Lesson 19 - Christian Lifestyle



The original sin of Adam affected mankind in three ways - spiritually, morally, and physically. When Christ came to be the Savior of the world, He came to redeem humanity from these threefold effects of sin. Therefore, when we by faith receive Christ as our Redeemer we also receive Him as Lord and Master and are to surrender ourselves to His transforming grace in all these three areas.

While we will not experience total salvation from the effects of sin until the Second Coming of Christ, in this study we will consider what the Bible has to say about our bodies and how we should take care of them while we wait for His return. This, too, is part of Christian living, the fruits of the gospel.

The reason why Christians must take care of their bodies is twofold. In the first place, when believers experience the new birth and are indwelt by the Holy Spirit, they become the temple of God (see 1 Corinthians 3:16). Therefore, as Christians we are to treat our bodies as the house of God. As the apostle Paul wrote to the believers in Corinth, whatever we do must be done to the glory of God (see 1 Corinthians 10:31).

Secondly, as Christians we are ambassadors of Christ, called to witness Him to the world (see 2 Corinthians 5:20). In order that we may fully represent Him, we must not only take care of our bodies so that we may be fit vessels for God’s use, but also represent Him in the way we dress and in our lifestyle.

Based on these twofold reasons, the Bible gives counsel on healthful living as well as on how we should dress. When Israel was a theocracy (totally under God's rulership) God gave them all kinds of guidelines, not as requirements for salvation but for their own good and as His witnesses. Among these guidelines were many health and dress principles.

While believers are not under a theocracy in the New Testament, these health principles as well as the dress guidelines are just as valid today as they were in ancient times. In this study we will consider some of the basic health and dress principles recorded in His Word as the fruits of salvation in Christ.

1. How much of the believer does God want to sanctify? 1 Thessalonians 5:23

Since sin has affected the total person, God also plans to rescue the total person - spirit, soul, and body - from the sin problem. This is part and parcel of His saving plan through the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

2. How does this total redemption affect our Christian living? 1 Corinthians 10:31

Before our conversion we ate, drank, and dressed as we pleased, often abusing our bodies. But now that we belong to Christ and have become the temple of the Holy Spirit, God wants us to do everything to His glory.

3. As Christians, whom do we belong to and live for? Romans 14:8

Since Jesus redeemed us by His precious blood (see 1 Peter 1:18, 19), we belong to Him - spirit, soul, and body. Out of a heartfelt appreciation for His redeeming grace, all our actions are motivated by this love relationship.

4. Besides our souls, in what does God want us to prosper? 3 John 2

God is not only concerned about our spiritual well-being, but also our health. A healthy body means a healthy mind. This in turn means we are better able to discern spiritual things. Since there is a close relation between spirit, soul, and body, what affects one affects the other.

5. What promise did God make to the Jews if they obeyed Him? Exodus 15:26

All the health instructions that God gave the Jews of the Exodus were for their own good and not a requirement for salvation. As His children, God wants us Christians to experience the same blessings.

6. What blessings would Israel experience by their obedience to God? Deuteronomy 7:14

Although the ancient Jews made the mistake of turning all the health rules and regulations God gave them into legalistic requirements for salvation, they still experienced physical and mental blessings from obeying them.

7. As Christians, what kind of sacrifice does God want from us? Romans 12:1

8. What must we do daily to experience the transforming power of the gospel? Romans 12:2

The battlefield in the Christian life is the mind. On the one hand, the converted mind - what Paul refers to as the new or inner man (see Ephesians 4:22-24) - wants to do the will of God. On the other hand, the mind of the flesh, our sinful nature, wants to do the very opposite (see Romans 7:25).

9. How are we to gain victory over the sinful desires of the flesh? Galatians 5:16

Only as we surrender our wills to the control of the Spirit can we gain victory over the flesh. This is what it means to "walk in the Spirit." To do this we must constantly keep our minds focused on spiritual things (see Romans 8:4-6).

