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Deacon/Elder Lecture Outlines

Lecture 12

How to Maintain Good Health and Prevent Sickness

I. Introduction

- A. Here is a riddle: "What one thing is received naturally by most people, is taken for granted by almost everybody, is lost sooner or later by us all, and for the return of which humans will pay almost anything?"
- B. The answer is health!
- C. And here is another riddle: "Why, if we know that we will lose our health if we don't take care of ourselves, do we ignore caring for our bodies until it is too late?"
- D. This second question is harder to answer. But usually the answer is lack of knowledge or lack of desire and commitment. But we leaders in God's Church must be examples to the flock in all things, and therefore must determine to give our health the high priority it should have in our lives (if we are to have our lives at all!).

II. SPS

This lecture will deal with the often discussed but rarely acted on topic of how to maintain good health and prevent sickness.

III. Need

Why should we be concerned about our health? Why should we devote a lesson to it? Why is it important?

III John 2 -- It is God's express will and intent that His people have good health.

Good health is one of the seven laws of success. Our health will vitally affect, first of all, our success in this Christian life -- the degree to which we overcome and grow spiritually -- and, secondly, our success in doing our part in God's Work. And, of course, our basic happiness and well-being depends in large part on how we feel physically -- on our health.

A. To Grow Spiritually

In order for us to use this physical life as God intended -- to build godly character -- we need to have the best health possible. A tired, run-down, sickly body will automatically cause you to have a dull, lethargic mind. In order to have a sharp, clear, alert, sound mind, you must have a healthy, vibrantly alive physical body.

Any one of us can think more clearly, concentrate better and retain what we learn much more easily if we are in good health. Our spiritual growth -- the extent to which God's Spirit can enlighten, inspire and motivate us -- will be in direct proportion to the condition of our health.

B. To Do the Work of God

A second reason that we should maintain good health is to do God's Work. If we are physically run-down and weak, and at times sick, how can we do our part in the Work of God -- whatever that part may be, whether serving in the local area or simply staying on our jobs to contribute as much as possible to the Work?

To produce and be profitable in God's Work, we must maintain the best health possible!

C. For Our Own Happiness and Well-Being

Obviously, the state of our health directly affects our mental happiness and well-being. How we feel physically is important to our overall sense of peace and satisfaction. Certainly no one can read the book of John and miss this important truth. Physical health and happiness are closely linked.

IV. Basic Keys to Good Health

We all know that sickness is not normal or natural, and that a healthy body is not susceptible to sickness and disease. But we need to apply that knowledge and accept full responsibility for the present condition of our health. And when we do become sick, we should try to understand what caused it and resolve to change to avoid repeating that same mistake.

We are living in a physically degenerate age, and all of us are now suffering from physical weaknesses that we either inherited from our ancestors, or that we brought on ourselves by our own past way of life. Rather than using this as an excuse for not maintaining the best possible health, however, we should strive all the harder to negate

those weaknesses by complete obedience to the principles of health. There are certain basic keys, that, if followed, will ensure that each of us in our present circumstances will have the best health possible.

A. Proper Sleep

The first basic key to staying healthy and being alive, alert and productive is getting regular sleep. The average individual needs about eight hours of sleep, beginning and ending at about the same time each night, to be most effective.

The human body is not like a machine. It runs down. During the time you are asleep, your bodily processes slow down and your internal organs rest. At the same time, poisons are expelled through your sweat glands, and the body repairs itself. When you skip sleep or get it at odd hours, you throw additional strain on your body, wearing it down, and you upset your metabolism and make your body vulnerable to sickness or disease.

Failure to get proper sleep may also make your thinking murky. This means your study of God's Word is ineffective and your prayers are lackadaisical, which stunts your spiritual growth. In addition, you are more accident-prone and tend to be more irritable when you have robbed yourself of needed sleep.

Set a definite, reasonably early time each night to go to bed, and stick to it. Then get up early each morning after a good night's sleep. Make it a regular way of life, and you'll be far more alert, alive, healthy and productive.

B. Regular Exercise

The second basic key to good health is regular exercise. You can't be in really good physical condition without regular exercise. Have you ever seen an out-of-condition deer, squirrel or hawk? Their whole way of life is exercise. It is normal to be alive, zestful, energized. But many of us have been living in a physical straitjacket for years -- in most cases simply because we do not get enough exercise.

I Timothy 4:8 -- God tells us that for the time we are in this flesh regular exercise is profitable to us. Let's understand why.

