

These Habits Are Spiritual Poison to Your Soul

Not to frighten you, but that lettuce in your grocery cart could be lethal. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimate that some 48 million Americans are sickened by contaminated food each year, and 3,000 die from their illness. Recalls of hazardous meat and poultry rose 83 percent from 2013 to 2017, and one in six Americans gets sick every year from eating unsafe food.

This isn't a health and nutrition magazine, so let me get right to the point. Sinful habits are the contaminants of the soul, and many Christians are spiritually unwell because of sinful patterns that have crept into their diets. We live in a polluted world filled with immoral filth, but to be effective and productive, we must always strive to reflect the holiness of God.

As I said in my book *The God You May Not Know*, "When you read through the Bible beginning to end, you're constantly reminded—it seems like in every other chapter—that we are dealing with a holy God, and that His holiness is stunningly beautiful."

When we say God is holy, we mean He is separate from all else in creation and absolutely pure. There is no taint of evil in His nature, not a splinter, not a shred. Furthermore, nothing unholy can exist in His presence, which is why Jesus died for us. He clothes us with His blood and cloaks us with His righteousness, so when God sees us, He sees the holiness of His Son.

But that also means in practical terms that we must vigilantly guard ourselves against anything that would defile our conscience, hinder our fellowship with God or damage our

testimony for Him. The Bible says, “I urge you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy, and acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service of worship” (Rom. 12:1). Ephesians 1:4 says, “He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, to be holy and blameless before Him in love.”

Holiness is a great practice because it keeps us emotionally, spiritually and even physically healthy. There’s a correlation between holiness and wholeness. Just as you wouldn’t knowingly eat contaminated food or drink tainted water, so you shouldn’t knowingly defile your mind with the sewage of the world or your heart with the germs of jealousy or bitterness.

We grow in holiness when we guard our entertainment because what we see on our screens, hear through our earbuds, or read in our novels can imprint itself on our minds. Do you know that at least 30% of all data transferred over the Internet is porn-related, and this vile global business garners \$97 billion a year? But I’m not just concerned about pornography. Our entertainment options provide endless ways of corrupting our minds, and it takes the discipline of the Holy Spirit to help us obey Psalm 119:37: “Turn away my eyes from beholding worthlessness, and revive me in Your way.”

We also grow in holiness when we improve our vocabulary and monitor the way we communicate. The book of James warns us that an unrestrained tongue “defiles the whole body” (James 3:6).

Acrimony also defiles us. When our anger is aroused against someone and we let it simmer to a boil, it turns into bitterness. Hebrews 12:15 tells us to guard against “any root of bitterness springing up” which can “cause trouble, and by this many become defiled.”

The wrong thoughts, the wrong words, the wrong attitudes—these can defile us.

The best way to cultivate holiness is to stay in the Holy Bible and walk in the Holy Spirit. It's beyond our ability to maintain a holy heart; but when our minds are filled with His Word and His Spirit has control over our lives, these twin agencies create a growing experience of holiness within us.

The result? Holy habits lead to healthy hearts, and that imparts a deep-seated happiness—what the Bible calls joy—in increasing measure. Is there a habit you need to change? Take a moment to pray and think about it. By making one little change, how could your life better reflect the holy character of God?

Live purely, and ...

*Take time to be holy, the world rushes on;
Spend much time in secret, with Jesus alone.
By looking to Jesus, like Him thou shalt be;
Thy friends in thy conduct His likeness shall see.*

—William Longstaff

Dr. David Jeremiah is among the best known Christian leaders in the world. He serves as senior pastor of Shadow Mountain Community Church in El Cajon, California and is the founder and host of Turning Point. Turning Point's 30-minute radio program is heard on more than 2,200 radio stations daily. A New York Times bestselling author and Gold Medallion winner, he has written more than fifty books.