

The Laws of Health

Foundational Truth Volume 4

By Peter Tan

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PREFACE

Many people, who have received their healing, loose it later because they have not understood the laws of health. Others have been prayed for but have never been healed nor ever experience sound health. Even ministers with healing ministries fall sick. Falling sick occasionally has been accepted as a norm.

The great need in the body of Christ is not only to discover the laws of healing but also to discover the laws of health. It is far better to remain healthy than to fall sick and then be healed. Jesus was never sick at all during His ministry on earth. He is our example.

In this book we seek to bring to light some basic laws of health that is found in the Bible. May it bring forth a greater measure of health as you practice them.

I wish above all things that you may prosper and be in health, as your soul prospers (3 Jn. 2).

Pastor Peter Tan

CHAPTER 1

THE WILL OF GOD

It is God's perfect Will that all His children enjoy perfect health. It is wonderful to be healed. But it is even more wonderful to be in health and never sick. Health was a part of the Old Covenant that God promised to the Israelites. God said that He would take sickness from the midst of them (Ex. 23:25). The Israelites were to experience freedom from sickness - divine health was their privilege. This covenant was further expounded in Deuteronomy chapter twenty-eight.

The Apostle John expresses the Will of God when he wrote to Gaius saying that he prayed for Gaius to be in health (3 Jn. 2). Being in health is not an accident. Nor is it to be taken for granted and only appreciated when one falls sick. Health is produced, maintained and a consequence of keeping in harmony the laws that governs the spirit, the soul and the body. Neglect in one realm can upset the equilibrium.

The Balance of Spirit, Soul and Body

It is a common experience that what goes on in either the spirit, the soul or the body will affect the other two parts. Physical tiredness affects our mental ability to concentrate. Thoughts of anger or depression can affect our appetite for food. The lack of spiritual tranquillity stirs unrest in our souls. The spirit realm is the predominant influence of all three. However, the influence of the soul and body must not be neglected.

The physical hunger of Esau caused him to be blind to the value of his birthright (Gen 25:29-34). Many Christians have made blind hasty decisions based upon their natural appetites. Jesus was tempted by Satan to satisfy His physical hunger by a misuse of the power of God (Matt. 4:2, 3). The strength of the temptation was amplified by the physical hunger that Jesus felt.

Paul, in writing to the Corinthians, spoke about how husbands and wives can refrain from sexual relationships, with consent from both sides, for the sake of fasting and prayer (1 Cor. 7:4, 5). However, he advises them to come together again after that so that Satan does not take opportunity to tempt them. We can see here how spiritual desires can overrule and control sexual desires. The spirit man can take ascendancy over the body. But yet we need to know the balance of spirit and body - the need for the husband and wife to come together again - lest Satan tempt them.

Epaphroditus did not understand the need of his body for proper rest and he fell sick (Phil. 2:27, 30). He broke natural laws of sleep. His body was weakened and fell sick. Many men of God, whose zeal has overtaken them, have wrecked their physical bodies through overwork. They forget that they have not received new resurrected bodies yet. On the other hand, we recognize that God does allow us from time to time to live above natural limitations. Moses lived forty days and night without food and water (Deut. 9:9). He probably went without sleep, too.

The secret is to understand the balance of spirit, soul and body. We need to develop a close relationship with God such that we can discern when He allows us to break physical laws through the Spirit's endowment and when He wants us to abide by them. It is not a clear-cut formula. It is a relationship.

In regard to this, ministers of God should know how to discern the amount of time they should spend with their family. To sacrifice the family on the altar of blind zeal to the point where you neglect them is not martyrdom. It is foolishness. Contrarily, to spend all your time with them and neglect the call and ministry of God is to put them first before God. It would have been idolatry. The key then is to neither neglect the spiritual nor the natural but to have a balance between them.

The Benefits of Proper Balance

Most people who work in office-related jobs do not get sufficient physical exercise. As such, most of them develop backaches at some point in their lives. Some Christians forget that they still live in a physical body that was not designed to be cramped in an office environment day and night. A simple half an hour walk everyday would have brought greater relief than all their cries to God for healing.

I am not advocating spending all our time anxious over the physical realm. But I do want to make Christians aware of the fact that they do not possess their resurrected bodies yet. Therefore, they need to spend at least some time, several days a week, keeping their physical bodies trim and fit for God to use for His glory.

There have been times when I have undertaken projects that demand my full mental and spiritual concentration. After many hours of intense concentration, I would take a break from the project and take a walk. When I come back again to continue the project, I find myself physically, mentally and spiritually refreshed and rejuvenated.

Sometimes I have wrestled with theological concepts that stretched my imagination to its limits. At such times I would take a long walk and then come back to seek to understand the meditations of my heart. It is only when our physical bodies are in health that our souls and spirits can reach its fullest capacities. The reverse is also true. No one can deny that there is an intricate link between the spirit, the soul and the body.

