

Lesson Plan & Study Guide



Spiritual Disciplines: Wellness

Walking with Jesus

iFOLLOW

The iFollow Discipleship Series

Version 1.0 - 11/17/10



About the iFollow Discipleship Series Pastor's Edition

Categories

The iFollow Discipleship Series is designed to be used in congregations to assist people in their pursuit of God. This assumes that individuals are in unique places in their journey and there is no perfect set of lessons that everyone must complete to become a disciple—in fact discipleship is an eternal journey. Therefore the iFollow curriculum is a menu of milestones that an individual, small group, or even an entire church can choose from. The lessons can be placed in three general categories: **Meeting with Jesus** (does not assume a commitment to Jesus Christ); **Walking with Jesus** (assumes an acceptance of Jesus Christ); and **Working with Jesus** (assumes a desire to serve Jesus Christ).

Components

Each lesson has a presenter's manuscript which can be read word for word, but will be stronger if the presenter puts it in his/her own words and uses personal illustrations. The graphic slides can be played directly from the Pastor's DVD or customized and played from a computer. There are also several group activities and discussion questions to choose from as well as printable student handouts.

Usage

The lessons are designed to be used in small groups, pastor's Bible classes, prayer meetings, seminars, retreats, training sessions, discussion groups, and some lessons may be appropriate sermon outlines.

Credits

Curriculum Development: The iFollow Discipleship Series Pastor's Edition curriculum development was lead by the **Center for Creative Ministry**. **General Editor:** Monte Sahlin; **Assistant Editor:** Debbonnaire Kovacs; **Directional Advisory:** Brad Forbes, Carole Kilcher, Ceri Myers, Cesar Gonzalez, Clayton Kinney, Curtis Rittenour, Dave Osborne, Dave VanDenburgh, Gerry Chudleigh, Jane Thayer, Jerry Thomas, John Appel, Jose Rojas, Kim Johnson, Nicole Chao, Paul Richardson, Rich DuBose, Shasta Nelson, William Sutton; **Pastoral Advisory:** Claudio Consuegra, Collette Pekar, Dave Hutman, Don Driver, Fredrick Russell, Jerry Nelson, Jesse Wilson, Leslie Bumgardner, Loren Fenton, Rebecca Brillhart; **Unit Authors:** Alberto Valenzuela, Althea Pineda, Corienne Hay, Debbonnaire Kovacs, Ed Dickerson, Gianluca Bruno, Gil Bahnsen, Greg Nelson, Jack Calkins, James Whibberding, Karen Collum, Monte Sahlin, Norma Sahlin, Pam Splawinski, Patty Ntihuka, Reinder Bruinsma, Ryan Bell; **Additional contribution** by Maria Ovando-Gibson; **Additional editing:** Dave Gemmell, Meredith Carter; **Graphic Design:** Mind Over Media; **Layout:** Paul D. Young; **Web Development:** Narrow Gate Media.

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www.ifollowdiscipleship.org

The Spiritual Discipline of Wellness

This presentation is designed for people who have decided to accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

Learning Objectives

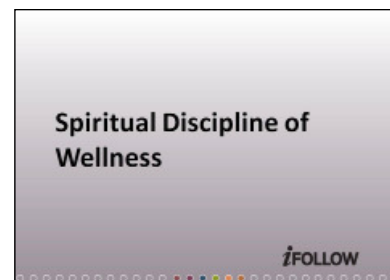
1. Define health as not simply the absence of disease, but overall wellbeing
2. Understand that wellness is God's will for us and will help us get the most out of life
3. Review the basics of caring for one's self in terms of nutrition, exercise, water, sunshine, temperance, air, rest, and trust in God

Content Outline

1. Wholistic health of our body and spirit
2. Nutrition
3. Exercise
4. Water
5. Sunshine
6. Temperance
7. Air
8. Rest
9. Trust in
10. Conclusion: Keeping ourselves in good health is a step toward being what God means us to be.

Background Material for the Presenter

The World Health Organization defines health as “a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.” (WHO Preamble) This definition is consistent with the biblical principles of healthful living, which often addresses the issues of physical health alongside the issues of mental or spiritual health. In Jeremiah 33:6 God promises He will “heal my people and will let them enjoy abundant peace and security.” Health is not



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simply being free of mental and physical disease; it is a wholeness of mind and body which lets us live our lives to the fullest.

As Christians, we know God calls us to honor Him with our bodies (1 Corinthians 6:20). The health of our physical bodies is tied to our emotional, mental, and spiritual health. We are not simply a collection of parts which operate independently; we are an entire self which is interdependent. A preacher related the following story in a sermon to demonstrate the importance of church unity: "I broke my wrist once. The rest of me was very concerned. The rest of my body was so concerned that it stayed up all night worrying about my wrist." What happens to one part of our body affects the rest of our body in the same way that what happens to our spirit affects our body.

