

destructive habit through His “power at work within us” (Ephesians 3:20). If you need help in overcoming some body-destroying habit such as using tobacco or alcohol, here is a prayer for you:

*Dear Father in heaven: I want so much to live as Jesus lived, in holiness and purity. Give me Your grace to surrender every harmful thing in my life. I just can't pull it off through my own willpower. You know how often my best resolutions have turned into ropes of sand. But you have promised Your power will “work within us.” I love You and want to be like You and to be ready when Jesus comes again. Please give me strength to overcome my bad habits and to live for You. In Jesus name, Amen.*

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# DISCOVER

## THE SECRET OF A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE



Contemporary researchers have taken pains to document a truth which the Bible first established: human beings are an integrated whole. What we often divide into the physical, mental, social, and spiritual parts of a person are really interrelated and inseparable. In other words, what affects the mind, affects the body. Our spiritual condition has an impact on our physical condition, and vice versa. What

affects one aspect of our being also touches all the others. We are a whole person.

For example, researchers Dr. Lee S. Berk of Loma Linda University and Dr. William F. Fry of Stanford University found in controlled studies that happy, joyful laughter produces measurable changes in a person's immune system (*Loma Linda Scope*, July-September, 1992, p. 55). You can actually help your body fight disease better by being happy! This and several other studies show how closely the mind and body work together.

Thousands of years ago God's Word pointed out this vital connection which has only recently been accepted into medical theory:

***“A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones.”***—**Proverbs 17:22.** (*Unless otherwise noted, all Scriptural texts in the DISCOVER guides are from the New International Version of the Bible [NIV].*)

According to the apostle John, how closely related are the mind and body to our spiritual well being?

***“Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well.”***—**3 John 2.**

The Word of God can save your life in more ways than one. It can serve as our fountain of health, as well as our fountain of eternal life. So in this guide we'll look at several essential health principles.

Since physical and mental health and our spiritual well-being go hand-in-hand, Paul makes the following strong appeal to the Christian:

***“Whether you eat or drink or***

principles described in this guide experience not only a longer life, but also a much better quality of life. An ongoing research project by the Department of Preventive Medicine at Loma Linda University has documented what happens when a segment of the population follows these principles: “Approximately 50,000 Seventh-day Adventists were studied, primarily in California, over 30 years. Results showed that Adventist men live 8.9 years longer and women 7.5 years longer than the general population.”—John Sharffenberg, M.D., M.P.H., *Vibrant Life* (May/June 1992), p. 18. This physician also points out that studies of Adventists in Holland, Norway, and Poland show similar results.

Researchers attribute the longer life-span of Adventists to their following some or all of the eight health principles outlined in this guide.

Studies have shown that Mormons also have one of the lowest rates of heart disease. They don't smoke, drink, or use beverages containing caffeine.

Applying the Bible's perspective to our lives does make a difference—in all kinds of practical ways; offering convincing evidence that Christianity is the most practical, reasonable religion in all the world. It changes people—their thinking and their actions—and creates a new lifestyle.

Because of the close relationship between the mind, the body, and our spiritual life, Christians who live by the Word of God will want to follow the principles of a healthful lifestyle as they prepare for Jesus' second coming (John 10:10, 1 John 3:1-3). Christ not only wants us to be ready to meet Him when He returns, He also wants to improve the quality of our present lives. We can cooperate with Him in doing that by following God's basic health principles.

Jesus promises to deliver us from every

David Larson, a consultant to the National Institute of Mental Health, did extensive research on the relationship between religion and health. His study demonstrated a direct connection between a Christian commitment and health. He was rather surprised to learn that those who attend church live longer than those who don't.

Church-goers have a reduced incidence of heart attack, hardening of the arteries, high blood pressure, and other diseases. Larson also found that those who have faith in God live more productive lives because they are less likely to be depressed, to become alcoholics, to be jailed as repeat offenders, or to be trapped in an unhappy marriage.

Health is more than just an absence of disease. It results from the harmonious development of the physical, mental, social, and spiritual parts of our nature. Trust in divine power is the keystone to genuine well-being and a healthy and happy life.

Those who follow the eight health

*whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.*”—1 Corinthians 10:31.

The gospel includes both physical and spiritual restoration. The Creator wants us to “enjoy good health” (3 John 2). He knows that a healthful lifestyle can help us be vibrant Christians.

How can we build up and maintain good health? Here are eight principles to follow if you really want to live a healthier and more productive life.

## 1. PURE AIR

Pure, fresh air is essential to good health. During the day and while sleeping at night, proper ventilation of our home and workplace insures that our blood will always distribute enough oxygen to every part of the body.

