed us from the curse of the law, having been made a curse for us on the cross (see Galatians 3:13), we belong to Him — spirit, soul, and body. Out of a heartfelt appreciation for His redeeming grace, all our actions are motivated by this love relationship.

4. In what things does God want us to prosper, besides our souls?

3 John 2 _____

Note: God is not only concerned about our spiritual well-being but also our health. A healthy body means a healthy mind. This, in turn, means we are better able to discern spiritual things. Since there is a close relation between spirit, soul, and body, what affects one affects the other.

5. What promise did God give the Jews of the Exodus if they would follow all His health instructions?

Exodus 15:26 _____

Note: All the health instructions God gave the Jews of the Exodus was for their own good and not a requirement for salvation. As His children, God wants us to experience and witness His saving grace in every way. The rules and regulations that God imposed upon the Jews was for this purpose. That is how we Christians must consider them.

6. What blessings did God say Israel would experience if they obeyed all that He had instructed them?

Deuteronomy 7:14 _____

Note: Even though the ancient Jews made the mistake of turning all the health rules and regulations God gave them into legalistic requirements for salvation, they still experienced physical blessings from obeying them.

7. As Christians, what kind of sacrifice does God want from us?

Romans 12:1 _____

8. What must we do daily to experience this transformed life that is pleasing to God?

Romans 12:2 _____

Note: The battlefield in the Christian walk is the mind. On the one hand, the converted mind, that which Paul refers to as the new man (see Ephesians 4:22-24), wants to do the will of God. Yet, on

the other hand, the mind of the flesh, our sinful nature, wants to do the very opposite. The next question explains how we are to gain the victory over the flesh.

9. What is the only way to gain victory over the desires of the flesh, our sinful natures, which contradict the desires of the converted mind?

Galatians 5:16 _____

Note: Only as we surrender our wills to the control of the Spirit can we gain the victory over the flesh. This is what it means to “walk in the Spirit.” To do this we must keep our minds focused on spiritual things (see Romans 8:4-6).

10. How should our relationship with fellow believers affect our eating habits?

Romans 14:21 _____

Note: To be a true Christian means we are dead to self and live unto the Lord. This affects every phase of our Christian living so that the two guiding principles that motivate all our actions are: (i) I do nothing that affects my right relationship with God; and (ii) I do nothing that weakens the faith of a fellow believer (see 1 Corinthians 10:31-33).

11. How should we consider ourselves as Christians?

1 Corinthians 3:16 _____

12. As temples of God, what does He not want us to do and why?

1 Corinthians 3:17 _____

Note: As temples of God, we are to keep our bodies holy. The reason for this will be answered in the next question.

13. As His temple, what does God want to do in and through us?

2 Corinthians 6:16 _____

Note: The whole purpose of the Christian life is to glorify the Saviour: “for me to live is Christ” (Philippians 1:21). The only way this can be done is to let the life of Christ shine through us. This is what sanctification is all about. That which motivates such a life is the love of God manifested in Christ crucified and not the fear of punishment or the desire for reward.

14. How does God fulfill the above through the New Covenant promise?

Hebrews 8:10 _____

Note: The New Covenant does not do away with the laws of God but puts them into our hearts. Under the Old Covenant, the laws were a series of rules — do’s and don’ts. Under the New Covenant, the same laws become the inner desires of the converted mind. This is how God writes His laws in our hearts and minds. This is the transforming grace of the gospel!

15. When it comes to healthful living, what was the original diet God gave mankind?

Genesis 1:29 _____

Note: Just as the car manufacturer entrusts us to use the best oil and gas for our cars, so God, the Creator, instructed our first parents regarding what are the best foods to eat — nuts, fruits, and grains.

16. What did God add to man’s diet after the flood?

Genesis 9:3 _____

17. While God did add meat to man’s diet, after the flood, what two things did He prohibit?

Genesis 9:4 (i) _____

Leviticus 7:23 (ii) _____

Note: God knew what He was doing when He forbade the Jews to eat the blood and fat of animals. Today, medical science has discovered and proved that both of these items are harmful to our health.

18. What further instruction did God give the Jews concerning meat eating?

Read the whole chapter of Leviticus 11.

Note: Even though God gave man permission to eat meat after the flood, He distinguished the clean (healthy) meats from the (unhealthy) meats in chapter 11 of Leviticus and elsewhere. These health regulations are still valid today, as long as we do not make them a requirement for salvation.

19. What warning does the wise man give regarding appetite?

Proverbs 23:1-3 _____

Note: Appetite is one of the great weapons of Satan. It was through food that Adam fell. Likewise, it was through tempting Christ to turn stones into bread that Satan tried to cause the downfall of Christ. In the same way, Satan uses our appetite to cause us Christians to stumble. Smoking, drugs, alcohol, and overindulgence in eating are some of his methods for preventing God’s purpose from being fulfilled in us or for destroying the Christian faith.

20. Of what must we constantly remind ourselves regarding our bodies?

1 Corinthians 6:19 _____

Note: When we are tempted to indulge in wrong kinds of foods and drink, we need to remind ourselves that we are the temple of God and we are not our own. Therefore, as verse 20 reminds us, we must “glorify God in our body, and in our spirit, which are God’s.” This is true health reform.