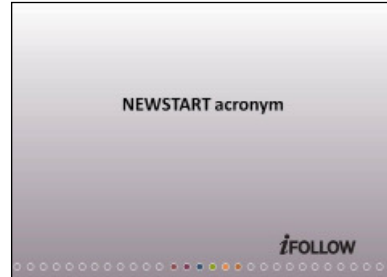
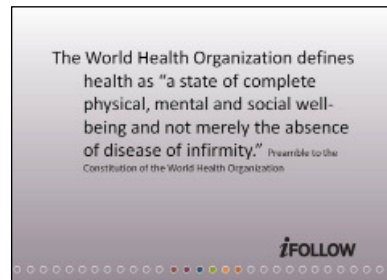
Often the effects of emotional or spiritual trauma on our bodies are much more apparent than the effects of physical wear and tear on our spiritual or emotional health. When we are angry, our temperature rises and hands clench. When we are shocked we feel cold and tremble. But our physical bodies affect our spiritual selves as well. If we do not eat good food or drink enough water, we are listless and find it hard to concentrate. If we do not exercise we are more prone to stress and tension. Our bodies and our spirits are parts of the same creature, and in order to insure the health of one we must insure the health of the other.

The Weimar Institute near Sacramento, California, developed the acronym NEWSTART to represent the principles of healthy living: Nutrition, Exercise, Water, Sunlight, Temperance, Air, Rest, and Trust. This acronym provides a good formula for real health; not just the absence of disease, but optimum wellness of body, mind and spirit.

Nutrition

Nutrition is a too large a subject to be covered in so short a space. This is simply an overview, some principles to keep in mind in trying to find the diet which is ideal for you and for your body. Finding your ideal diet will take time, thought, patience, and, if possible, input from people who know their stuff.

One important thing to remember in any discussion about diet is that everyone is dif-



ferent. There isn't one "miracle diet" which works exactly the same for every person. There are principles which can be universally applied, but it's important to remember that diet is not one-size-fits-all. What works for another may not work for you, and what works for you may not work for another. With this in mind, we must be careful not to dictate the food choices of others, or allow others to dictate our choices.

The original diet given to humans in Eden was "every plant with seeds on the face of the earth and every tree that has fruit with seeds" (Gen. 1:29), which is a bit different from the modern diet, even a vegetarian one. This diet includes only nuts, legumes, fruits, grains, and vegetables with seeds. In Genesis 3:18, when God tells Adam and Eve to leave the garden, he tells them that they "will eat plants of the field," which is taken by many to mean that at that point they began eating leaf, root and tuber vegetables (plant parts which do not have seeds.) After the flood God broadens the menu even further (Gen. 9:3,4), saying "Everything that lives and moves will be food for you. Just as I gave you the green plants, I now give you everything. But you must not eat meat that has its *lifeblood* still in it." It is clear, however, by the injunction to take different numbers of "clean" and "unclean" animals, that there was a difference, even then. In Leviticus 11 there is a more detailed description of what may and may not be eaten.



There are many things we can learn from this. One of them is, of course, what the human diet was originally meant to be. Another thing we learn is that diet is not a moral issue. Morals do not change, whereas what God told us to eat changed several times. Another thing we can take from this is that our needs as a race change as the earth gets progressively worse. When Adam and Eve left Eden, which was perfect and provided them with perfect nutrition, the world was no longer perfect, and so provided them with imperfect nutrition. God told them what to eat to compensate, at least partly, for this lack. After the flood, which destroyed the world and probably rearranged the topsoil entirely, God again told them how to supplement their diets to compensate for the lacking nutrients. Now, thousands of years later, the earth continues to "wax old like a garment" (Hebrews 1:11) and the earth provides us with poorer nutrition than ever. Now we may sometimes need to supplement our diets with additional vitamins and nutrients to obtain optimal health.

Different sources will give you slightly different nutritional information, but not too different. Often the amount of different foods required each day are made into a pyramid. The base of the pyramid is grains, since that is what we require most of, and the ascending layers are foods we need less of.

1. Bread, rice, cereal, and pasta are all grains or grain products. We should eat six to

11 servings of these every day. It's best if we eat a variety of grains, as opposed to just one kind, and at least half of our grain intake should be of whole grains. The importance of grains in our diet was referenced by Jesus when He called himself the bread of life (John 6:35). He should be the base of our spiritual pyramid in the way that bread is the base of our nutritional pyramid.

2. Next are fruits and vegetables. Ideally, we should eat three to five servings each day of vegetables. Fruit is on the same layer with vegetables and we should have two to four servings per day.

3. Milk, yogurt, cheese—two to four servings daily. A vegan diet excludes this part of the pyramid. In a vegan diet, it's very important to be sure you have enough calcium, which is found in foods such as tofu, rhubarb, collard greens, spinach, turnip greens, okra, white beans, baked beans, broccoli, peas, brussel sprouts, sesame seeds, bok choy, and almonds. Vitamin B12 may be deficient, so vegans should consume flaxseed oil, walnuts, and other foods that are sources of B12. Even then, they may need to supplement as well.

4. Protein group, two or three servings daily. This is on the same level as the previous item. In a vegetarian diet this consists of beans, nuts, and products made from beans and nuts, such as vegetarian meats which are often made from soy protein and may be fortified with B12. This food group also includes eggs.

5. Fats, sugars, and oils use sparingly. Fat and sugar are both necessary parts of our nutrition, but for the most part, a balanced diet will provide the body with plenty of both. There are certain oils which contain nutritional value in their own right, but oils should never be overused.

