



## QUEST LESSON F-9

### HEALTH PRINCIPLES

The Problem: What does physical health have to do with religion? There are millions of professed Christians who smoke, drink alcohol, and eat whatever is -tasty without considering that there is any relationship between physical health and the Christian life. Some will quote texts from the Bible that, on the surface, seem to suggest that a believer can eat and drink whatever he likes without it damaging his spiritual life. But when these passages are studied in relation to their context and to the practices of the age in which they were written, it becomes clear that they are not intended to teach that a Christian can eat and drink anything with no ill effects to his relationship with Christ. Any passage must be considered in the light of the overall teaching of the Bible. The real issue is, what did Jesus and the apostles teach about health? What did they have to say on the importance or otherwise of what a Christian eats and drinks. And what messages had Christ given previously to Old Testament prophets on the question of eating and drinking.

When a man buys a new car he makes careful inquiry concerning the best kind of oil to put in it, and of how often he should change it. He needs to know what kind of gas it runs best on; premium, regular, or unleaded. He will probably read the manual that comes with it, to discover how many miles he can drive before giving the car a tune-up. If his family drives it too far without changing the oil, he is likely to become a little upset. Cars cost a lot of money, and we all like to get the best possible mileage for our money.

Now God created mankind in His own image (Genesis 1:27). The human body is a remarkably complex organism that requires careful servicing if it is to run correctly. Why would God say to us, "Now you have a beautiful body. Do with it whatever you wish. Eat as often and as much as you like, and whatever tastes good to you, even if it is not the best for your health. Drink whatever you want, even if it spoils the efficiency of your body. I have given you a body to have fun with, and you can do anything you want with it, and I will be your God just the same. When you have destroyed your body, I will give you another one, and take you to heaven?" Can you imagine a loving, caring God talking like that?

What would you think of man who treated his car like that? You would say, "What an extravagant person! He must have money to burn!" God is rich in good things for His children. But He is not careless and extravagant! Our bodies are a sacred trust. It is not possible to have great mental and spiritual efficiency if your body is not functioning in a healthy way. That does not mean that God will not save the sick. It simply means that our Christian duty is to cooperate with the laws of nature that the Lord of nature has laid down for us. Then we can have healthy minds in healthy bodies, we can understand the Word of God as we study, and be receptive to the conviction and leading of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus never separated physical and spiritual health. In His teaching and ministry they always went together. We will look now at His Word and see what He wants us to do for our bodies.

#### Objectives

First, we shall note that our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit.

Second, we study the effects of tobacco on the body.

Third, we note the danger of alcohol and other drugs.

Fourth, we consider the importance of proper diet.

Fifth, we outline a program for physical and spiritual health.

## I. Our Bodies Are Temples Of The Holy Spirit

God has not left us in doubt about how He wants us to treat our bodies. The Bible instruction is very specific and very direct.

### The Word

1. Does God regard our health as an important aspect of our religious life? What does He say should direct the way we eat and drink? 1 Corinthians 10:31; 3 John
2. What did Jesus do for people whom He wanted to save from sin? Matthew 4:24; Mark 5:25-34.
3. Why is God so concerned about our physical health? 1 Corinthians 3:16-17; 6:19-20.
4. What does the Lord promise to do for the health of those who obey His commandments? Exodus 15:26; Deuteronomy 7:15.
5. What will happen to those who disobey God's commandments? Deuteronomy 28:58-61.

Explanation: Eating and drinking, the Bible teaches, is to be done "to the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31). God wants His people to be physically healthy (3 John 2). Now anyone with an elementary knowledge of health matters knows that there are some foods and drinks, and some drugs that are very harmful to health. And most people today are aware that, if health is to be maintained, we must watch the amount we eat, we must get sufficient physical exercise, and drink a certain daily quantity of water. How can we glorify God by our eating and drinking, and whatever else we do, unless we eat and drink and act in ways that are beneficial to our bodily health? The person who is careless of health is destroying one of God's most bountiful gifts, and such a lifestyle can never be to the glory of God.