The kind of air we breathe is obviously important. Be careful that you're not subjecting yourself to fumes, gases or air-borne bacteria from some hidden source. Taking deep breaths during an early morning walk is a great way to



oxygenate your body—as long as you can walk where the air is clean.

Smoking not only pollutes the air, but is also one of today's big killers. Scientific research has established a causal relationship between tobacco and lung cancer, emphysema, heart disease, and other ills. The body's addiction to the nicotine in cigarettes makes smoking one of the hardest habits to break. If present trends continue, smoking will kill 12 million people a year by the year 2020.

## 2. SUNLIGHT

"The benefits of sunlight are many:

"1. Fifteen to 30 minutes of daily exposure to sunlight in the early morning or late afternoon helps the body synthesize or make its own vitamin D, an essential nutrient/hormone in the skin. (Vitamin D helps blood to produce calcium and phosphorus, which build and repair bone mass.)

"2. Sunlight acts as a disinfectant and a killer of bacteria and germs.

"3. Being in the sun after a plane trip that crosses several time zones is helpful in adjusting to jet lag.

"4. The sun provides energy [by which the plant kingdom can] convert carbon dioxide and water into carbohydrates. . . . Without this process animals and humans would starve to death.'—Eleanor N. Whitney and Eva M. Hamilton, *Understanding Nutrition* (St. Paul, Minn.: West Publishing Company, 1981), p. 401.

"5. Sunlight also helps a person adjust to night work and relieves depression related to dark days where winter occurs.

"(A word of caution: Sunlight can also be

"3. The circulatory system—The use of alcohol increases the risk of coronary heart disease, reduces blood sugar, and elevates blood fats and blood pressure, thus increasing hypertension.

"4. The digestive system—Alcohol irritates the stomach, thereby causing gastric bleeding. . . . Habitual use of alcohol raises the risk of fatty liver, hepatitis, and cirrhosis of the liver."

Alcohol is responsible for 30 percent of all suicides; 55 percent of all auto deaths; 60 percent of all child abuse; and 85 percent of all home violence (Kathleen Whalen Fitzgerald, *Alcoholism* (New York: Doubleday, 1988, p. xii).

In a letter to *Christianity Today*, Richard Cizik reminds us, "Alcohol is the nation's number-one drug problem, accounting for \$100 billion in economic costs and 105,000 deaths each year. It kills more than three times as many Americans as crack, heroin, and all other drugs combined."

## 8. TRUST IN DIVINE POWER

These seven principles outline the elements of a healthful lifestyle, but they are incomplete without an eighth vital principle—trust in divine power. A person haunted by fear or guilt will find it hard to benefit fully from the health practices we've just described. But a person enjoying a positive faith in God will find that everything works together for abundant living. Remember the ultimate source of well-being:

**"Praise the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits—who forgives all your sins and HEALS ALL YOUR DISEASES, who REDEEMS YOUR LIFE from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion."**—

**Psalm 103:2-4.**

*Who has needless bruises?  
Who has bloodshot eyes?  
Those who linger over  
wine.*—Proverbs 23:29-30.

*“Nor thieves nor the  
greedy nor DRUNKARDS  
nor slanderers nor  
swindlers will inherit the  
kingdom of God.”—1  
Corinthians 6:10.*

*Look Up and Live: A  
Guide to Health*, page 66, has  
these observations about  
alcohol:

“Just one or two  
alcoholic drinks decreases  
the brain’s ability to gather  
information . . . impairs  
memory, perception, and  
judgment. Alcohol affects  
the following bodily systems:

“1. The immune  
system—Alcohol decreases  
the white cells’ ability to  
fight disease, thus  
increasing the risk of  
pneumonia, tuberculosis,  
hepatitis, and several  
cancers.

“2. The endocrine  
system—Only 2 or 3  
alcoholic drinks per day  
increase the risk of  
miscarriages, stillbirths, and  
premature births.



harmful. Prolonged exposure can burn skin, increase the risk of skin cancer, speed up the aging process, damage the eyes, and cause cataracts.”—*Look Up and Live: A Guide to Health Quarterly* (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press Publishing Association, January to March, 1993), p. 36.

### 3. REST

We’ve grown quite impatient about health. We want a pill that will block the pain or relieve the symptoms so that we can keep on with our accustomed pace. But the body must have rest in order to repair itself. And the medications we take can only assist in the body’s work of restoration. Often, the symptoms we’re trying so hard to get rid of are really the body’s efforts to fight disease. Fever, congestion, and tiredness are all evidence that the body is working hard to cure you. So let it do its work. Rest.