The Balanced Life of Jesus

A study of the life of Jesus would show us that Jesus spent a lot of His time walking. The distances of the towns and villages He walked through range from a few miles to 60 miles. Added to that, He very frequently climbed the Mount of Olives to pray - a height of two thousand seven hundred and twenty-three feet. Many of His teachings were given to His disciples as they walked from town to town.

Jesus recognized the need to go aside and rest. At a time when the disciples were too busy in the ministry, Jesus told them to come aside to a deserted place and rest a while (Mk. 6:31). The crowds followed them but the Bible tells us they did have some time to themselves before the crowds gathered (Mk. 6:32). After feeding them, Jesus dismissed the crowds and departed to the mountain to pray (Mk. 6:46).

Jesus knew how to be alone to pray. He also had His favourite prayer place in Gethsemane where He used to pray (Jn. 18:1, 2). Jesus knew how to seek the refreshment of praying in the garden when many houses would have been opened for Him to use at any time He requested. Jesus in following the leading of the Holy Spirit lived a balanced life. His spiritual life was predominant but He never neglected the physical.

It is amazing that Jesus Christ, in the midst of a cosmic salvation plan, while dying on the cross, could concern Himself with the needs of Mary (Jn. 19:26,27). From that day forward, John took Mary to his own home.

Health Springs from Harmony

Paul states that physical exercise profits a little but godliness profits unto all things (1 Tim. 4:8). He is not undermining physical exercise here. Rather, he is pointing to the temporal nature of all things physical. The purpose of maintaining good physical trimness is that we may be in health to serve God better. It is not merely to build good looks or physical endowments for physical rewards. Our Christian goals and purposes in this life are all eternity orientated.

Godliness profits unto all things. True godliness should teach us balance in all three realms of spirit, soul and body. After all, it was God who created man with a physical body. Godliness does not just bring profit in the spiritual realm but also in the natural realm. Only the Spirit-filled man would know how to balance the harmony of spirit, soul and body. The natural man would place too much emphasis on either the mental realm or the natural realm with disastrous results.

Receiving and maintaining divine health is based upon understanding the various laws that operate in the spirit, soul and body realm. The greatest testimony a Christian can give is not that of healing. It is the testimony of divine health - total freedom from sickness - through the power of the Holy Spirit.

CHAPTER 2

THE LAWS OF THE SPIRIT REALM

The spirit of man was created to be the ruler over man's soul and body. In fact without the spirit of man, the body would have no life. The body without the spirit is dead (Jam. 2:26). When God first created man, the body of man - although perfect - was without life until God breathed His spirit into man and man became a living soul (Gen. 2:7). The spirit of man was to rule as king, the soul as the prime minister and the body as the servant.

This delicate arrangement was upset when Adam and Eve sinned. Today fallen men are ruled by the flesh and mental realm. Some who try to move into the spirit realm without the protection of the blood of Jesus have yielded to the demonic spiritual realm. When a person is born again, the Holy Spirit puts a new spirit within him and restores him to be spirit-dominated as God has intended men to be.

The Fall of Man

God told Adam that in the day that he eats of the fruit of the tree of knowledge, he will die (Gen. 2:17). The original Hebrew language of the Old Testament brings a more detail picture of this verse. The Young's Literal Translation of the Bible translates Genesis chapter two verse seventeen as follows:

“And of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou dost not eat of it, for in the day of thine eating of it - dying thou dost die.”

There are two Hebrew words for 'die.' One is in the present tense and the other is in the future tense. God was saying that in the day that Adam eats of the fruit, he will die spiritually (present tense), and in dying spiritually, he will die physically (future tense). Adam died spiritually the day he sinned but he lived on physically for nine hundred and thirty years (Gen. 5:5).

It was spiritual death that leads to physical death. The moment Adam's spirit was cut off from God, something happened to his soul and understanding. It was darkened. The condition of a darkened understanding continues throughout all generations because of alienation from the life of God (Eph. 4:18). Since Adam's sin, the law of sin and death has dwelt in our physical bodies (Rom. 5:14; 7:17, 18).

The Spirit of Man

The spirit of man is the strength of his soul and body. Everything physical is first imaged and created in the spirit realm (Heb. 11:3). The visible world is an image of the spiritual world (Rom. 1:20). A weak spirit produces a weak mind and subsequently a weak body. The laws of health in the spirit realm all relate to laws that feed, train and strengthened the spirit man. The purpose of all the laws is to produce a healthy and strong spirit man.

A strong, vibrant spirit produces health in the soul and in the body. A broken spirit dries the bones (Pro. 17:22). The spirit of a man will sustain him in his sickness (Pro. 18:14). One of the keys to divine health is to learn the secret of keeping our spirits healthy.