Portion control is a constant battle for many people, and the way food is packaged and sold does not help. Many people do not eat terribly unhealthy things, they simply eat too much of them. It's difficult to eat "about 15 chips" when the entire 16 oz. bag is staring you in the face. Temperance is an important element of diet. Most of us eat foods we don't even need. We just feel like eating and so we do. Stop and think about how you're feeling. Are you eating because you actually need food or because it's sitting in front of you? Don't eat food you don't need.

Any gardener will tell you good soil grows good food. Anyone who has tasted food fresh from a garden knows that food tastes best when it's picked ripe. The problem with food you buy at the average grocery store is that most of it is grown hundreds of miles away, picked while green and chemically ripened to sell on store shelves. Much of it is genetically altered, and there is no way to tell what has and has not been genetically altered. In the case of meat, there is almost no way to know how the animal was raised, how healthy it was, or how it was killed. As much as possible, it's impor-

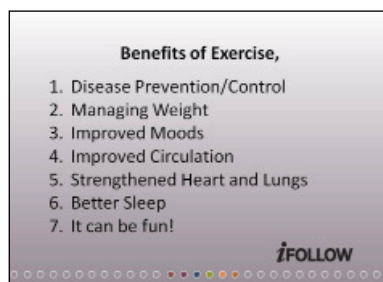
tant to know where your food comes from. Even if you're not in a position to grow your own food, there are farmer's markets and places that sell local foods which are becoming more available. Even things like flour and cornmeal can often be bought locally. This way you know exactly where your food came from and who grew or raised it.

Exercise

Sometimes exercise is put as the base of the pyramid, to show that it's just as important to your health as what you eat. Exercise is crucial to a healthy body. God made our bodies to move, and if they do not move they fall into disrepair. When our daily lives are not physically active on their own, it's our job to make sure our temples of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19) are well cared for. Exercise has many benefits, and not all of them are solely related to our bodies.

1. Exercise can help prevent or manage many diseases such as heart disease, osteoporosis, high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, and even some kinds of cancer.
2. Exercise can help you regain and/or maintain a healthy weight. Exercise burns calories, which helps in weight loss and management. It also improves muscle tone.
3. Exercise releases endorphins in the brain. Endorphins are neurotransmitters associated with happiness and a sense of well-being. Exercise can help reduce depression and anxiety. It also helps reduce tension and relieve stress.
4. Circulation is increased by regular exercise, not only circulation of the blood, but also circulation of the lymph fluids stored in body tissues. Improved circulation helps your cells get the oxygen they need to do their jobs well.
5. Regular exercise strengthens the heart and lungs. Not only will this help prevent certain types of diseases, it will strengthen the heart and lungs and help them work more efficiently. You'll find you don't tire as easily and you have more energy.
6. Insomnia and other sleeping problems can be helped by exercise. Being more active during the day will help you fall asleep when night comes.
7. You don't have to do something you hate in order to exercise; find something you like to do, or something you want to learn to do. Have fun with it.

Exercise doesn't have to be a despised activity. It can just be a walk around the



neighborhood, or a bike ride. Take up a new sport like tennis or rock climbing. Find something you really enjoy. If motivation is a problem, try to get an exercise partner. If you're trying something new, your partner could be a mentor, or perhaps just someone else interested in learning.

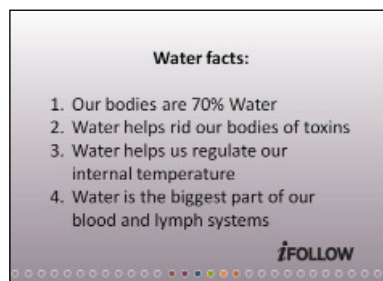
Water

A human could, if circumstances warranted, survive about a month without food, but only about a week without water. Our adult bodies are about 70 percent water, down from 80 percent when we were born. Water is what makes our blood liquid. Our brains and muscles are 75 percent water. When our bodies run low on water, they have difficulty performing their basic functions. It's no wonder it's so important to our survival.

Water does many things for our bodies. It helps control our internal temperature by insulating the body from cold and by shedding excess heat. Most of our cells are composed primarily of water and without water they could not perform their basic functions. It also helps our kidneys rid the body of toxins and is the biggest part of our blood and lymph systems.

It's estimated that 75 to 90 percent of us do not drink enough water. And many of us may suffer from dehydration every day without realizing it. Some of the initial symptoms of dehydration are dry mouth, sleepiness, muscle weakness, headaches, and dizziness. In its more severe form, it can include confusion, irritability, dry mouth, lack of sweating, decreased urination, dry skin, rapid heartbeat, and many other unpleasant results. In most of us our symptoms never become extreme enough that we take them very seriously, but a low-level dehydration over a period of time is not good for our bodies.

How much water we need is to some degree a question open to debate. The commonly accepted amount for an adult is eight 8-ounce glasses of water per day, though some doctors recommend more. Eight is the recommended minimum in most cases. Pay attention to your body; if you show symptoms of dehydration, then drink more. If you're sweating a lot due to temperature or physical labor, then you should drink more water accordingly. Some people schedule water drinking into their lives. Some people carry around a water bottle with them all day long and drink from it regularly. Whatever you decide to do, it should be something that works for you.