Rest is nature’s best remedy for the abuse our mind and body often take during the day. We must have time for recreation and rest to relieve the tensions of work and family responsibilities. Without their required dosage of rest, people often experience anxiety, depression, and irritability. This can lead to illness, which will force us to take the rest our bodies were asking for all along. There’s simply no substitute for a good night’s sleep. No kind of medication or stimulation can make up for a lack of sleep.

Recharging our spiritual batteries on a daily basis is also important to physical health. A Christian’s daily time of meditation, Bible study, and prayer will heal the body as well as the soul. We also need a regular break from the work cycle, a weekly day of rest, and annual or semi-annual vacations that provide a good change of pace.

## 4. EXERCISE

*Look Up and Live: A Guide to Health*, page 38, has this to say about exercise:

“God appointed Adam and Eve to do work that involved exercising the body. Unfortunately, many of us today have work that involves a minimal amount of movement. Yet the fact that exercise is vital to our health has not changed. Here are only some of the things it can do for us:

“1. Exercise helps to normalize blood pressure.

“2. Exercise allows more blood to reach all parts of the body, keeping the extremities warm.

“3. Exercise releases both physical and emotional tension helping you to feel better about life. [Exercise is usually the best remedy for worry and stress.]

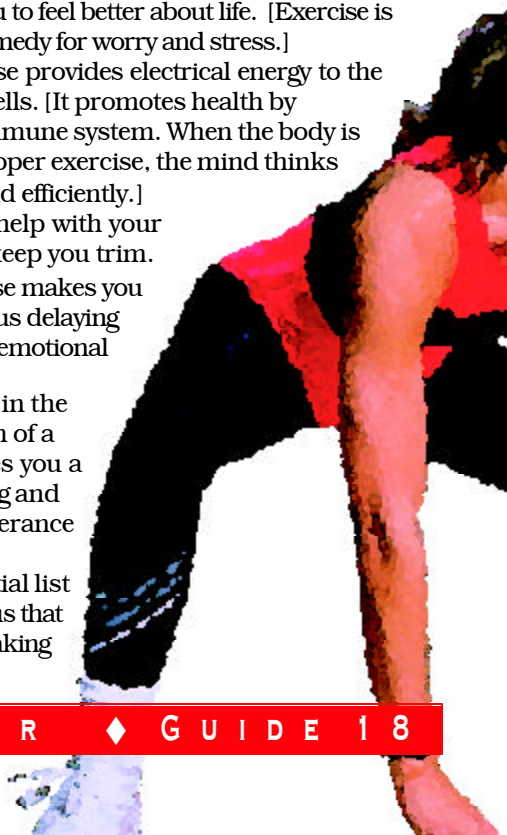
“4. Exercise provides electrical energy to the brain and nerve cells. [It promotes health by stimulating the immune system. When the body is kept in tone by proper exercise, the mind thinks more creatively and efficiently.]

“5. It can help with your complexion and keep you trim.

“6. Exercise makes you more energetic, thus delaying both physical and emotional fatigue.

“7. It aids in the brain’s production of a chemical that gives you a sense of well-being and increases your tolerance for pain.

“This partial list should convince us that it is time to stop making excuses and start



fit for humans to eat. When God gave people permission to eat meat after the flood (Genesis 7:2, 3; 9:1-6), He made clear which animals were clean and could be eaten, and which animals were unclean.

Read in Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14 the list of birds, beasts, and fish God pronounced unfit for food. According to these chapters, clean fish must have both fins and scales. Scavenger birds are prohibited. Clean animals must divide, or split the hoof and also chew the cud. An example of an unclean animal is the pig.

***“The pig is also unclean; although it has a split hoof, it does not chew the cud. You are not to eat their meat or touch their carcasses.”—Deuteronomy 14:8.***

Scientific research substantiates that God is indeed right in His warning against eating unclean meats. The health concerns are valid. Not only are there diseases in some animals but the effects of saturated fat on the human body is well documented. It is important to cook all red meat, poultry and fish at the recommended temperatures in order to kill the disease causing bacteria. God’s desire is for His people to live happy, healthy, and productive lives. Why? Because He cares about you.

## 7. AVOID THINGS HARMFUL

What warnings does the Bible give about alcoholic beverages?

***“Wine is a mocker and beer a brawler; whoever is led astray by them is not wise.”—Proverbs 20:1.***

***“Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has strife? Who has complaints?”***

"4. Try to eat five or more servings (one half cup) of fruits and vegetables every day. Green and yellow vegetables, along with citrus fruits, are especially important. Also try to eat plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables as they come into their season.

"5. Replace your intake of animal fats (butter, cream, lard, suet, etc.) with vegetable fats." Your total fat intake should be less than 30 per cent of your total calories."

