

V. Health

- A. Question: what does “health” have to do with “you shall not murder”?
- B. Two mistakes to avoid
1. Asceticism: Neglect and abuse your body because it’s not important (only spiritual life is important)
  2. Materialism: Pursue physical health and pleasure as your religion, as your highest good
- C. A biblical perspective on our physical bodies
1. Creation: God created our physical bodies as “very good” (Gen 1:31)
  2. The Fall and gradual death: Our bodies are now subject to aging and death as a result of the fall (Gen 2:17; Gen 3:19; Rom 8:23)
  3. Death: Our bodies will someday die (unless Christ returns first) (Heb 9:27)
  4. Bodily resurrection: But death is not the end for our bodies! God will one day raise them up and restore them to perfect health and strength (at the “last trumpet” when death is conquered) (1 Cor 15:51-55)
  5. Therefore our bodies are important to God
    - a. He has made them - they are amazing (Ps. 139:14)
    - b. He will someday fulfil his original purpose for them - in them we will glorify him forever
    - c. We should not neglect them but care for them - and be thankful for them
- D. Physical health
1. Our bodies belong to God and are the “temples” of the Holy Spirit (the place where he dwells) (1 Cor 6:19-20)
    - a. Our physical bodies are the means by which we serve and glorify God in this life
    - b. What ministry is done today that does not involve use of a person’s physical body?  
→ nothing
    - c. The Holy Spirit chooses to work through our physical bodies to bring about many results in the world today (through our prayers, our words, our worship, our care for others, etc.)  
Note Paul’s great physical energy: Colossians 1:29 “For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me.” Acts 20:31 “Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish everyone with tears.”
  2. When our bodies grow weak and ill, and eventually die, there is less and less kingdom work that is done through them (through us)
    - examples of aged, very infirm Christians - (limited in what they are able to do now)
  3. Therefore we should take reasonable care of our bodies, to make them effective instruments for the Holy Spirit to work through (Rom 12:1; Rom 6:13)
  4. All other things being equal, it is better to be healthy than not healthy, to be physically strong rather than weak
    - a. The curse of Gen. 3.19 is not good for us but is God’s judgment
    - b. Our bodies will be physically strong forever in the age to come: “it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power” (1 Cor. 15:43)
    - c. 3 John 1:2 “Beloved, I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be in good health, as it goes well with your soul.”
    - d. If not, why do you go to the doctor when you become ill?
  5. This means it is pleasing to God, and consistent with his purpose for us, when we give attention to common-sense health matters (like regular exercise, proper food, enough sleep, wearing seat belts, getting a flu shot, taking vitamins, washing hands before eating something, and not ordinarily taking reckless or foolish risks)
    - most people, at most stages of life, have the ability to make a significant difference in their own health, and therefore in how many years they have for effective work in God’s kingdom
    - 1 Timothy 4:8 “for while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.”
    - BGT 1 Timothy 4:8 ἡ γὰρ σωματικὴ γυμνασία πρὸς ὀλίγον ἐστὶν ὠφέλιμος, ἡ δὲ εὐσέβεια πρὸς πάντα ὠφέλιμος ἐστὶν ἐπαγγελίαν ἔχουσα ζωῆς τῆς νῦν καὶ τῆς μελλούσης.
    - Misleading: KJV (1611) 1 Timothy 4:8 “For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.”  
{little: or, for a little time}
    - 1 Corinthians 9:25 “Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. 26 So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. 27 But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.”
- But I do not support only eating “organic” food or think only “natural” foods are good for us (everything comes from “nature” anyway)
- 1 Timothy 4:4 “For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, 5 for it is made holy by the word of God and prayer.”
- Gen 1:28 “and fill the earth and subdue it” ==> agricultural development – even more so after the curse in Gen 3:17-18

6. However, if we do become weak or ill, God will often work in surprising and powerful ways through our weaknesses and in spite of our weaknesses
- 2 Corinthians 4:7 But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us. 8 We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; 9 persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; 10 always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. 11 For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. 12 So death is at work in us, but life in you.
- 2 Corinthians 4:16 So we do not lose heart. Though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed day by day. 17 For this slight momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, 18 as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.
- 2 Corinthians 12:9 But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. 10 For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.
7. And Paul sometimes sacrificed his physical health and the well-being of his body in order to spread the Gospel
- 2 Corinthians 11:25 Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I was adrift at sea; 26 on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from robbers, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers; 27 in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure.
- this  $\neq$  modern culture's idea of protecting your physical health as your highest goal
- ministry often costs something in terms of our physical health! (Rev 12:11; John 15:13; 1 Pet 2:21)
8. Knowing how to decide between caring for your body as temple of Holy Spirit (not being stupid) and sacrificing your body for the sake of the kingdom (not being selfish) is a matter for mature wisdom, and the right choice may vary from person to person
- a. Such wisdom can be gained in part by hearing the counsel of friends
- Proverbs 11:14 Where there is no guidance, a people falls, but in an abundance of counselors there is safety.
- b. The Holy Spirit will often give guidance to us in this as well
- c. How do you decide this?
9. Sleep is important, and is a gift from God
- Psalms 127:2 It is in vain that you rise up early and go late to rest, eating the bread of anxious toil; for he gives to his beloved sleep.
- Ecclesiastes 5:12 Sweet is the sleep of a laborer, whether he eats little or much, but the full stomach of the rich will not let him sleep.
- I think enough sleep is important to an effective prayer life
- Ephesians 6:18 praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints,
- 1 Pet 4:7: be "sober-minded" for the sake of prayer
- but too much sleep is a sign of laziness and will lead to poverty
- Proverbs 24:30 I passed by the field of a sluggard, by the vineyard of a man lacking sense, 31 and behold, it was all overgrown with thorns; the ground was covered with nettles, and its stone wall was broken down. 32 Then I saw and considered it; I looked and received instruction. 33 A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest, 34 and poverty will come upon you like a robber, and want like an armed man.
- Proverbs 26:14 As a door turns on its hinges, so does a sluggard on his bed. 15 The sluggard buries his hand in the dish; it wears him out to bring it back to his mouth.
10. Moral guilt before God can eat away at your health
- Psalms 32:3 For when I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. 4 For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was dried up<sup>1</sup> as by the heat of summer. Selah 5 I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not cover my iniquity; I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD," and you forgave the iniquity of my sin. Selah
11. But living in obedience before God is good for your health! (Prov 3:7-8 "Be not wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD, and turn away from evil. 8 It will be healing to your flesh and refreshment to your bones." Prov 14:30; Prov 17:22)