Jesus revealed during His ministry on earth that He is not just interested in the health of the body, important though that is. His concern is for the transformation of the total personality; the spiritual self, the intellectual capacity, the emotional life, and the physical being. Christ wants us to be totally whole. He wants to save us in the sense of healing the total personality. That is why, when He healed people's bodies, that was part of the process by which He saved them from sin. In fact, in the Gospels the Greek verb to save (sozo) is used a number of times in the sense of "to heal." (See, for example, Matthew 9:21; Mark 5:28, 34). And this is so despite the fact that there are two other Greek verbs meaning "to heal" (iaomai and therapeuo) that are sometimes used in the same contexts. Jesus\* healing work was a soul-saving work. The healing of the body was part of His ministry of saving souls for His Kingdom.

Why is God so concerned about our physical health? The answer is the most important principle in the Scriptures relating to matters of health! Each human body is to be a temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 3:16-17; 6:19-20). Now God the Holy Spirit cannot live in a polluted temple. Quite the contrary! We are told, "If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are" (1 Corinthians 3:17). Nothing could be plainer than that! If we defile our body temples, God will destroy us. He made us to be holy people, indwelt by His Holy Spirit. If we try to use our bodies for other purposes, allowing evil demons to control us, God has no choice but to destroy us. A farmer who knows that one of his horses is incurably sick will take the life of the horse. That puts the poor animal out of its misery and prevents its disease from spreading to other animals. Just so, God will eventually put the incurably spiritually sick people to sleep for eternity; not because He does not love them, but because they refused to be saved from sin. People who abuse their bodies are destroying God's holy creation. It is not possible for them to be anything but spiritually sick, because they refuse to obey God's will. They will be among the lost at the end of time.

That is exactly the message of the Old Testament given through Moses. If the people of Israel had treated their bodies as the temples of the Holy Spirit, they would have been preserved from disease. But, in so far as they neglected to follow the health laws given by God, and disobeyed His commandments, they became subject to sickness and disease.

This does not mean that we have any right to condemn sick people as greater sinners than we are. In an imperfect world, people sometimes become ill even when they have been doing all they can to follow God's health laws. Our concern is to do all we can to help the sick to get well, and to be sure that we ourselves are eating, drinking, and living to the glory of God.

Relevance: Do you regard your body as the temple of the Holy Spirit? If so, there are many practices common to mankind today that you will avoid, and there are many others, which are good for your health, that you will incorporate into your lifestyle.

## II. Tobacco Smoking Destroys Health

It has been scientifically proved and publicly announced many times that tobacco is an insidious poison that destroys the health and takes the lives of multitudes annually [See Robert Haddock, *Warning, The Surgeon General Has Determined That Cigarette Smoking Is Dangerous to Your Health* (Review and Herald, T9737)].

1. In the United States alone cigarette smoking contributes to the deaths of 300,000 people annually; six times as many as died in Vietnam in over ten years. It has been estimated that smokers die at a 68% faster rate than nonsmokers.
2. More people die of lung cancer than any other form of cancer; and the most common cause of lung cancer is smoking. Nicotine and other substances in tobacco enter the lungs and spread throughout the body causing different kinds of cancer. Stomach cancer is twice as prevalent among smokers as non-smokers. Also cancer of the large intestine is more common among smokers than non-smokers. Cancer of the throat, which may leave its victim without vocal cords, is common among smokers. 80% of throat cancers are caused by smoking.
3. If you are a smoker, your chances of dying from lung cancer are 700% greater than those who have never smoked regularly. Cigarette smoke contains tar and nicotine which settle in the air sacs in the lungs. The smoker's air passages become coated with sticky tar, containing cancer-causing substances. From the lungs, cancer cells enter the blood and lymphatic vessels and spread throughout the body. Even today lung cancer proves 95% fatal.
4. Smoking causes pulmonary emphysema. This disease afflicts approximately one million Americans, and 55,000 die of it each year. People who have emphysema suffer from shortness of breath, lack of energy, and lowered efficiency.
5. The chances of a smoker dying of heart disease are 103% greater than those who have never smoked regularly. Hardening of the arteries (arteriosclerosis) causes more deaths in the United States than any other disease. It is responsible for 54% of deaths. It is caused by the build up of cholesterol along the inner walls of arteries. This results from a high-fat diet, but it is accelerated by smoking. Nicotine, and possibly other substances in tobacco, increase the build up of fatty deposits along the inner walls of the arteries. Also Nicotine causes the arteries to shrink. Both these problems (cholesterol build-up, and shrinking arteries) prevent the blood from flowing as it normally should. Hence, the heart, brain, extremities, and other organs do not get sufficient blood. The result can be a heart attack or a stroke, The smoker is a prime subject for a stroke or senility, because insufficient blood gets to the brain. A small blood clot may clog a blood vessel that is already restricted internally.