Your heart is designed to pump blood through your body. If you are continually inactive, many of your

arteries and capillaries will tend to shrink, and your blood will not be able to carry enough oxygen to all parts of your body to keep you full of life and energetic. As a result, you will begin to feel tired all the time, and your circulation will become poor in your fingers, toes, hands and feet. At the slightest constriction of circulation, they will then begin to tingle and "go to sleep."

Our heart is a muscle, and any out-of-condition muscle works inefficiently and produces fatigue toxins at twice the rate of muscles that are in good condition. Also, in time of stress, a heart weakened by lack of exercise is vulnerable to a heart attack.

Drivers involved in automobile accidents sometimes escape serious injury in the accidents but die of heart attacks. This is how a person is literally "scared to death." The heart can't take it and just breaks down. A heart in good condition will not break down; it will remain steady after reaching a peak pulse rate.

As this world decays and this Work reaches its climax, we are going to be under more and more stress and persecution. We are going to face continuing crises as a Church and as individuals. Knowing what we will face in the near future, all of us should set ourselves to get in top physical shape.

The best exercises are those that not only tone up muscles in your body, but also build up your heart and increase circulation of your blood -- like running, cycling, walking and swimming. Aerobic exercises are excellent. When you first begin aerobics, you will put a load on your muscles and arteries, so that your body will begin to produce new arterioles for the blood to flow through. The new strain and flow of life-giving oxygen and blood will clean up the old arteries and expel the poisons. The muscles will become healthy, you will lose the feeling of fatigue and your mind will become much more alert.

It takes persistence, stick-to-itiveness and character to begin and continue on a regular exercise program, but it will pay off in better health for you today, and may save your life in the next few years.

If you are completely out of condition or have chronic health problems, it is wise to seek the advice of a doctor before beginning an exercise program.

C. Peace of Mind

The third basic key is peace of mind. Develop a positive approach to life. Don't stew and worry about minor things, and learn to cast your real concerns, worries and burdens on Christ (I Peter 5:7). Proverbs 17:22 shows that a merry heart does good like a medicine, but a broken spirit breaks up the body.

Many glands in your body respond to mental stimuli and react adversely when you are angry, frustrated, sad, sorrowful or upset in some way. If you argue, you can't properly digest your food. Many people stimulate fatigue in their bodies by constantly being in a downcast attitude.

Christians often put themselves under unnecessary stress by pottling up things that should be talked about. Counseling with a minister or going to a brother about a misunderstanding can help you restore calm and confidence.

II Corinthians 10:3-5 -- Bring all your thoughts into obedience to Christ.

Philippians 4:6-8 -- Stop worrying about things beyond your control. Begin to de-emphasize your problems and exercise faith. Refresh yourself with the promises of God and stimulate your mind through God's Word. Believe and know that all things work together for good to those who love and obey God and with whom He is working to perfect for His ruling Family and Kingdom (Romans 8:28).


Smile, greet people cheerfully, radiate happiness, pursue peace. Don't brood over things. Be open and talk things out -- get the problems, misunderstandings and traumas solved quickly.

You'll be surprised, if you begin to practice these techniques, how much better you'll feel and how some of your chronic ailments, pains and fatigues will subside. Mental attitudes and anxieties can cause physical diseases.

D. Right diet

1. Eat Balanced Meals

We are what we eat. Even though we are getting regular sleep and exercise and maintaining peace of mind, unless we are eating properly, we cannot be as healthy as we should be.

 You should eat a well-prepared, well-balanced diet. Vegetables, fruit and whole grains, raw seeds and nuts should predominate. This should be the major portion of your diet. Then should come protein -- good lean meats, fresh raw milk, eggs and cheese. And don't forget to drink plenty of fresh, clean water daily.

Most people emphasize the wrong foods. The major part of their diet consists of sugars and refined starches, followed heavily by protein. They rarely eat green, leafy vegetables and only occasionally have an apple or orange. Some drink virtually no water.

It is easier to serve pre-cooked, pre-packaged foods than to take the time to bake bread, make nourishing, colorful salads and carefully wash and prepare green leafy vegetables. Life comes only from life. Eating a constant diet of de-vitalized food will age the body prematurely. It takes more effort to prepare a nourishing, wholesome meal, but it really pays off.

Daniel 1:4-16 -- Daniel was healthy and wanted to stay that way. He didn't intend to defile his body and sludge up his mind with the rich, starchy, spiced-up concoctions the king was eating. But he was not a vegetarian, and he did drink wine (Daniel 10:3). Daniel simply ate natural vegetables and fruits and, later in life, clean unadulterated meats and good, natural wines. We would do well to follow his good example as much as possible in this present society.