Clean water, in particular, is what our systems require. Spring water is ideal, or water from a good, clean well. Part of making sure we stay healthy is making sure that future generations have enough clean water to drink. Be conservative with your water use. Something as small as turning off the water while you brush your teeth can have surprisingly big results over time. Make your showers shorter. Wash the car less frequently, and trust nature to provide enough rain, in most instances, for your lawn.

Be careful what household cleaner and fertilizers you use: don't use chemicals that will hurt our water, and us.

Sunlight

“But for you who revere my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings. And you will go out and leap like calves released from the stall.” (Malachi 4:2) The sun is one of God's amazing creations: a giant ball of hydrogen giving the earth its major source of energy. The sun gives us heat and light; it makes photosynthesis possible, and gives us beautiful displays like sunrises and aurora. The sun has a strong psychological role, completely aside from its physical health benefits.

In an age where the fear of cancer is always in our minds, sunlight is avoided to an extent which is unhealthy. When the sun hits our skin, a chemical in our skin absorbs some of the light and produces vitamin D. This is one of the only ways we get vitamin D; it rarely occurs naturally in food. Older people or people with certain disorders may need to take vitamin D supplements. This should be done with caution, as too much vitamin D can also harm the system.

Vitamin D is important for healthy bones. It regulates calcium and phosphorus in the blood and performs other tasks relating to bone formation and maintenance. Lack of Vitamin D can cause weaker bones and increase the risks of breakage. A study done at the University of California linked healthy vitamin D levels to lowered rates of certain types of cancer. (Edwards)

Overexposure to sun can cause damage in the form of sunburns and suntans. Neither are good for the skin, and it is believed that only a few minutes outside a few times a week is enough for a healthy person to produce sufficient levels of Vitamin D. In northern climates during the winter, this may need to be daily. But it doesn't have to be hours on a beach, or worse yet, in a tanning booth! Skin is very fragile, and we only get one. We need to protect it well.



Seasonal Affective Disorder, or SAD, is a depressive and seasonal mood disorder. The shorter days and weaker sunlight of the winter months cause higher levels of melatonin in your body. Melatonin is the sleep hormone; melatonin levels naturally rise when it gets darker. This is why we sleep at night. Serotonin is the hormone of wakefulness and alertness. It naturally increases when you are exposed to bright light. So, in the winter months when there is less light, your serotonin levels tend to be lower, and your melatonin levels higher. The sun is more than just a placebo effect; the brightness of the sun actually triggers hormonal changes that tend to make you happier. In some cases, doctors prescribe light treatments instead of drugs to increase serotonin levels and give sufferers of SAD more energy and less depression.

In the Bible, the sun was used as a symbol of righteousness, glory, and hope. Matthew 13:43 says, “Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father.” What does it mean to shine like the sun? Perhaps we will give happiness to others in the way the sun gives us happiness. Perhaps we will shine our light, God’s light, everywhere, enabling other people and other things to be what God meant them to be.

Temperance

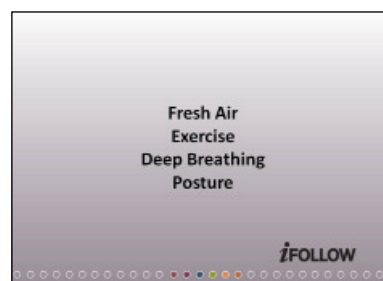
There are many extremes on this planet, many of them related to some evil even if they initially appear delightful. People in their search for God have pursued many paths. Some have sought refuge in self-denial. Some starve themselves or beat themselves in an attempt to earn their way into heaven, or to achieve some state divorced from the so-called “carnal.” Some have pursued a very different path, seeking every excess in trying to find some pleasure that would make everything worth it, that would make them stop wanting to seek God. God shows us in the Bible that neither of these things are his will. In Eden he gave Adam and Eve “every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it.” (Gen 1:29) He obviously meant us to enjoy what He gave us.

When Jesus was here on earth, eating and drinking with the people, He was accused of being a glutton and a drunkard by those who adhered strictly to a healthy Jewish diet. (Matt. 11:19) We know that he was not truly a glutton or drunkard, since both are denounced in Proverbs (23:2, 23:21, 26:9). We can, however, extrapolate from this passage that he did feast. He was not an ascetic.

Clearly God’s will for us is temperance and moderation. This means avoiding the more damaging substances we can put into our bodies, which can cause permanent damage, death, or birth defects. Any of these would be a very high price to pay for one experience of euphoria. Drunkenness can lead to other situations as well, such as unwise sexual contact, and unnecessary risks which can result in death. These are

things which must be considered. If we plunge into them without thinking, the results could be more than we bargain for.

There are some forms of intemperance, though, which are very acceptable in our society, and even in our churches. Overwork, overeating, overindulgence in various forms of entertainment, all these things are included in this biblical injunction against intemperance. When you're on the couch in front of the TV, a big bag of chips beside you and the remote in your hand, you are still the temple of the Holy Spirit.