10. What is another reason why we should eat and drink correctly? Romans 14:21

To be a true Christian means we are dead to self and alive unto the Lord (see Romans 6:10, 11). This affects every phase of our Christian living so that the two guiding principles that motivate all our actions are: (1) I do nothing that affects my relationship to God, and (2) I do nothing that offends or weakens the faith of a fellow believer (see 1 Corinthians 10:31-33).

11. As Christians, what are we to God? 1 Corinthians 3:16

The new birth experience makes believers into temples1 of God. We must ever keep this in mind during our Christian walk.

12. As God's temples, why are we not to defile ourselves? 1 Corinthians 3:17

As temples of God, we are to keep ourselves holy. The reason for this will be answered in the next question.

13. As God's temples, what does He want to do in and through us? 2 Corinthians 6:16

The whole purpose of the Christian life is to glorify our Savior. This is how Paul expressed it: "For me to live is Christ" (Philippians 1:21). The only way this can be done is to let the life of Christ shine through us. This is what sanctification is all about. That which motivates such behavior is not the fear of punishment, nor the desire for reward, but the love of God that compels us.

1 The temple of God is simply the place where He dwells.

• In the Old Testament, God dwelt with His people in the Sanctuary (see Exodus 25:8);

• When Jesus was on the Earth, He became Immanuel, which means "God with us" (Matthew 1:23). He referred to His body as a temple (see John 2:19-21); and

• When we are indwelt with the Holy Spirit, we become the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 3:16). It is in this way that we partake of the divine nature (2 Peter 1:4). The dynamics of the temple of God in its various forms is discussed in the Lesson 20 Supplement.

14. How does God fulfill the above transformation? Hebrews 8:10

The New Covenant does not do away with the laws of God but puts them into our hearts. Under the Old Covenant the laws of God were a series of rules, do's and don'ts. Under the New Covenant, the same laws become the inner desires of the converted mind (Romans 7:22). This is how God writes His laws in our hearts and minds. This is the transforming grace of the gospel.

15. What was the original diet God gave mankind? Genesis 1:29

Just as the car manufacturers instruct us on the best oils and gas to be used in our cars, so God, our Creator, instructed our first parents as to the best foods to eat - nuts, fruits, grains and vegetables. Today, medical science has confirmed that this is the most healthful diet for human beings. It is in our best interest that we follow it.

16. What warning does the wise man give regarding appetite? Proverbs 23:1-3

Appetite is one of the great weapons Satan uses. He used food to bring about the fall of our first parents. Likewise, it was through tempting Christ to turn stones into bread that Satan tried to cause His downfall. In the same way, Satan uses our appetites to cause us as Christians to stumble. Smoking, drugs, alcohol, and overindulgence in eating are some of the methods he uses to destroy the faith of believers and thus pull us out of Christ.

17. When it comes to the way we dress, what counsel does Peter give? 1 Peter 3:3, 4

The way we dress must reveal the inner beauty of a Christian so that we attract people to Christ and not ourselves. In regard to the way we dress, our priority must be the inward beauty rather than outward adornment.

18. According to Paul's counsel, how should women dress? 1 Timothy 2:9



In this world, people often judge us by the way we live and dress. We must do nothing that will in any way be an offense to the cause of God. This principle applies to members of both genders.

19. Why does the Bible advise believers to avoid alcoholic drinks? Proverbs 23:31, 32

20. Of what must Christians constantly remind themselves? 1 Corinthians 6:19

When we are tempted to indulge in harmful kinds of food and drink and to wear the wrong kinds of clothes we need to remind ourselves that we are the temple of God and we are not our own. Therefore, "...glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Corinthians 6:20). This is true Christian living.

21. Is it your desire to care for your body as the temple of the Holy Spirit, and do you wish to represent the Savior in your appearance?

My Response to Lesson 19

• When we experience the new birth we become the temple of God, and we must treat our bodies as such. In view of this, is it your purpose that whatever you do or eat, you do it all to the glory of God?

Response: _____

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