The Law of Meditation

The law of meditation is the law of feeding the spirit man. The food of the spirit man is the Word of God. Meditation in the Word of God brings life and health to our flesh. The Word of God is life and health to our flesh (Pro. 4:22). It is possible for the Word of God to be made flesh (Pro. 4:22; Jn. 1:14). All flesh and all matter is made up of God's Word anyway (Heb. 11:3).

The Bible declares that the life of the flesh is in the blood (Gen. 9:14, 5; Lev. 17:14). The life in the blood affects every tissue, organ and cell in the physical body. Blood is manufactured in the bone marrow. The Word of God can enter into the bone marrow and impart life and health to the blood (Heb. 4:12; Pro. 16:24). It works directly upon the source of our physical lives.

Meditation involves the constant confession of God's Word. As stated in Volume one of this series, meditation involves saying the same thing God says (homologos - confession). We have a choice to say what we feel or think but when we aligned ourselves to say as God says, we release God's power into our lives.

The Power of the Tongue

In this regard, we have to be careful of what we say if we want to live in divine health. This is one of the cardinal laws to live in divine health - keep thy tongue from speaking guile (Ps. 34:12, 13). No doubt, there will be many things which are true and negative. Yet we are to refrain ourselves in such conversation if we want to live in divine health.

Keep your conversation pleasant if you want to live in health. Pleasant words are like a honeycomb, sweetness to the soul and health to the bones (Pro. 16:24). We seldom see grouchy and negative people live in divine health. Most people who live long healthy lives have a pleasant disposition and have a positive outlook to life. Death and life are in the power of the tongue and those who love it will eat its fruit (Pro. 18:21).

Moreover Jesus tells us not to judge and be critical of others (Matt. 7:1, 2). Much of criticism is out of the critic's insecurity or jealousy. It is also sometimes out of an air of superiority and pride. The excuse of a critic is that their motive is to help and improve. Even psychologists today agree that right behaviour is enhanced in others by encouragement when the right thing is done rather than verbal abuse when the wrong thing is done.

The difference between criticism and counsel is that criticism is unsolicited while counsel is solicited. The greatest danger a critic does is more to himself rather than others. Jesus said that you will receive the same measure of judgment you judged others with (Matt. 7:1). You criticize at the expense of your health.

Therefore, in order to live in divine health, keep thy tongue from evil! Or better still, speak only what is in line with the Word of God. Love thinks no evil, speaks no evil and lives no evil.

The Law of Praying in Tongues

One of the most powerful spiritual weapons that God has given to the church is prayer in tongues. Paul says that when we pray in tongues, it is our spirit man who prays (1 Cor. 14:14). Praying in tongues is another important key to building immunity to sicknesses and diseases. It keeps our spirit strong and healthy.

When we pray in tongues, we are edifying ourselves (1 Cor. 14:4). We are building ourselves up in the strength and power of the Lord. Praying in the spirit builds us upon the rock of faith (Jude 20). It helps tune all of our souls and bodies to be pliable and yielded to the Word of God. Faith does not come by praying in tongues. Faith comes by hearing the Word of God (Rom. 10:17). Praying in tongues builds us upon the most holy faith - it increases in our lives the ability to absorb the Word of faith.

The Clothing of Power

Jesus in speaking about the baptism in the Holy Spirit said that the disciples are to be clothed with power from on high (Lk. 24:49). When the

baptism in the Holy Spirit was received, all the disciples spoke in tongues (Acts 2:4). Therefore, speaking in tongues is related to the clothing of power from on high. It is the testimony of many Christians who pray long hours in tongues that it feels as if they were physically clothed with power.

Personally, I have found that a minimum spiritual diet of meditation in the Word of God for an hour and prayer in tongues for another hour has been the best immunity shot against sicknesses. This is of course only minimal. Divine health does not just come by accident. We must be prepared to invest our time in all this spiritual endeavours of maintaining a healthy spirit man. Physical health is the fringe benefit. There are many great blessings in the spiritual realm for those who spend that much time in spiritual pursuits.

On the day of Pentecost, Peter stood up and in his preaching quoted Psalms sixteen in reference to their baptism in the Holy Spirit. He quotes David as saying 'my heart rejoiced and my tongue was glad' (Acts 2:26). However, a close look at Psalms sixteen shows that it actually says, 'my heart is glad and my glory rejoices' (Ps. 16:9). The word 'tongue' has been substituted for 'glory.'

The Holy Spirit through the lips of Peter was showing that there is a relationship between 'tongue' and 'glory.' The glory of God is the tangible manifested presence of His being. The glory of God is related to speaking in tongues in the same manner in which the power of God is related to the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Worship in the spirit has always increased the manifestation of God's glory.