Air

Our lungs are one of the many amazing structures God built into our bodies. Breathing is not something most people think about until they are unable to do so. Our lungs are one of our biggest contacts with the outside world. If eight glasses of water every day seems like a lot, compare it to the 2,100 to 2,400 gallons of air we inhale and exhale each day every day (Lungs). We pull air in through our mouth and nose, through our windpipe, and into our lungs which are divided into many tiny sacs called alveoli. Each lung contains enough alveoli to cover about the area of a tennis court (*ibid.*). This might seem like a huge amount of air, but our bodies require huge amounts of air. About 90 percent of our bodies' energy is created by oxygen (Oxygen).

After we breathe the air into our lungs, some of the oxygen in the air is absorbed by our lungs. At the same time, our bodies discard the carbon dioxide which is a byproduct of our body's energy conversion process. The oxygen is then carried by red blood cells to where it's needed. Our brains take up the largest amount of oxygen; about a quarter of our oxygen goes straight to our brains. The rest goes to cells in other parts of our bodies. The red blood cells then carry carbon dioxide, discarded by the cells, back to the lungs to be exhaled into the air.

Our cells use the oxygen to produce energy. Oxygen is like gasoline for our cells; without it our cells will not "run." Cells need oxygen to perform their basic functions. Without oxygen, our hearts would not be able to pump, we would be unable to digest, our brains would be unable to process information, and we would be in a very bad case indeed.

It's easy to see why oxygen is important to us, but the question becomes what can we do? How can we make sure our bodies have the oxygen they need to be healthy? There are many ways we can help our bodies receive the necessary oxygen. Here are some of the most important.

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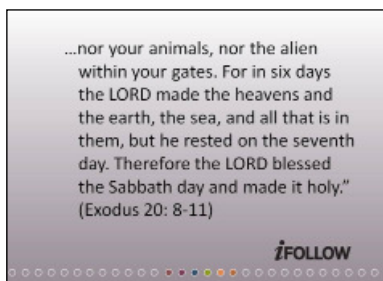
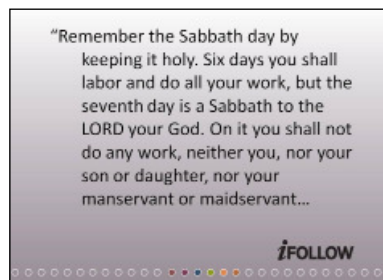
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Fresh Air: Dr. Bernell Baldwin has written of the importance of fresh, clean, outdoor air, as opposed to re-circulated indoor air. Why fresh air? He cites the chemical difference in fresh air (the negatively charged oxygen molecule) as being the vital difference. He lists several advantages of this difference, including a better sense of well-being, an increased ability to relax, and the mildly antiseptic affect of fresh air on airborne bacteria and viruses. Even before the chemical composition of air was understood, fresh air was known to have a beneficial effect on people. Ellen White, in her book *Education*, speaks to the importance of “recreation in the open air.”

Exercise: Aerobic (meaning “with air”) is exercise which increases the amount of oxygen absorbed by the body. It increases the amount of oxygen our bodies can absorb, as well as having many other health advantages. Forms of exercise that can be practiced out of doors are ideal. This can be anything from brisk walking, jogging, playing tennis, swimming, cycling, or anything else that gets your heart pumping.

Deep Breathing: Deep breathing is breathing in a deliberately slow, relaxed manner. Most adults breathe very shallowly, using our chest muscles instead of our diaphragms. The diaphragm is a layer of muscle in between our lungs and our lower organs. Its contraction and expansion causes us to breathe deeply, utilizing more of our lungs. This helps oxygenate our tissues and relieve built up tension. Tension causes us to tense our muscles which restricts our breathing, as well as the flow of blood, and thereby oxygen, through our bodies. Not only do deep breathing exercises help us temporarily, learning to breath with our diaphragms on a daily basis will help our oxygen intake.

Posture: Your mother was right on this one. Standing up straight relieves pressure on your lungs and internal organs, allowing your lungs to do their work better. If you sit a lot on a daily basis, it’s important not to slouch, as this also will constrict lung function. If it’s an option, there are ergonomically designed office chairs and chair covers which help with posture.

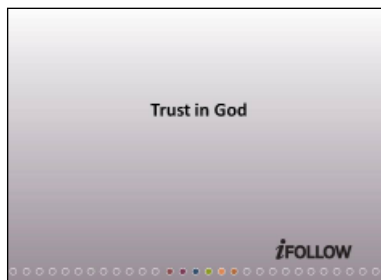


Rest

The first thing God did after he created the world and everything on it was rest. “By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work.” (Gen. 2:2) There are surely many things He could have done instead, but He rested. He looked at His creation and rested. Surely it behooves

us to follow His example? Throughout Scriptures God showed us our need for rest. It was so important to Him that He not only included it in the words He gave Moses, but devoted more time to its description than to any other commandment.

“Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor the alien within your gates. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.” (Exodus 20:8-11)



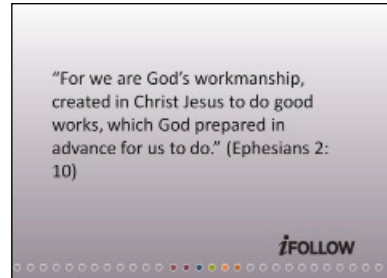
He gives us the gift of a day without work, not only for us but for those who work for us. He also gave His people feast days, for them to stop working and celebrate Him and each other. He knew, long before modern science rediscovered it, that rest and vacations are vital to maintaining physical and mental health.

Another kind of rest He gives us every day is sleep. He gives us nearly a third of each day to devote to rest and restoration of our minds and bodies. It is a princely gift, and to misuse it would be a shame.

We don't entirely understand sleep, but we know that it's necessary. If we don't sleep we don't function well and, eventually, our bodies will simply fall asleep with or without our permission. Sleep has two basic stages which we call Rapid Eye Movement (REM) and Non-Rapid Eye Movement. These are named for the movements of our eyeballs during sleep. We know very little about either stage. We know that REM sleep is key to our sleep cycle; if we never reach the REM cycle of our sleep we will not wake up rested. Sleeping pills and alcohol can sometimes interfere with the stages of sleep, causing sleep deprivation. A person can sleep while under the influence of these drugs, but not actually gather much benefit from the sleep.

As discussed earlier in the section on sunlight, our levels of the hormone melatonin, the sleep hormone, increase when it gets dark. These continue to increase as it gets darker, and then begins to decrease when it begins getting lighter (around midnight.) This is one of the things which make us sleep at night. Another is what is called our circadian rhythm, which is an inner time keeper which controls inner temperature and certain enzymes in the body. All these things work together to make us creatures that sleep at night. There is some difference among people as to whether they tend to be more alert in the evenings or in the morning, but most healthy people do tend to sleep at night unless there's an outside force affecting their system.

The average adult needs eight to nine hours of sleep every night, and it's important that the sleep schedule remains relatively constant. Sleep at the "wrong" time in your cycle gives you much less benefit. Sleep deprivation can cause many mental and physical side effects including impaired motor skills and a decrease in cognitive performance.



Trust in Divine Power

Belief in a higher power has been linked to decreased stress levels, lower rates of cancer and heart disease, and a stronger immune system. These are the advantages for the body, but it's a much greater advantage for the spirit. A belief in God gives us something to hold on to; it gives us something to work for.

When you're one of God's children, you're not alone. You're not an individual. You're a part of something greater. By yourself, you might just be a chip off the block, but you're an important chip in a mosaic that tells a grander story. Each one of us is unique, just as no two pieces of a puzzle are the same, but like the pieces of a puzzle we each have a place where we belong, a gap that we were meant to fill. We are not all different because we are all random accidents, born to create more random accidents and die, we are different because we were made different, because we "are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." (Ephesians 2:10)

Conclusion

Our bodies are complex pieces of machinery requiring a lot of care. God gave us all the resources we need to do so, but it's up to us to make sure we guard our bodies carefully. If we don't then they can break down and become useless. If we do take care of our bodies, then we can begin to fully realize what we are capable of, not only physically but spiritually. "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body." (1 Corinthians 6:19-20) God has given us amazing instruments with which to do amazing things. Taking care of what He's given us is one step in discovering what He wants us to do with the talents and skills He has given us.



Handouts in this Package

1. The Food Pyramid and Nutrition Principles
2. NEWSTART
3. Adventist Church Standards on Health and Temperance

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Discussion Questions

1. What are the difficulties you face in eating well and wisely?
2. How much have you exercised this week? What can you do differently? Can the members of the group help each other in any way?
3. Jesus referred to himself as the water of life. Given your new knowledge of what water does for our systems, what might He have meant by this? In what way is Jesus the spiritual water to our lives as physical water is to our bodies?
4. Why do you think Micah refers to Jesus as the “sun of righteousness” rather than the “Son of righteousness”?
5. Which areas are easy for you to be temperate in? Which are not so easy?
6. What are some of the reasons the Holy Spirit is referred to as wind? How is He like air to our hearts, as air is to our bodies?
7. Name some of the ways you build restfulness into your life. Is there enough? How can you get more, if you need it?
8. How does your belief in God affect your view of the universe? How would your views change if you didn’t believe in God?
9. Do you find it easy or difficult to trust God in your day-to-day life? Why?

Group Activities

Activity 1

Purpose: To think about the levels of spiritual “nutrition” we need, as well as physical.

Preparation: You need tables or desks, writing materials, preferably including markers or crayons for color, and a large sheet of paper for each person.

Assignment: Make a spiritual pyramid. Using the food pyramid as a guide, each participant will make a pyramid of activities which are necessary to a healthy spiritual life. Begin with Jesus as the base and see what else you can come up with. Don't worry about making the pyramid perfect or symmetrical; give it as many layers as it needs.

Debrief: Share thoughts, emotions, and reactions this exercise brings up.

Time: Allow 15 minutes for making the pyramids, and another 15 for sharing.

Activity 2

Purpose: To increase understanding of breathing techniques.

Preparation: None needed, though an anatomical chart showing the diaphragm would be a nice extra.

