

Changing Cleveland One By One

Bishop Stephen D. Lewis

Benefits. God puts the benefits of self-discipline - and the penalties of self-indulgence squarely before us:

- **Deuteronomy 30:15, 19, 20:** “Behold, I set before you life and good, and death and evil. Wherefore, choose life.”
- **Galatians 6:7, 8:** “Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.”
- **Deuteronomy 6:24:** God’s commands are “for our good always, that He may preserve us alive.”
- **Proverbs 3:1, 2:** “Length of days, and long life, and peace” are the sure fruits of obedience to God.
- **Daniel 1:8,15, 17, 20, 21:** Daniel’s life is a classic illustration of the benefits- physical, mental, and spiritual - that follow faithful adherence to God’s laws of health.

Conclusion:

We are now in a position to appreciate the force of Paul’s appeal in Romans 12:1: “**I beseech you therefore brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, wholly acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.**”

The sanest and most rational way to live is in harmony with the laws of God.

“**The great business of life is to find which way God is moving and then move with Him.**”

Let us resolve to do this, and we will be compelled to say with David: “**With Thee is the fountain of life, and in Thy light shall we see light**” (Psalms 36:9).

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How to Care for God’s Living Temple

Introduction

- **John 2:13-16:** Jesus cleanses the Temple in Jerusalem.

Christ’s cleansing of the Temple was a dramatic illustration of the work He came to do in the human soul. God’s original ideal was that man should be a living temple for His indwelling, but sin defiled the body-temple and marred God’s plan. Jesus came to drive out the demons of selfishness and lust that had made their home in man, and to restore him as a clean temple for God’s possession.

Many people think of Christ’s work as applying only to the cleanliness of our hearts, as if He were indifferent to the way we treat our bodies. It therefore comes as a complete surprise to learn that God views our whole personality—body, soul and spirit—as His temple, and that He is just as keenly interested in the health and welfare of our bodies as He is in the health of our souls!

- **II Corinthians 6:16:** “Ye are the temple of the living God”

How does God want us to care for His living temple?

GOO’S CLAIM TO THE BODY-TEMPLE

God’s claim is based upon the fact that He is our **Maker, Owner, Preserver** and **Redeemer**.

- **I Corinthians 6:19, 20:** “Your **body** is the Temple of the Holy Ghost... Ye are not your own... Ye are bought with a price... Wherefore glorify God in your **body** and in your spirit, which are God’s.”
- **Psalms 100:3:** “It is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves.”
- **Acts 17:28:** “In Him we live and move and have our being.”
- **Romans 14:8:** “Whether we live or die, we are the Lord’s.”

What impact does this Divine claim have upon us? It should hush our hearts with gratitude and awe. The greatest day in our lives comes when this realization first dawns over our souls. Life can never be quite the same again for us

from the moment we say: “**I BELONG TO GOD. MY BODY IS HIS TEMPLE!**” This is surely the most powerful, life changing conviction that can ever lay hold upon our hearts. **If God places such a high value upon us, can we continue to have a cheap regard for ourselves?**

GOD’S CONCERN FOR THE BODY TEMPLE

- **Exodus 20:5:** “I the Lord thy God am a jealous God.”

It is fundamentally right for God to be jealous about His property. We are jealous about our property, aren’t we? If we owned a beautiful temple, of intricate design and matchless craftsmanship, would we not be concerned to guard it from abuse?

Accordingly, God says that the health and welfare of His people is His highest wish for them.

- **III John 2:** “I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.”

This concern is prompted solely by love and a desire for His people’s good.

- **Deuteronomy 6:24:** “For our good always, that He may preserve us alive.”

God places a high value upon our physical bodies, He does not subscribe to the false view of man which regards the human body wholly as a source of evil, and despises it as a vile and worthless husk. God created our bodies “in His own image”, and pronounced them “very good” (Gen. 1:31). Therefore, His redemptive work takes in our bodies, and He will not rest until they are fully reclaimed from sin, disease and death.

- **Romans 8:23:** “The redemption of the **body**,”
- **I Thessalonians 5:23:** “Your whole spirit and soul **and body** be preserved blameless.”

God’s concern for the body temple is reflected also in His warnings and prohibitions against its willful abuse.

- **I Corinthians 3:16-17:** “If any man **defile** the temple of God, **him shall God destroy.**”

However, because of God’s concern for the welfare of His living temple, we would expect more than warnings against abuse. We would expect Him to give clear and positive counsel about how to keep the body temple in the best possible condition. Does the Bible contain such counsel?

GOD’S COUNSEL CONCERNING THE BODY-TEMPLE

God’s health counsel has two outstanding merits - its **Breadth** and its **Benefits**. Let us consider them in order:

Breadth. God’s health counsel takes in **the whole of man - physical, mental, and spiritual - and the whole of life.** His health program is a remarkably comprehensive, rational, well-balanced program.

- **1 Corinthians 10:31:** “Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.”
- **1 Corinthians 9:26:** “Every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things.”

The Bible meaning of “Temperance” is not merely “**total abstinence from that which is bad**,” but also “**the moderate use of that which is good.**” Some of the Bible’s most positive recommendations for good health are as follows:

- Strict personal cleanliness (2 Corinthians 7:1).
- Proper sanitary provisions (Deuteronomy 23:12-14).
- Isolation of infectious diseases (Numbers 5:2-3; Leviticus 13:45-46).
- Burning of infected materials (Leviticus 13:47, 48, 52).
- Clean and wholesome foods (Genesis 1:29; Leviticus 11:1-47).
- Non-intoxicating drinks (Proverbs 20:1).
- Avoidance of gluttony (Luke 21:34; 1 Corinthians 9:25).
- Adequate exercise and rest (Exodus 20:8-11; Mark 6:31).
- Clean, positive thinking (Philippians 4:8).
- Cheerfulness, contentment and trust in God (Prov. 17:22; Philippians 4:11; Isaiah 26:3,4).

The most fastidious modern Health Department could hardly find fault with these recommendations!