Prayer in tongues builds a covering of glory about us. The fringe benefit of this is immunity to sicknesses and diseases present in the world. John G. Lake speaks of this clothing of the Holy Spirit as the law of the Spirit of Life. In an experiment with scientists, live germs placed in his hands died instantly (The John G. Lake Sermons on Dominion over Demons, Diseases and Death, pg. 108). John G. Lake says that tongues have been to him the making of his ministry (The New John G. Lake Sermons, pg. 17).

It should not be unreasonable for believers to believe that germs or viruses will die instantly at the moment of contact with their bodies. Jesus gave to the disciples power and authority over ALL sicknesses and diseases (Matt. 10:1). This authority and power is still operational today through the commission of Jesus (Mk. 16:18).

The Holy Spirit helps us in our infirmities (Rom. 8:26). The word 'infirmities' (Greek - *astheneia*) has been translated as sicknesses in various parts of the Bible (Matt. 8:17; Lk. 5:15; 8:2; 13:11; Jn. 5:4). The Holy Spirit

helps us in our infirmities by helping us to pray with groanings which cannot be uttered - praying in tongues. Praying in tongues builds a spiritual clothing of healing and health about us.

Of course, the context of Romans eight speaks about many areas that the Holy Spirit helps us. But we are pointing to another facet of truth that can be added to the normal understanding of Romans chapter eight. It is as we see all the facets of truths that our lives can be richly blessed by God.

The two laws of meditation in the Word of God and praying in tongues are essential laws to abide by to receive and maintain divine health.

CHAPTER 3 THE LAWS OF THE SOUL REALM

There are sicknesses of the soul just as there are sicknesses of the body. Sicknesses of the soul have not really been classified because there are no measurements to define what the optimum healthy soul should be like. Everybody knows what a healthy physical body should be like. Thus, when their bodies fall sick and are incapable of functioning properly, they classify it as sickness.

However, the Bible does have some classifications of what a healthy soul should be like. We can set our minds on the things of the spirit and receive life and peace rather than death (Rom. 8:6). Those who learn to live by the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus will be free from the law of sin and death (Rom. 8:2). Freedom from the law of sin and death means freedom from sicknesses which, of course, means divine health.

The Law of Being Fear-Free and Faith-Filled

One of the major forces that have ruled mankind since Adam fell is the force of fear. Fear comes in every form and media. The basic reaction of the subconscious mind is fear. If one of our loved ones is delayed in coming home, the first thought that arises is that some evil has befallen them. The news media places fearful happenings in the headlines. It takes training to remove the natural inclination to fear.

Fear is the controlling force of the devil (Heb. 2:14, 15). The spirit of fear produces bondages (Rom. 8:15). Fear is faith perverted. Fear is belief in the devil's lies. Fear is the reverse gear of faith. Fear brings torments (1 Jn. 4:18). Fear weakens the physical body and makes it more subjectable to sicknesses.

Emotional stress has been scientifically proven to have an influence upon nearly every human ailment. This has even led to a new field of medical study called psychoneuroimmunology. This convincing research has been done by a team at the University of Rochester led by psychologist Robert Ader and immunologist Nicholas Cohen (Brody, J.E. "Emotions Found to Influence Nearly Every Human Ailment," New York Times, May 24, 1983, Page 17+).

All negative emotions must be eradicated if one is to enjoy divine health and life. We should set our minds on things which are noble, just, pure, lovely and of good report (Phil. 4:8). A positive mental attitude is vital to a health-filled life.

Being Faith-Filled

The opposite of fear is faith. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God (Rom. 10:17). Faith is hope-filled and positive. Faith is the substance of things hope for (Heb. 11:1). People who lose their hopes are tempted to commit suicide. Without hope, there is no faith. Since hope is the positive outlook of the future, then faith is confidence in the positive outlook of the future.

Some Christians have reacted to the deluge of positive thinking books and philosophy by becoming negative cynics. Any preacher who preaches positive thinking is quickly branded by them as heretics. We forget that the Bible message is a message of hope and faith in our living God. A true Christian should be an optimist.

The difference between positive thinkers and us is that they say, "I can do it," while we say, "I can do all things in Christ." Please note that we are still positive thinkers. They are positive thinkers. We are positive thinkers plus. The strength and power of our positiveness is our faith in God and not in ourselves.

The positive force of faith makes people whole. It was through faith in the Name of the Lord Jesus that Peter and John brought healing to the lame man (Acts 3:16).

And His Name, through faith in His Name, has made this man strong, whom you see and know. Yes, the faith which comes through Him has given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all (Acts 3:16).