Very significantly, back in the nineteenth century, Ellen G. White was given special counsel by the Lord regarding cigarette smoking. It has taken about a century for science to prove that smoking is a killer. In 1875 she wrote: "Tobacco is a slow, insidious poison, and its effects are more difficult to cleanse from the system than those of liquor." *Temperance*, p. 55.

How does a smoker quit? One of the best methods is the Five Day Plan devised by Dr. J. Wayne McFarland. See the outline of the plan in Robert Haddock's book *Warning*.

Relevance: Since tobacco smoking takes such a toll upon the health of the smoker, how can anyone do it to the glory of God? The body temple is seriously defiled by this practice. This is why we plead with all smokers to quit now for the sake of their health, and for the sake of their relationship with the Lord.

## III. The Danger Of Alcohol And Other Drugs

Most people have some knowledge of what alcohol and drugs do to the human body and mind. Even drinkers who ignore the danger signals are aware that alcohol is destructive of their physical, mental, and spiritual efficiency. The crucial issue for a Christian is to know God's will in respect to alcohol and drugs, and to be willing, by His indwelling power, to turn away from these things. Only by His power can such problems be entirely eliminated from the life.

#### The Word

6. What does the Bible have to say about the danger of alcoholic drinks? Proverbs 20:1; 23:20, 29-35.
7. What warning is given to those who partake of poisons and administer them to others? Revelation 21:8; 22:15. (See explanation paragraph 2.)

Explanation: In Scripture, the Hebrew and Greek words for wine are used both for alcoholic and non-alcoholic wine. This is why in some passages wine is condemned, and in others it is extolled. Alcoholic drink is listed in Scripture among the greatest dangers to mankind. The Bible says a little about the use of wine as medicine (1 Timothy 5:23), but strongly condemns drinking alcohol for pleasure.

Among the strongest condemnations of alcohol and other drugs are the passages in the book of Revelation that list the kinds of people who will be excluded by God from His Kingdom. The "sorcerers" (Revelation 21:8; 22:15; Greek pharmakoi) are "mixers of poisons," or "poisoners." The reference is to those who poison themselves and others by the use of harmful drugs. Such people in ancient times were often involved in occult practices. And today we see heavy drug use associated with worship of the occult. The devil uses drugs and others means to destroy those who respect him! But the Lord's warnings are very earnest. People who play with drugs will be among those cast into the lake of fire at the end of the millennium. They will be classed among murderers, adulterers, and idolaters.

What are some of the facts about alcohol:

1. Alcohol causes loss of mental and physical control. This is why in California it is illegal to drive a vehicle with a blood alcohol concentration greater than 10% This means that the authorities recognize the danger to normal mental and physical functioning of more than 1/10 of a percent of alcohol in the bloodstream. In fact the California Driver Handbook goes on to point out that "a BAC [blood alcohol content] below .10% does not mean that it is safe or legal to drive. Almost all drivers are significantly impaired at lower levels. A person can be convicted of drunk driving in California at BAC's as low as .05%." California Driver Handbook, 1984, p. 39.
2. Alcohol is one of the main causes of tragedy on the highways in most countries on earth today. "Drinking drivers are involved in about 50% of California's fatal traffic crashes. Each year, almost 3,000 Californians are killed and 75,000 injured in alcohol related traffic crashes." Ibid. Similar statistics could be cited for other states and other countries.