Assignment: Identify the diaphragm. Tell the group, “Place your hands around your waist, in the space between your lower ribs and hipbones. Inhale sharply, as though you've been startled by something. You should feel the muscle contract suddenly. These are the muscles of your diaphragm. These are the muscles you want to use when breathing deeply.” Next, have them practice breathing deeply. Say, “Place your hands on your stomach and relax your shoulders. Inhale through your nose and concentrate on pushing your belly out as you inhale. When you're finished inhaling, hold your breath for a few seconds and release it through your mouth. You should see your belly relax back inward again. Repeat several times. If your stomach goes in and out as you breathe, this is a sign that your diaphragm is doing the work and not your chest muscles.”

Debrief: Discuss the following questions: Why is breathing so important? Can our bodies just take care of it on their own? Are there participants who have asthma or other breathing ailments? How has it changed their view of breathing? In what way

can we do “spiritual deep breathing exercises”? Could we consider being in a general attitude of prayer all the time as “spiritual breathing,” and special times of prayer as “deep breathing”? What would it do for our spiritual lives?

Time: Do five minutes of deep breathing. Ask if people feel any different afterwards. Allow 10-15 minutes for discussion.

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Group
Activities

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Handout 1

The Food Pyramid and Nutrition Principles

1. Bread, rice, cereal, and pasta are all grains or grain products. We should eat six to eleven servings of these every day. It is best if we eat a variety of grains, as opposed to just one kind, and at least half of our grain intake should be of whole grains. The importance of grains in our diet was referenced by Jesus when He called Himself the bread of life (John 6:35). He should be the base of our spiritual pyramid in the way that bread is the base of our nutritional pyramid.
2. Vegetables; we should eat three to five servings each day.
3. Fruit, two to four servings per day.
4. Milk, yogurt, cheese—two to four servings daily. A vegan diet excludes this part of the pyramid. In a vegan diet, it's very important to be sure you have enough calcium, which is found in foods such as tofu, rhubarb, collard greens, spinach, turnip greens, okra, white beans, baked beans, broccoli, peas, brussel sprouts, sesame seeds, bok choy, and almonds. Vitamin B12 may be deficient, so vegans should consume flaxseed oil, walnuts, and other foods that are sources of B12. Even then, they may need to supplement as well.
5. Protein group; two or three servings daily. In a vegetarian diet this consists of beans, nuts, and products made from beans and nuts, such and vegetarian meats which are often made from soy protein and may be fortified with B12. This food group also includes eggs.
6. Fats, sugars, and oils use sparingly. Fat and sugar are both necessary parts of our nutrition, but for the most part, a balanced diet will provide the body with plenty of both. There are certain oils which contain nutritional value in their own right, but oils should never be overused.

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Handout 2

NEWSTART

N = Nutrition

There are principles which can be universally applied, but it's important to remember that diet is not one-size-fits-all. What works for another may not work for you, and what works for you may not work for another. With this in mind, we must be careful not to dictate the food choices of others, or allow others to dictate our choices. Diet is not a moral issue. Morals do not change, whereas what God told us to eat changed several times. When Adam and Eve left Eden, which was perfect and provided them with perfect nutrition, the world was no longer perfect, and so provided them with imperfect nutrition. God told them what to eat to compensate, at least partly, for this lack. After the flood, which destroyed the world and probably rearranged the topsoil entirely, God again told them how to supplement their diets to compensate for the lacking nutrients. Now, thousands of years later, the earth continues to "wax old like a garment" (Hebrews 1:11) and the earth provides us with poorer nutrition than ever. Now we may sometimes need to supplement our diets with additional vitamins and nutrients to obtain optimal health.

E = Exercise

Exercise is crucial to a healthy body. God made our bodies to move, and if they do not move they fall into disrepair. When our daily lives are not physically active on their own, it's our job to make sure our temples of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19) are well cared for. Exercise has many benefits, and not all of them are solely related to our bodies.

W = Water

A minimum of eight glasses a day. Clean water, in particular, is what our systems require. Spring water is ideal, or water from a good, clean well. Part of making sure we stay healthy is making sure that future generations have enough clean water to drink. Be conservative with your water use. Something as small as turning off the water while you brush your teeth can have surprisingly big results over time. Make your showers shorter. Wash the car less frequently, and trust nature to provide enough rain, in most instances, for your lawn. Be careful what household cleaners and garden fertilizers you use. Don't use chemicals that will hurt our water and us.

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S = Sunlight

The sun is one of God's amazing creations: a giant ball of hydrogen giving the earth its major source of energy. The sun gives us heat and light; it makes photosynthesis possible, and gives us beautiful displays like sunrises and aurora. The sun has a strong psychological role, completely aside from its physical health benefits.

In an age where the fear of cancer is always on our minds, sunlight is avoided to an extent which is unhealthy. When the sun hits our skin, a chemical in our skin absorbs some of the light and produces vitamin D. This is one of the only ways we get vitamin D; it rarely occurs naturally in food. Older people or people with certain disorders may need to take vitamin D supplements. This should be done with caution, as too much vitamin D can also harm the system.