2. Minimize Preservatives and Artificial Colorings, Flavorings and Supplements

Try to avoid eating foods with preservatives or artificial colorings or flavorings. People today are suffering from myriad diseases and paying a horrible penalty in their bodies as a result of these additives. Many of these additives are poisons that would be fatal if ingested in larger quantities, and are somewhat harmful even in small quantities. To make matters worse, many of them are residual -- some of them accumulate in your system and build up over the years to potentially dangerous levels.

It is a simple matter to check the products you buy for additives that might be harmful. The labels of most products list the ingredients and chemical additives such as BHA and sodium nitrate.

If you are visiting someone's home and you don't know whether what they serve contains such things, don't worry about it. But where you are doing the buying and it's your decision, make an effort within your financial means to buy only pure, natural foods or products.

We should eat only those natural foods that can spoil -- and eat them before they do. This is a good overall principle to follow with regard to every area of your diet.

Artificial supplements and vitamins, as well as food that is "enriched" or "fortified" with such supplements, are not the keys to good health. A diet of natural foods is the surest, quickest, best way to health. Many "health foods," pills and artificial vitamins can get your body out of balance or have an adverse reaction that is harmful to your body.

In some cases a dietary supplement may be required for a limited time for a special dietary lack. You must make those decisions for yourself. But a natural diet is all that is generally necessary to maintain good nutrition.

3. Refined and Processed Foods Do Not Build Good Health

Many refined and processed products are of little or no value in sustaining, nourishing or building the body. In fact, tests have proven that they can be harmful. They can clog the digestive system and become a real burden for the body to eliminate. In many cases, they act as poisons -- not foods.

While it is certainly not wrong or a sin to eat white bread, white sugar or other refined or processed foods on occasion, few people fully realize the detriment caused by these "improved" products when they are regularly substituted in place of the natural products that were intended as food.

Today we are paying the penalty of having a generation grow up on refined and processed "non-foods" rather than on nutritious foods. Our hospitals are filled with people with mental disorders, and our streets and homes abound with them. Our nations are wracked with sicknesses and diseases that are the direct result of our diet of processed and refined foods.

Many of the starchy, sugary, spicy desserts that taste good at the moment contain little or no nutritional value and can, if eaten too often, adversely affect one's health. Fruits, cheese and nuts are good alternatives.

And a special point should be made here that most of us eat too often (because of snacks) and too much. Consequently, many of us are overweight and out of condition. So learn to eat sparingly of the right kinds of food. This, combined with regular aerobic exercises, may literally save you from heart attack, stroke or premature death.

V. Don't Compromise With What You Know Is Right

We all know many of these basic keys to good health, but are we acting on that knowledge? Do we simply lack the character to do what we know is right?

A. You Will Incur Physical Penalties

It is easy to make excuses for not doing what we know we should, but excuses do not take away the penalties. Many look around and see others losing sleep, burning the candle at both ends, "too busy" to get regular sleep and exercise and eating improperly, and they conclude: "Oh, well, it doesn't hurt me any worse than it hurts them." Others look to someone else and justify what they do because so-and-so does it. That, in other words, makes it all right in spite of what they personally know is right. If you reason this way, your physical health will suffer as a result.

B. Your Confidence and Faith in Healing Could Be Weakened

James 4:17 -- Knowledge can be dangerous if we are not acting on and obeying that knowledge. Some will not change even though they know better. Others toss it off to the fact that this is the end time and we are all so degenerate it couldn't have been avoided. In some cases this might be true, but not always.

Galatians 6:7-8 -- We can't mock God. We can't claim to repent and continue to repeat the same mistakes that caused the illness, knowing better, and expect God to heal us (Colossians 3:25).

I John 3:22 -- You can't go wholeheartedly to God in prayer for healing when you know you haven't been doing the best you can with the knowledge you have -- when you know you have been compromising continually with that which makes for good health. You would not think of going to your employer and asking for a raise

in pay and a promotion when your performance on the job is substandard. Can we honestly think that we should ask God to grant us a miracle such as healing when we have not conscientiously maintained our bodies which are the temple of His Holy Spirit?

C. It Weakens Your Spiritual Character

But just as important, you need to use this area of your life to build character, not tear it down. Resolve not to compromise your conscience in any of the basic keys that would insure good health. Resolve that by the way you conduct this area of your life you will build good health -- and good character.

VI. Conclusion

It is important for us as God's leaders to set the example in maintaining good health. Plus, the vitality and energy that comes from practicing a balanced health program will enable you to serve the Church more effectively.

Strive to keep these principles. It will take effort, but we've been called to exercise character in all areas of our lives. The results will be well worth the effort!

