



## WHY MR. ARMSTRONG LASTED 93 YEARS

**H**ERBERT W. ARMSTRONG OFTEN wrote about the importance of health. In letters to supporters of the Church and in other writings, he often mentioned the need to obey God's health laws. He also described his own effort to keep his physical body in peak condition even as the demands and priorities of leading God's Work made doing so more challenging.

"I went on an 18-day fast for both physical and spiritual recharging," he wrote in his autobiography, describing the summer when he was 49 years old. "An unfit man cannot accomplish much. I returned to the new office in Eugene, Aug. 12, 1941, refreshed and renewed, with new vigor."

In a co-worker letter the following year, he wrote, "Personally, I have been working almost day and night until I have come to realize that I HAVE to begin to take better care of my physical health to keep fit for the tremendous task God has laid on us" (Nov. 6, 1942). His writings show that prioritizing physical health was a choice he had to make not once but repeatedly. Just as with spiritual character, you must recommit to it day by day.

Mr. Armstrong also occasionally referenced his summertime tradition of retreating to the coast and spending two weeks in fasting for physical health. At age 53 he wrote in an Oct. 22, 1945, *Bulletin*, "I'm writing from the beach, where I've managed to come at last to get the much-needed period of FASTING and prayer, and total rest, in order to *regain perfect health* and the *vital energy needed* for this heavy gospel campaign immediately ahead" (emphasis added).

Just before turning 56, he wrote in the July 7, 1948, *Bulletin*, "This is the 21st day since we first started. I have been on a long orange-juice fast. ... And I expect to remain in this quiet place, fasting and praying, for 10 more days .... This fast is doing wonders for me physically and mentally, and spiritually too. I expect to be in tip-top shape, with renewed physical and mental powers, eager to plunge back into the all-important work ahead with renewed vigor and power." Mr. Armstrong cared for his physical health *so he could serve God with vigor and power!*

"I am not, and have not been in 20 years, sick," he wrote. "But I have been worn out, vitality impaired. This fast and rest was imperative. It has NOT been a vacation for pleasure and recreation. But already my mind is clearer, and I am beginning to feel anxious to leap back into the work" (ibid).

A few weeks later, back at the office he wrote in an Aug. 2, 1948, co-worker letter, "I am now immeasurably improved, but still fighting, through careful diet, systematic exercise, rigid observance of health rules, to get myself back into 100 percent efficient tip-top clear-minded fit condition."

Later, at age 69, he wrote to Church employees about taking a two-month sustained milk and lemon-juice fast, "in an effort to get my entire digestive system readjusted, for a complete physical and mental rejuvenation—and also as a spiritual fast" (Nov. 13, 1961).

Two years later, he described experiencing a sudden, unexpected heart flutter. "All my life my heart has been strong. Never before had I experienced anything of this nature,"

he wrote in a Nov. 10, 1963, co-worker letter prior to fasting for 10 days. "But the many responsibilities of this large and constantly growing Work have driven me to a hard pace. I knew I was nearly a year past due to slow down and recharge the nerve-batteries with rest and a fast. Arriving back at the college that evening, I decided I must take no more chances—I must STOP right where I was, go on a stringent fast, get myself back into top physical condition, so that I may plunge on ahead in God's Work in high tension once again." Mr. Armstrong paid attention to his body and God's laws of health. When he saw "warning lights" come on, he did not ignore them and continue pushing ahead until he wore out. He responded with drastic maintenance measures.

When planning a new gymnasium at the England campus of Ambassador College in 1965, Mr. Armstrong wrote, "A well-planned program of physical-fitness exercises is in progress at each college—and this is just as necessary as any other part of college work. ... How do you suppose I have been able to carry on this energetic, exhausting grind these past 38 years?? I have to watch my health, my diet—and keep physically fit" (Feb. 1, 1965).

Two years later, at age 74, he wrote to co-workers, "I had been concerned over a heart condition and high blood pressure. I was slowed down in my work. That is now all gone. This heart condition I have felt for some four years is no longer noticeable. I have renewed verve, bounce, energy. God has, in this fasting and prayer, opened my eyes to many things—changed my entire daily routine, brought me far closer to Him. I am ready, now, for this big LEAP AHEAD in this Work" (Feb. 27, 1967).

Less than a week later, he wrote in another co-worker letter: "For four years I have had to live knowing I could drop dead at any second! Now pounds have been taken off. Now I can take longer, more vigorous walks. Now I am taking them, three times a day—REGARDLESS of circumstances which might try to prevent! ... My life from NOW WILL BE FAR MORE ACTIVE—and

that new routine is already in effect and becoming well established" (March 2, 1967).

"In spite of the heavy traveling I have had to do these past 15 months ... my own health is holding up well," he wrote at age 79. "A year ago I was becoming concerned with overweight, but I have gotten rid of a good share of excess avoirdupois [personal weight], and feel that I am in the best physical shape in recent years" (Oct. 27, 1971).

At age 81, he wrote about coming down with a flu and head cold and his immediate response: a three-day fast during which he took only a little lemon juice and honey. At age 84, he wrote about engaging in five days of fasting and prayer. He wrote in a Feb. 25, 1977, co-worker letter, "[M]UCH if not MOST of [my] energy, vitality, drive and power has come from two sources—God, of course (Isaiah 40:29-31), and sheer determination and SELF-drive, even when I did not feel up to it. ... I feel that God will continue renewing my youth and physical vigor and mental powers as long as necessary to get His job done. I have had to come to realize that this excessively arduous job of this new dimension, getting into nations where doors were closed to the gospel before, traveling the whole wide Earth—is one few could endure. While I was driving myself on, even in fatigue, my physical body was taking a beating. There was a time when Jesus needed to take off a little time and go aside to a quiet place and get some rest. So I have decided I must do." Thus, he checked into a facility that was quite regimented for healthy meals, exercise and sleep.

In his 70s, 80s and 90s, Mr. Armstrong preached; broadcast; wrote; flew overseas to meet hundreds of world leaders, deliver public lectures, and meet Church members; and fought persecution from outside the Church and rebellions from within. He said that he *started* doing the seven best years of work in his entire lifetime when he was about 85 years old.

How well are YOU taking care of *your* aging body so you can yet do your greatest work for God? ■