Jesus, in ministering healing to many, has often attributed the miracle to the faith of the people concerned. He told the woman healed of the issue of blood that her faith has made her whole (Mk. 5:34). To the blind man, Jesus said that his faith has made him well (Mk. 10:52). The force of faith brings wholeness. The force of faith brings health. The law of sin and death is activated by fear. The law of the spirit of life is activated by faith. A positive mental attitude produces life (Rom. 8:6).

The Law of Joy

One of the first things that happened after the fall of man was the loss of joy (Gen. 3:10, 16). When we lose our joy we lose our health. A merry heart does good like a medicine (Pro. 17:22). Laughter eases the stress and the strains of life. Scientists studying the effects of laughter on people have

reported a measurable effect, not just on the lungs, but on other important organs.

Laughter, even when forced, results in a beneficial effect on us, both mentally and physically. One psychologist has said that laughter is good for both body and mind. It eliminates nervous tensions which upset body functions and it clears the mind of annoyances and resentments. Laughter leaves a feeling of well-being, of personal satisfaction, and of contentment (Cross, F. & W. "Laughter: A Way to Better Health," Science Digest, November 1977, pages 15-18+).

In the medical line, the notion that laughter was healthy was popularized by Norman Cousins's *Anatomy of an Illness*, published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* in 1976 and expanded into a best-selling book in 1979. Cousins, then editor of the *Saturday Review*, described his bout with ankylosing spondylitis, a chronic, progressive disease inflaming the joints of the spine; and he attributed his rather remarkable recovery to self treatment with vitamin C and laughter. One medical wag has said that he who laughs, lasts.

The Bible has long noted that the joy of the Lord is our strength (Neh. 8:10). The prophet Habakkuk, in the face of fig trees that don't blossom, fruitless vines, failing olives, empty harvest fields, and empty stalls, said that he will rejoice in the Lord (Hab. 3:17,18). Paul, while in prison facing trials, speaks of praying with joy (Phil. 1:4). He even went as far as urging the Philippians to rejoice in the Lord with him (Phil. 2:17, 18; 4:4). This was the same Paul who sang hymns together with Silas after being beaten and placed in stocks (Acts 16:23-25).

The apostles had learnt the secret of not letting the circumstances of life to steal their joy. They exemplified what joy-filled Christians can accomplish. In Paul's time the gospel was successfully brought to the entire known world.

Some Christians are of the opinion that the Spirit-filled Christian life is filled with religious sombreness. They forget that Jesus said that His joy is to remain in us and our joy is to be made full (Jn. 15:11). Jesus even said that no one can take away our joy (Jn. 16:22).

Undaunted Joy

The joy that Jesus has enabled us to have in Him is not affected by the circumstances of life. It is not a happiness which is a fruit of the circumstances of life. It is a fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22). Even in great

persecutions and difficulties, Jesus commands us to rejoice and leap for joy (Lk. 6:23). The joy He speaks about is not a natural joy but a supernatural God-given joy.

The Israelites were told to rejoice in the abundance of God's provisions (Deut. 16:11; 26:11). God told them that if they did not serve Him with gladness and with joy for the abundance of his blessings, the curses will come upon them (Deut. 28:45). If the devil can't steal our joy, he can't steal our goods.

The force of joy that God imparts into us is supernatural. We must learn to rejoice in the Lord always. The results of being filled with the Holy Spirit are the speaking of psalms, hymns and spiritual songs (Eph. 5:18,19). That means that the Spirit-filled Christian is a joy-filled Christian and not a glum-faced Christian. If the devil can't steal our joy, he can't steal our health.

The two laws of being faith-filled and being joy-filled are essential to maintain a healthy soul. Learn to have a positive mind and a positive attitude in life. Learn to laugh in the Holy Spirit. As our souls prosper and are in health, our bodies will also be in health (3 Jn. 2).

CHAPTER 4

THE LAWS OF THE PHYSICAL REALM

God has created man to live in both the spiritual and the physical world. Man has always swayed to extremes. Fallen man sways to the extreme of indulging in all the pleasures of the flesh. They become sensual and body-controlled. During the Dark Ages, Christianity became extremely ascetic to the level where even the most basic functions and requirements of the human body were regarded as sinful. The body was regarded as sinful and an object to be tortured and mistreated in order to achieve spirituality.

The biblical view is that God has created both the spiritual and the physical world for our enjoyment. Full enjoyment would depend on us following the laws that govern both realms. The human body is to be regarded as a holy dwelling place of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19, 20). Therefore, it is important to flow and harmonize with laws that keep the body - the temple of the Holy Spirit - healthy.

The Law of Fasting

Eating and fasting are part of the regular rhythm of our physical lives. The first meal of the morning is often called 'breakfast.' It is literally a break in the night of fasting. If you happen to eat later than usual in the evening, you may notice that you may not be hungry in the morning.