Can any Christian justify partaking of a drink that so seriously impairs the "temple of God" (1 Corinthians 3:17)?

3. Cecil Coffey has pointed out in his book, Up the Down Road that "more than 10 percent of all admissions to public mental institutions are the result of chronic alcoholism. But this is a small figure compared to the number of those being treated privately." (p. 39).
4. Coffey also says, "It is impossible to tell in advance whether or not a person will become an alcoholic. Every person who drinks is gambling. For years he may take only an infrequent cocktail on social occasions without having any physical craving for more than that amount. But he becomes accustomed to the effects of alcohol, and when a crisis comes in his life, he may turn to drinking as a regular thing to help him over the hump." Coffey p. 39. We all know that Coffey is correct!
5. The first part of the body to be effected by alcohol is the brain. Even a small amount of alcohol damages the highest centers of the brain; those concerned with behavior, speech, and memory.

6. When more concentrated doses of alcohol are taken, the nervous system becomes increasingly irritated. "The body reacts to this by saturating the brain with large quantities of fluid in an attempt to wash out the poison. This causes swelling and congestion in the tissues covering the brain and results in distortion of the drinker's thoughts and actions. Confusion, disorientation, incoordination, stupor, anesthesia, coma, or even death may follow." Coffey, p. 40.
7. The disease, cirrhosis of the liver, occurs about 8 times as frequently among alcoholics as among nonalcoholics.
8. Alcohol is not a food. It supplies calories in much the way that sugar does. But the human body cannot store alcohol. A large intake of alcohol destroys the appetite for balanced food, and the drinker may very well be undernourished. Coffey correctly points out: "The presence of calories and the lack of food value in alcohol, giving the victim a feeling of being better fed than he is, bring on certain forms of malnutrition which often lead to chronic liver damage." (p. 41).

Many hospitals, including some Seventh-day Adventist hospitals, have very fine programs treating alcoholism. The only real safety is total abstinence. Since small amounts of alcohol seriously effect the health and efficiency of an individual, he can only preserve his body as the temple of the Holy Spirit if he refrains completely from alcoholic drinks.

What are some of the facts about Marijuana? A very fine little Book by Drs. Bernard and Greeta Lall presents the true facts about Marijuana. The book is entitled Marijuana Friend or Foe? They provide a summary of the best-known scientific Facts about Marijuana (See pp. 13-16):

1. THC (delta-9 tetrahydrocannabinol) tends to accumulate in the brain, gonads (the male and female sex glands), and other fatty tissues in the same way as DDT...
2. Marijuana, even when used in moderate amounts, causes damage to cells in the human body... More frightening is the fact that even a three-times-a-week consumption of marijuana drops the formation of the cells involved in the body's immunity process by 41 percent.
3. Tied in with its habit of accumulating in the brain and its capacity for cellular damage is a growing body of evidence that marijuana inflicts irreversible damage on the brain itself, including actual brain atrophy (a wasting away or failure of the brain to grow), when used for several years. The research of such scientists as Heath, Powelson, Kolansky, and Moore increasingly support the conclusion...
4. Increasing evidence suggest that marijuana adversely affects the reproductive processes in a number of ways and that it poses a serious danger of genetic damage and even of genetic mutation (a significant and basic change in heredity, producing new individuals basically unlike their parents)...[They add that heavy marijuana smoking leads to impotence. ]
5. Cannabis (marijuana) smoke or marijuana mixed with cigarette smoke is far more damaging to lung tissues than tobacco smoke alone...
6. Continuous smoking of marijuana can produce sinusitis, pharyngitis, bronchitis, emphysema, and other respiratory difficulties in a year or less, as opposed to ten to twenty years of tobacco smoking...
7. Regular marijuana use results in the deterioration of mental functioning, pathological forms of thinking resembling paranoia, and a massive and chronic passivity and lack of motivation the so-called 'amotivational syndrome.' "

Can any Christian who wants his body to be the temple of the Holy Spirit try to justify smoking such a dangerous drug?

