

All Your Exercise and Healthy Eating Mean Nothing Without This Key Focus

You may know well the verse that indicates your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit.

“What? Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God, and that you are not your own? (1 Cor. 6:19).

The truth and reality of this verse is likely a motivation for you to care for your body by making healthy choices. Engaging in physical activity, eating well, drinking lots of water, being free from drugs and other addictions, refraining from the use of tobacco, limiting, if not abstaining from, alcohol consumption and getting plenty of sleep are a few key behaviors that contribute to good health. It's likely that you desire for these behaviors to be a part of your lifestyle.

Yet you may be trying to muster up the willpower and strength to engage in these healthy behaviors in your own power and self control. And consequently, you may be failing miserably at some or many of these behaviors.

This could be because your focus is on the behaviors instead of the Savior and his work on the cross.

“You were bought with a price. Therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's” (1 Cor. 6:20).

How often and how deeply do you dwell on the cross of Christ and on the man who died for your sins? How frequently are you grateful, deep in your heart, of the sacrifice that Jesus made for you?

Paul writes the following: “God forbid that I should boast,

except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified to me, and I to the world" (Gal. 6:14).

I could write and speak endlessly about how to choose nutritious foods in the grocery store, how to engage in physical activities to become more fit and about habits that are conducive to sleeping well but those instructions will carry no power. They will merely be facts.

The apostle Paul preached the gospel of the cross, even though it seemed foolish to others. When he did, the spiritual power of God was released into the lives of those who heard it!

"It pleased God through the foolishness of preaching to save those who believe. ... But we preach Christ crucified" (1 Cor. 1:21b, 23a).

Dietary, physical activity and other health-related guidelines are there to direct us and provide us with the means to be healthy. Where many of us, and perhaps you, fail is that we make following these guidelines like the laws found in the Bible. We try to live according to these 'laws' independent of our relationship with Jesus. We do not regularly look to the cross. And so we fail time and time again in our attempts to engage in healthy behaviors.

"I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. I do not nullify the grace of God. For if righteousness comes by the law, then Christ died in vain" (Gal. 2:20-21).

God desires that you and I rest in the fact that His Spirit lives within us and that He will daily give us the grace and associated spiritual power to make healthy choices. And God wants you to dwell, or meditate, on what Jesus did on the cross for you.

This attitude and behavior is the key to opening the door for you to experience the power of God's Spirit in your life and to be able to live a life that glorifies Him, including your health-related behaviors.

And your desire to be healthy is to be rooted in your desire to glorify God by best using the gifts and talents he has given you to serve in his kingdom. Then He will be most glorified!

"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, so that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2:10).

The wonderful thing is that these healthy behaviors will be just one area of your life that will benefit. All areas of your life will be different because the love, grace and Spirit of God will reach down into your whole being and transform you to be more like Jesus.

Pastors, I encourage you to teach these biblical principles to members of your congregation. A reason that the church is as unhealthy as it is, is because our leaders are not connecting the dots between biblical principles and health. You play a key role in this.

Health and wellness professionals who are reading this are encouraged to do likewise. Incorporate these truths as part of your prescription to your patients and clients. You play an important role in teaching followers of Christ how to live the abundant life that Jesus died for us to live!

"Beloved, I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be in good health, even as your soul is well" (3 John 2).
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