When a person is ill, they naturally do not eat and sometimes just ask for liquids. Sick animals sometimes do not eat for days. The instinctive fasting during sicknesses is just one of the ways our bodies fight sicknesses. Many people have found relief from coughs and colds during a fast.

Fasting is one of the most natural ways in which the body cleanses itself internally. Fasting removes excess weight and toxic matter from the body. It is one of the few successful natural purifiers in the polluted world. Fasting is a beauty treatment from within. It is the testimony of many that their skin has cleared up after a fast. Fasting is also one of the most powerful preventative forces against disease.

Many people eat out of habit and social custom then out of hunger. Eating has not only been for the purpose of satisfying hunger and our bodily needs. People end up gorging themselves out of purely social and sensual reasons. Overeating always has been accompanied by a hangover. Whether it is a queasy stomach or just a loss of appetite, we should pay attention to the 'squeaks' of our natural bodies.

The most natural thing to do after overeating is to begin a fast and let the body go back to normal. We should stop eating altogether and eat only when we feel hungry again, which can be from a few hours to a few days or more. Some people find that their body signals are erratic - they do not feel hungry when they need to replenish the food supply in their bodies. Scientists have found out that a human body that has insufficient exercise does not give correct natural signals of the need for food, sleep and wake.

The Health Fast

Fasting has many spiritual benefits but we will only focus on the physical benefits in this chapter. Based on the reasons given above, we should endeavour to fast regularly as a physical discipline. A weekly twenty-four hour fast would be a good way of maintaining sound physical health. Every week, the body will be given the chance to eliminate all the poisons present in foods that have been eaten.

The fasting can be in the form of a total fast (abstaining from food and water), a water fast (drinking only plain water), a liquid fast (drinking only fruit juices), or a fruit fast (eating only plain fruits). It may be more beneficial to have it as a sunrise to sunrise fast rather than from sunset to sunset. A fast that begins from the evening of the day to the evening of the following day is more like a partial one-meal fast as food is eaten on both days.

During a fast it is important to avoid cold drinks, tea and coffee. The body temperature drops during a fast as metabolism slows down. Therefore, it is important to keep warm during the fast. Tea and coffee contains caffeine which upsets the normal functions of the body by given it an artificial boost. In fact many tea and coffee drinkers experienced dizziness and sometimes headaches during a fast as the body seeks to eliminate all the poisons in their system. Generally, this also happens to people who have never fasted before as there is a great accumulation of toxins in their body. After the first few fasts, these side effects will disappear.

A good fast would cause our healing to spring forth speedily (Isa. 58:8). Daniel and his companions lived on vegetables and water for ten days and the chief of the eunuch found that their countenance appeared better and fatter than all the other young men (Dan. 1:12,15). They could have won the beauty contest if there was one.

The Diet Law

In the Old Testament, God set some diet laws for His people. He told the Israelites not to consume any animals that were unclean (Lev. 11; Deut. 14). The purpose of His law was that it may be well with them (Deut. 4:40; 5:16, 29; 6:3, 18; 12:25, 28; 22:7). God was concerned for the spiritual, social and physical well-being of the Israelites.

The spiritual and moral laws are still applicable today. The ceremonial laws which point to the coming of Christ were all abolished (or rather fulfilled) in Christ. The question is what about the diet laws? Scientists have agreed that the clean and unclean animals were not just ceremonial divisions but were actual physical differentials of the animals that were either physically clean or unclean. The clean animals have physical habitats and diets that were clean. The unclean animals were mostly scavengers.

In the New Testament, as in the Old, moral laws as a code of conduct are still applicable. The unclean animals have not changed their unclean habits in the New Covenant. Their flesh is still in a true sense an 'unclean scavenger's meat.' The question is whether God's recommended diet could still be beneficial for New Testament believers?

God also forbade the Israelites from eating fat (Lev. 7:23-25). Modern men have finally come to the conclusion that fat is not good for our bodies because of their high cholesterol content. New Testament believers can try to claim freedom from the law and eat fat the rest of their lives if they want to. But fat in the New Covenant has the same effect on the bodies as it has in the Old Covenant. We would be better off physically if we refrain from eating fat.

Misunderstood Scriptures

Many Christians claim that God has sanctified all animals for our consumption based on First Timothy chapter four verse three. They say that every creature can be eaten. Taken literally, these would include cockroaches and maggots. Or how about a delicacy of flies? The key word here is verse five where Paul says the sanctification is by prayer and the Word of God (1 Tim. 4:5).

The only Bible Paul had was the Old Testament. When he refers to the Word of God, he is referring to the Old Testament. Sanctified by the Word of God means that it is in line with the Word of God. That would have to mean that the animals referred to were clean animals that the Old Covenant sanctioned for consumption. The controversy that Paul was correcting was

not in regard to the consumption of clean and unclean animals but it was regarding the false belief that one is to consume only vegetables to be spiritual.