There is an increasing body of literature on the danger of other drugs. No-one today should be ignorant of the enormous harm done to the human body and mind by Cocaine. See Mark S. Gold, M.D., 800-Cocaine (New York; Bantam Books,

1984). Anyone wanting information or help in breaking loose from drugs can contact Narcotics Anonymous, World Service Office, Inc. 16155 Wyandotte St., Van Nuys, California 91406-3423.

Relevance: Alcohol and other drugs are totally inappropriate for a Christian. It is not possible to maintain the body temple in a state of purity and health while partaking of these drugs. God's power is wonderfully available to heal alcoholics and drug users. We plead with them all to turn to the Lord and receive the power for healing. The healing techniques used by good hospitals are undoubtedly used by God to help people break loose from these drugs. And the users direct contact with God by prayer is the greatest source of strength to be an overcomer.

#### IV. Importance Of Diet

The human body does not function normally unless it receives a nourishing balanced diet. The Bible outlines the kinds of foods that are best, and others that the Lord does not want us to eat.

#### The Word

8. What kind of diet did God originally prescribe for man? Genesis 1:29.
9. After the Flood, when there was no vegetation immediately available, what kind of diet did the Lord allow? Genesis 9:3-4.
10. What kinds of animals, fish and birds did the Lord forbid man to eat? Leviticus 11:1-20.
11. What kind of diet is mentioned in Scripture as an especial abomination to the Lord? Isaiah 65:3-4; 66:15-17.

Explanation: The original diet given man by God consisted of vegetables, fruits, nuts, and grains. Our first parents were vegetarians. Such a diet contains all of the nutrients necessary for health.

A diet of flesh food was allowed after the Flood because all of the earth's vegetation had been destroyed. Later, when new crops and orchards were productive, the Lord allowed the continued eating of flesh food under certain conditions:

1. No blood was ever to be eaten. Only flesh without blood could be partaken of.
2. Only certain kinds of animals, fish, and birds were to be regarded as clean and fit for food. The clean and unclean varieties are carefully listed in Leviticus chapter 11 and Deuteronomy chapter 14.
  - a. Animals that chew the cud and have a split hoof could be eaten. Any other was to be regarded as unfit for food. Swines' flesh is especially condemned in Scripture.
  - b. Fish that have fins and scales could be eaten. All other varieties of fish were listed as unfit for food.
  - c. A long list of birds that are unfit for food is given in these chapters.

What are the disadvantages of a flesh food diet today? See such documents as: Owen S. Parrett, M.D., Diseases of Food Animals; and Raymond H. Woolsey, Meat on the Menu: Who Needs it?

1. The instance of disease in animals today is startling. The diseased parts Of animals are very often cut away and the rest sold for food. Such diseases as cancer (various forms), abscesses or pyenia (pus cells in the blood), liver abscesses in cattle, pneumonia, trichinosis and other parasites (in hogs), undulant fever (Brucellosis) in cattle, leukemia in cattle. The danger of humans contracting disease by eating animal flesh is very great today.
2. The instance of disease in poultry. Cancer is very widespread in chickens. Hence, eating the flesh of chickens exposes humans to the risk of cancer. Dr. Parrett writes: "How about eggs? Chickens can carry malignant viruses through several generations without outward evidence, which then suddenly may appear. Moisture on an egg can carry bacteria through the shell, while pullorum or paratyphoid can develop in the hen's ovaries and be passed on into the egg. There are some 60 varieties of this disease, a common cause of serious sickness in

humans." (p. 20). Poultry is also the largest single reservoir of salmonella typharium in this country. These micro-organisms are one of the leading causes of gastro-enteritis in the United States.