Overexposure to sun can cause damage in the form of sunburns and suntans. Neither are good for the skin, and it is believed that only a few minutes outside a few times a week is enough for a healthy person to produce sufficient levels of Vitamin D. In northern climates during the winter, this may need to be daily. But it doesn't have to be hours on a beach, or worse yet, in a tanning booth! Skin is very fragile, and we only get one. We need to protect it well.

T = Temperance

Clearly God's will for us is temperance and moderation. This means avoiding the more damaging substances we can put into our bodies, which can cause permanent damage, death, or birth defects. Any of these would be a very high price to pay for one experience of euphoria. Drunkenness can lead to other situations as well, such as unwise sexual contact, and unnecessary risks which can result in death. These are things which must be considered. If we plunge into them without thinking, the results could be more than we bargain for.

There are some forms of intemperance, though, which seem very acceptable in our society, and even in our churches. Overwork, overeating, overindulgence in various forms of entertainment, all these things are included in this biblical injunction against intemperance. When you're on the couch in front of the TV, a big bag of chips beside you and the remote in your hand, you are still the temple of the Holy Spirit.

A = Air

Our lungs are one of the many amazing structures God built into our bodies. Breathing is not something most people think about until they are unable to do so. Our lungs are one of our biggest contacts with the outside world. If eight glasses of water every day seems like a lot, compare it to the 2,100 to 2,400 gallons of air we inhale

and exhale each day every day! Fresh, outdoor air, exercise, deep breathing, and good posture all help us get our full daily dose of life-giving oxygen.

R = Rest

God gives us the gift of a day without work, not only for us but for those who work for us. He also gave His people feast days, for them to stop working and celebrate Him and each other. He knew, long before modern science rediscovered it, that rest and vacations are vital to maintaining physical and mental health.

Another kind of rest He gives us every day is sleep. He gives us nearly a third of each day to devote to rest and restoration of our minds and bodies. It is a princely gift, and to misuse it would be a shame.

T = Trust in God

Belief in a higher power has been linked to decreased stress levels, lower rates of cancer and heart disease, and a stronger immune system. These are the advantages for the body, but it's a much greater advantage for the spirit. A belief in God gives us something to hold on to; it gives us something to work for.

When you're one of God's children, you're not alone. You're not an individual. You're a part of something greater. By yourself, you might just be a chip off the block, but you're an important chip in a mosaic that tells a grander story. Each one of us is unique, just as no two pieces of a puzzle are the same, but like the pieces of a puzzle we each have a place where we belong, a gap that we were meant to fill. We are not all different because we are all random accidents, born to create more random accidents and die, we are different because we were made different, because we "are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." (Ephesians 2:10)

(The NEWSTART acronym was developed originally at Weimar Institute near Sacramento, California, and has become widely used as a framework for understanding the basic principles of wellness.)

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Handout 3

Health and Temperance

The body is the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:9). “Both mental and spiritual vigor are in great degree dependent upon physical strength and activity; whatever promotes physical health promotes the development of a strong mind and a well-balanced character.”—*Education*, p. 195. For this reason, Seventh-day Adventists take care to live intelligently in accordance with health principles of physical exercise, respiration, sunshine, pure air, use of water, sleep, and rest. By conviction, they choose to eat healthfully, freely choosing to follow the principles of health, of self-control, and of wholesome diet. Therefore, they abstain from all forms of alcohol, tobacco, and addictive drugs. They strive to preserve their physical and psychological balance by avoiding any excess.

Health reform and the teaching of health and temperance are inseparable parts of the Advent message. Instruction came to us through the Lord’s chosen messenger “that those who are keeping His commandments must be brought into sacred relationship to Himself, and that by temperance in eating and drinking they must keep mind and body in the most favorable condition for service.”—*Counsels on Health*, pp. 132, 133. Also, “it is the Lord’s design that the restoring influence of health reform shall be a part of the last great effort to proclaim the gospel message.”—*Medical Ministry*, p. 259.

We belong to God, body, soul, and spirit. It is therefore our religious duty to observe the laws of health, both for our own well-being and happiness and for more efficient service to God and our fellow men. The appetite must be kept under control. Health is promoted by an intelligent observance of the hygienic principles having to do with pure air, ventilation, suitable clothing, cleanliness, proper exercise and recreation, adequate sleep and rest, and an adequate, wholesome diet. God has furnished man with a liberal variety of foods sufficient to satisfy every dietary need. Fruits, grains, nuts, and vegetables prepared in simple ways “make, with milk or cream, the most healthful diet.”—*Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene*, p. 47.

When the principles of healthful living are practiced, the need for stimulants will not be felt. The use of intoxicants and narcotics of any kind is forbidden by nature’s law. From the early days of this movement abstinence from the use of liquor and tobacco has been a condition of membership in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. (See *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual*, pp. 16, 33, 35, 195, 221, 185, 211.)

God has given us great light on the principles of health, and modern scientific research has abundantly verified these principles. These cannot be safely ignored, for we are told that those “who choose to follow their own preferences in this matter, eating and drinking as they please, will gradually grow careless of the instruction the Lord has given regarding other phases of the present truth and will lose their perception of what is truth.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, pp. 156, 157.

Statement from Chapter 13 of the **Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual**, “*Standards of Christian Living*,” the official description of the minimum spiritual disciplines of the denomination.

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