Moreover, the phrase 'every creature of God' is different from the phrase 'every creature.' When we say that every man of God is to be welcomed into the home, we do not mean every man. There are some men that the Bible tells us not to welcome into the house (2 Jn. 10). Paul even clarified that he was referring to meat which God has created to be received (1 Tim. 4:3). There are some meats that God has not created to be received. They are the scavengers whom God has created to clean up the earth.

Some say that Peter's vision of the clean and unclean animals were God's sanction for eating unclean animals. A close study shows us that the vision was repeated three times to symbolize the three Gentiles who were coming to meet him (Acts 10:16, 19). This was a symbolic vision which Peter understood as God sanctioning him to minister to the Gentiles (Acts 10:28).

In Romans chapter fourteen verse fourteen, the word 'unclean' has no reference to a sanction for eating unclean animals. The word used is 'koinos' which means 'ceremonial uncleanness.' The word used for unclean scavenger animals is 'akathartos' which means 'filth or impure uncleanness' (Acts 10:14, 28; Rev. 16:13; 18:2).

Even Jesus' confrontation with the Pharisees in regard to 'kosher' food was in reference to ceremonial uncleanness (Mark 7:15-19). The question at stake was not whether it was right or wrong to eat scavenger animals but rather whether it was right or wrong to keep the Jewish laws and customs of washing hands (Mk. 7:4,5). It would be a grave contextual mistake to jump to the conclusion from this passage and say that Jesus was saying it was alright to eat unclean scavenger animals including cockroaches, flies, worms, etc.

Those who claim Mark chapter sixteen and say that they can eat all they like are pulling the Scriptures to the extreme (Mk. 16:18). They might as well go around picking up snakes, too (Mk. 16:18). The promise here is in the context of preaching the gospel. It is a promise for protection in an accidental situation of being poisoned or being bitten by snakes rather than a purposeful act.

A Balanced View

On the other hand, it would be a serious mistake to say that the eating of unclean animals is sinful. In the New Covenant, the eating or non-eating of

unclean animals has nothing to do with our spirituality. We are all saved and brought into relationship with God through the blood of Jesus Christ. There are some groups that take this to the extreme and practice this for religious reasons rather than for health reasons. In regard to the Gentiles the early church ruled that the only requirements that they recommended were that the Gentiles abstain from things offered to idols, from blood from things strangled, and from sexual immorality (Acts 15:29).

The diet law of clean and unclean animals stands in the New Testament as a health law rather than a religious law. We would do well to bridle our eating habits and go by God's recommended diet. One fine day, scientists will find that God was right in the first place just as they have found in regard to the eating of fat. Even at this time of writing, there is much research surfacing that the unclean animals carry a greater risk factor; being carriers of many, many kinds of worms, germs and viruses.

Personally, it has been difficult in the initial stages to adjust to the dietary laws because it has been the tendency of fallen men to make unclean animals a delicacy. But the blessings of health have been worth the discipline of a healthy diet. The testimony of being free from all kinds of sicknesses and diseases is far more precious.

No one is healthy by accident. Health is received and maintained by observing all laws that pertain to the spirit, soul and body. These two laws of fasting and dieting are essential to maintaining good health. Some modern preachers, on their death beds, have come to grasp the fact that a life of spirituality does not exempt us from discipline in our physical life. Bridling their food consumption and maintaining a healthy diet, they have rebounded to new levels of health.

CHAPTER 5

THE BENEFITS OF FASTING

Fasting has many benefits in the spiritual realm as well as in the physical realm as covered in the previous chapter. In order to encourage believers to fast, we will make a study of the spiritual benefits of fasting in this chapter. Fasting does not change God but it sure changes us. It has an effect on the spirit, soul and body.

Fasting Disciplines the Body

The spirit of man was created to dominate the soul and the body. Our body has the elements of sin nature in it. Paul, in writing to the Romans, speaks about sin which dwells in him (Rom. 7:17). Our spirits were born again when we accepted Jesus into our lives (Jn 1:12, 13; 3:5,6). We are new creatures and old things have passed away (2 Cor. 5:17).

However, our minds still need renewal and our body still have the elements of sin nature. Paul tells us very clearly in Romans that sin dwells in the flesh (Rom. 7:18). He speaks about a law in his members warring against the law of his mind (Rom. 7:23). He calls it 'the law of sin which is in his members' (Rom. 7:23). The word 'members' in Romans chapter six and seven refers to the physical body (Rom. 6:13; 7:5).

The passions and desires of the body are still awakened by the law of sin. As long as we are on this earth, and until we receive our new resurrected bodies, we must discipline our body and bring it under subjection (1 Cor. 9:27). We must keep presenting our bodies as a living sacrifice unto the Lord (Rom. 12:1). One of the most important keys to bring our bodies under subjection is by prayer and fasting.