3. The instance of disease in fish. Or. Parrett writes: "In the matter of bacterial, viral, and parasitic diseases, fish come but little, if any, behind other animal life." (p. 23). Fish tend to become contaminated by the filth on which they feed. Thus they cause disease in man when they are eaten. This is particularly true where the fish come in contact with the sewage of large cities. "About fifteen varieties of parasites are listed for fresh-water fish, while another fifteen varieties and many sub-varieties are listed for salt-water fish." (Parrett, p. 24).
4. The Cholesterol content of flesh foods is very high. Cholesterol is one of the main causes of arteriosclerosis (hardening of the arteries), that leads to heart disease.

What about coffee and tea? Joe Crews in his little book, *Death in the Kitchen*, write: Merck Index of Drugs lists quite "a variety of caffeine symptoms and indicates that seven grains of the drug is a medical dose. Most cola drinks, tea, and coffee contain from 1 1/2 to 3 grains.

Many people take far more than a medical dose at every meal. The effect is to stimulate the cells of the body to operate on a higher level of activity than God ever intended. One physician described it this way: 'We in America have become a nation of tea and coffee drunkards.' . . . Doctors warn heart patients and those with stomach ulcers to leave off caffeine, along with smoking...Tea, in addition to its content of caffeine, has another harmful constituent, tannic acid. This powerful chemical is used for dyeing leather." (pp. 26-27).

Relevance: The best approach to health matters will involve a total abstinence from things that are harmful, and a moderate, judicious use of the things which are good. Then we can know for sure that we are not defiling our body temples, and that God will bless us and not allow us to be destroyed (1 Corinthians 3:16-17; 6:19-20).

#### V. A Program Of Healthful Living

True religion and health are inseparables. If we allow Christ to reign in our "mortal body" (Romans 6:11-12), we will separate ourselves from the unhealthful eating, drinking, smoking practices of the world. We will seek God's forgiveness for sin and His healing of mind and body. He is the wonderful, loving Lord "who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases" (Psalm 103:3).

One of the fundamental beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists is that, "because our bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit, we are to care for them intelligently. Along with adequate exercise and rest, we are to adopt the most healthful diet possible and abstain from the unclean foods identified in the Scriptures. Since alcoholic beverages, tobacco, and the irresponsible use of drugs and narcotics are harmful to our bodies, we are to abstain from them as well. Instead, we are to engage in whatever brings our thoughts and bodies into the discipline of Christ, who desires our wholesomeness, joy, and goodness." Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual, 1981 edition, p. 42.

Such a program of healthful living is also emphasized very strongly in the writings of Ellen G. White. See her books, *Counsels on Diet and Foods*; *Temperance*; *Counsels on Health*; *The Ministry of Healing*; *Medical Ministry*.

Relevance: Jesus wants us to be to be physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually healthy people. This life is a preparation for life in the Kingdom of heaven. Our willingness to obey God's laws in every area of life demonstrates our love for Him. When Christ lives within us by the Holy Spirit we have His righteousness, and we are in conformity with His will (Romans 8:3-4, 9-10). This life of overall healthful existence is a rich and abundantly satisfying experience. We do not seek health so that we can compete physically, or in any way with other people; we seek it because we wish to be unspoiled reflectors of the love and grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Will you join us in this great quest for health and happiness? It is found in Christ, because His way of life is the only one that leads to fullness of joy and the best development of all man's abilities and faculties. Have you found Him as your Savior from sin, and your great source of spiritual and physical well-being?

## Review Questions

1. True or False
  - a. There is no connection between religion and health.
  - b. Tobacco is an insidious poison.
  - c. Marijuana is not harmful.
  - d. Our bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit.
2. Discuss: Since our health is so important to the Lord, we should be constantly studying better ways of caring for ourselves. We should be up to date in our understanding of dangers to our health. There are many aspects of health that could not be mentioned in a brief lesson like this. As Christian believers we will want to go on studying the issues. Without becoming cranks or fanatics, we need to know what is best for us, and what is bad for us.