The above diet of fully fortified alternatives is adequate without meat if you use low-fat dairy products. If your diet does include meat, eat only lean meats and fish.

A healthful diet includes eating simple, attractive, well prepared foods at regular intervals. Eating between meals and overeating—especially fats, sweets, and rich foods—can lead to being overweight and to several degenerative diseases as well.

Drinking a lot of liquids with meals slows digestion, so when you drink with your meals, do it sparingly. Some spices and rich greasy foods irritate the stomach. Beverages containing caffeine can cause ulcers, an acid stomach, heartburn, anxiety, and depression.

Those who choose to eat meat as a part of their diet, should eat only the meats that the Bible indicates are "clean," or



exercising. Start slowly and gradually increase as you gain endurance. It may be wise to consult your physician before starting. High blood pressure and cholesterol often do not manifest symptoms, but can prove harmful when starting an exercise program. Your goal should be to engage in any type of aerobic exercise or recreation that is comparable to walking one mile in 15 minutes four or more times a week. (Aerobic exercises repeatedly use the large muscles of the legs and arms until the heart rate increases 20 to 25 percent)."

## 5. WATER

Since water is essential to every cell in the body, we should drink plenty of it. It is nature's solvent, the one perfect medium for cleansing both inside and out.

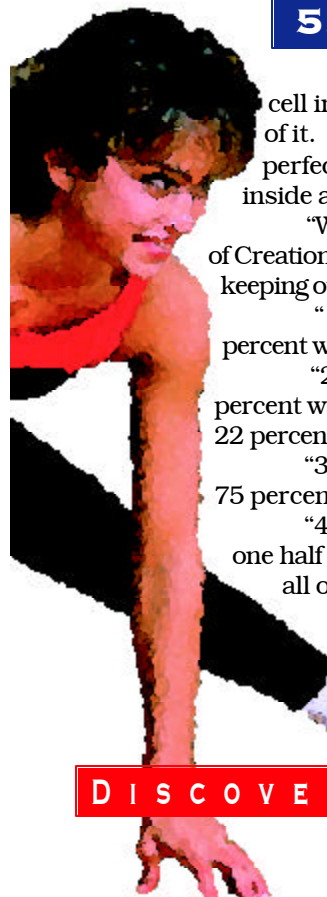
"Water has existed since the beginning of Creation and is an important factor in keeping our bodies running smoothly:

"1. By weight the body is about 70 percent water.

"2. Blood is approximately 83 percent water, and bones consist of nearly 22 percent water.

"3. Water comprises approximately 75 percent of the body's muscles.

"4. The body requires about two and one half quarts of water per day to perform all of its functions. Some of these functions include blood circulation, waste removal, nutrient transport, and digestion. (We obtain water both by drinking it



and from the food we eat.)

“5. The average person has between 15 and 40 billion brain cells. Each one of those is 70 to 85 percent water. Sufficient water to supply these cells helps keep you mentally alert and helps prevent depression and irritability.

“6. It is not only the water you drink that is important. A cool or tepid daily bath or shower improves circulation, thus energizing the body and mind. A shower or bath can also soothe jangled nerves, which can cause illness by weakening the immune system. Bathing also removes impurities from the skin and can reduce fever.”—*Ibid.*, p. 35.

## 6. PROPER DIET

At creation God instructed Adam and Eve to eat a diet of nuts, grains, and fruits (Genesis 1:29). After Adam and Eve sinned, vegetables were added to their diet (Genesis 3:18). After the flood, the Creator added “clean” flesh foods to the diet (Genesis 7:2, 3; 9:1-6).

Because people on a vegetarian diet are healthier and live longer, many experts in nutrition and health urge us to consider

returning to humanity’s original diet of nuts, grains, and fruits with vegetables added. The flesh of animals contains both saturated fat and cholesterol, which can increase the risk of high blood pressure, stroke, heart disease, cancer, obesity, diabetes, and other diseases. Today many physicians and nutritionists advise those who do eat meat to consume only lean, well-cooked meat and to do so sparingly. If you’d like to start a vegetarian menu, make sure you first understand how to provide a balanced diet without meat.

Here are some helpful suggestions for preparing a vegetarian diet or a diet with limited meat (taken from *Look Up and Live*, page 44):

“1. Purchase the freshest and best-quality fruits, nuts, grains, and vegetables available. Then store them in a cool, dry place for a short amount of time.

“2. Eat some raw food every day. When you do cook, use a minimum amount of water and time.

“3. Stay away from as many refined foods as possible. Buy or make breads with whole-grain cereal flour, and use brown rice instead of white. Your intake of such starches and complex carbohydrates should consist of six or more servings a day. (This also includes seeds and legumes.)