Did you noticed how spiritually dull we become when our stomachs are filled and our bodies are lazy? The lust and passions of the flesh seem stronger when we eat, drink and are merry. However, it is well noted that the sexual appetites diminishes when a person is without food for long periods. Too much food produces a carnal and sensual society.

The Sexual Fast

When a person is married, it does not mean that they no longer restrain their sexual passions. Marriage is not a licence to have sexual orgies with one's life partner. Please understand that I do not say that sex is wrong or sinful. Sex in a marriage relationship is beautiful and the marriage bed

undefiled (Heb. 13:4). Both marriage partners must learn to satisfy each other sexually. However, a marriage is not just for the purpose of having sex. It is the knitting and binding of two people - spirits, souls and bodies - to fulfil the will of God on this earth.

From time to time, as one or both partners have times of prayer and waiting upon the Lord, there need to be self-control exercised over sexual desires (1 Cor. 7:5). Of course, this must be with consent from both partners. Note how this is accompanied by fasting (1 Cor. 7:5). After the period of prayer and fasting, they may resume normal sexual relationships. One of the fruit of the Spirit is self-control (Gal. 5:23).

Prayer and Fasting

In the Bible, fasting has always been accompanied by prayer. Fasting without prayer is merely dieting or just plain starvation. The twin forces of fasting and prayer have unleashed great demonstrations of God's power. It has brought deliverances in times of great need (2 Chron. 20:3; Est. 4:16). We should always combine fasting with prayer.

If we are fasting while involved in some work or activity, we should take whatever time we have, during lunch breaks or dinner times, to pray and seek the Lord. It would also be useful to write down on a piece of paper the objectives for the fast. This helps us to focus our prayers to bring breakthroughs on specific areas.

Although we may not see all the objectives answered, we can be assured that we have committed them to the Lord. Some of the objectives I have listed during my fasts have been answered about two years after the fast. Some others took ten years or longer. But God has always reminded me, each time He brought the manifestation of my prayers, that it was an item I had fasted for long ago.

Fasting and Revelation

Christianity is built upon revelation. Unless God reveals, all our intellectual effort to understand and know Him and His laws are in vain. We need to humble ourselves before God and ask Him to show and reveal to us areas which we seek understanding. Revelation does not come by schooling and education. It comes by prayer.

When Daniel did not understand the prophecies of Jeremiah, he prayed and fasted for revelation. God sent the angel Gabriel to give Daniel an understanding of the prophecies (Dan. 9:2, 3, 22, 23). Later Daniel again

humbled himself in fasting and prayer to seek revelation of some of the visions he had seen. Once again, God sent the angel Gabriel to bring Daniel the revelation he sought (Dan. 10:12).

Anna the prophetess prophesied concerning Jesus when she saw baby Jesus. She had received much revelation because she had spent much time in fasting and prayer (Lk. 2:36-38). I believe that Simeon was also a man of prayer and fasting for he received revelation from the Holy Spirit (Lk. 3:25-27). It was while the leaders in Antioch church were praising and fasting that they received revelation concerning the ministries of Paul and Barnabas (Acts 13:1-3).

Paul prayed for the Ephesian church to receive wisdom and revelation (Eph. 1:17). Kenneth E. Hagin took this same prayer and prayed for himself for hundreds of times. One day the Lord spoke to him and told him that He would bring him into visions and revelations (Praying to Get Results, pages 31 & 32). He said that he learnt in a few days what fifteen years of study could not bring.

We need to learn to pray and fast for revelation. Furthermore, many have found that fasting helps their minds to be more alert. I have also found that I need less sleep when I am on a fast. Fasting has also strengthened the goals and desires of my life. If we are willing to give up food to pray over the goals and desires of our lives, we will be willing to put our blood, sweat and tears to accomplish them.

Fasting and the Anointing

Jesus Christ imparted the anointing to His disciples to heal all sicknesses and cast out all devils (Matt. 10:1; Lk. 9:1). When they could not cast out a devil, it was not because they did not have the authority or the anointing (Matt. 17:16, 19). Jesus said that it was because of their unbelief (Matt. 17:20). Jesus then recommends fasting and prayer (Matt. 17:21).

Fasting and prayer would have helped to release the authority and power that Jesus had already delegated to them. If they had really believed while faced with an impossible situation, they would have fasted until the manifestation came. Their lack of perseverance through fasting was an indication of their unbelief.

Fasting helps to release the authority and power of God through our lives. The objective promises of God can become our subjective experience through prayer and fasting. Fasting actualizes the promises.

Learn the art of fasting. Jesus was a man of prayer and fasting. It is a lost art among modern Christianity. Fasting has both spiritual and physical benefits.