

The Health Principle Recommended by Heaven

Description

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A study related to the SDA
Sabbath School Lesson for 2021, 3rd Quarter

Rest In Christ

Week 8

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This week's lesson is entitled, "Free to Rest," and discusses the challenges of "resting" when we or our loved ones are sick, and our prayers for healing "are not answered."

Of course, we can ultimately find rest in the hope of the resurrection, or translation, and life in the kingdom of heaven. This life – the time between birth and death or birth and translation – no matter how long or short that period is – is a vapor in relation to eternity.

Sunday's lesson says,

"God's original design did not include pain, disease, and suffering. Sickness came to this planet only with the entrance of sin. That's why God gives us health guidelines—so that we can enjoy a better quality of life now. But as long as we are in this sin-sick world, there will be no guarantees of health, no matter how diligently we follow healthful principles."

It is certainly true that God doesn't design for us to be sick. It is also true that no matter how perfect we are in our health habits in this world, that wouldn't guarantee freedom from sickness. Yet, it is important to understand that health principles are not only for this world. As Seventh-day Adventists, we should all know that humans are not naturally immortal. Even in a sinless world, we are mortal and our bodies will eventually break down, get sick, and die, if we don't have something outside of us to keep us alive and well. Thankfully, God has everything we need to keep us alive and healthy. In order to receive all these benefits, we need to fulfill the condition of obedience. Obedience to God includes not only living in harmony with moral principles but also with biological principles – the principles of health. This is one of the most fundamental principles of the health message. And living according to the laws of health is not a temporary principle for this world of sin. The simple absence of sin doesn't erase physical cause and effect.

For example, one reason why it is imperative not to overeat is because it is true that overeating puts physical stress on the stomach. It is not physically able to accommodate more than it can accommodate. This is a fact about the physical nature of stomachs that we will need to respect in the new earth, and we certainly need to respect it now. Since the principles of health reform are based on physical facts like this one, it is important to make sure our understanding of proper health habits is informed by genuine physical sciences.

In the chapter entitled “Irregular Eating and Indigestion” in *Counsels on Health*, where she talks about overeating, Ellen White wrote,

“Our workers should use their knowledge of the laws of life and health. They should study from cause to effect. **Read the best authors on these subjects,** and obey religiously that which your reason tells you is truth.” Ellen White, *Counsels on Health*, p. 566

Ellen White promoted health guidelines that were established by the best health professionals of her day. And the best health professionals were (and still are) those who had an understanding of the principles involved in the action they were studying, who did careful scientific experiments, and who marked their results with careful solicitude (See “Experience Not Reliable,” 3T 67). They were the best professional scientists in each particular subject of her day.

This is the principle recommended by heaven. And there is no reason for this to change because it is a principle. So, still today, and even forever, we should consult the best health experts in each health field, just like Ellen did. We should consult oncologists for cancer treatments, obstetricians for birthing children, nephrologists for kidney issues, and virologists, immunologists, and epidemiologists for viral pandemic protocols.

It is certainly possible to find doctors and nurses who promote ideas and treatments that are contrary to the experts in these fields, but such doctors and nurses are not “the best authors on these subjects.” – for that, you have to go to true experts. And practitioners of alternative medicine, whether it be chiropractors, naturopaths, homeopaths, etc. are not genuine health authorities in any subject since their training and knowledge is not rooted in scientifically evidenced biological realities. So, when it comes to Covid-19, for example, we need to make sure we aren’t getting our information or advice from those sorts of practitioners or from fringe doctors or nurses – we should get it from the relevant experts.

The reason why we wear masks during the covid pandemic is because science has shown that it is true that the virus is present in the droplets of our breath, and that it is by inhaling these virus-laden droplets that the virus spreads. Therefore we should try to do all we can to keep our droplets to ourselves. With the technology we have at this moment, masks are the best way to mitigate the spread of our breath droplets. And, we should say, the science on the value of masks has increased since the pandemic has started. We should follow the latest and greatest science on mask-wearing at this moment, leaving behind the recommendations at the beginning of the pandemic.

Sin is simply thinking or acting out of harmony with truth. So, when current studies show that people all around you are getting infected making it possible that you may be one of them, to think that your breath droplets are free from the covid-19 virus without evidence that this is the case, is simply acting out of harmony with the data, and acting without a knowledge of the truth in regard to the viral load of your breath droplets. And, this is sinful to do.

Science shows that it is true that people are all affected differently by the virus. Some are super spreaders, that is, their breath droplets contain the virus, and although the virus does not affect them, it is true that it can affect others with a variety of symptoms if they happen to inhale their droplets of the superspreader’s breath that contain the virus, sometimes leading to death or long term injury.

Of course today, the best way to reduce the spread of the disease is to increase our immunity to the virus. Sunshine, nutrition, rest, temperance, water, exercise, fresh air, and trusting in God are all wonderful, healthful things to do. No question about that! But to think that simply by making these things a part of our health routine we will guarantee that our immune systems will be able to handle any virus that comes our way is presumptuous. It shows a lack of understanding on the subject of our immune systems and the subject of virology. And this is why we need to consult the best authors on the subjects of immunity and virology.

Many believe that God designed our bodies in such a way as to be impervious to all disease if we treat them right. For clarity, we are not saying that treating our bodies with the greatest care is not important or of no value. Of course it is! But, sin has caused degradation in our bodies, as the lesson says, and no matter what we do, until we get new bodies at the resurrection or the translation, AND live in a sinless society, our immune systems are just no match for some viruses out there unless we help them out with other treatments...like vaccines.

People think that just because something is “natural” – like the sun or water – it is the best thing for our bodies – but we know that this is not always true! Humans can get skin cancer from the sun – and they can drink too much water also. Plus, what is “natural water?” Distilled? Spring? Filtered? Alkaline? Should we just drink from any natural spring or pond? What about ocean water? That is natural – but we know from science that we shouldn’t drink very much of it, if at all! Poison ivy is natural, and, it is loaded with antioxidants – but should we eat it? No! Of course not! Some people are allergic to tomatoes, bananas, garlic, etc...others benefit greatly from these plants. We often create a false dichotomy between the benefits of things that are supposedly “natural” versus those things that are “man-made.” The truth is, it is not that simple.

For example, Jesus took advantage of man-made things, like sandals, boats, clothing, baked bread, and money. Your church building is man-made. Your car that takes you to church is man-made. Insulin is man-made. Your bird-friendly down-free synthetic winter coat is man-made...and I’m quite sure that God would approve of this kind of synthetic coat over a coat made by cruelly pulling feathers out of live birds. Not everything that is “man-made” is good, but nor is it necessarily bad. The same goes for “natural” things. Frankly, viruses are natural, but you don’t want a sick person coughing in your face, right?

Our immune systems that have never been exposed to particular viruses are not prepared to fight off the new invaders with the same efficiency as it is for those viruses it has encountered before. That is just a true scientific fact of human immunity.

Consider the Native Americans whose population was decimated when the Europeans came to the North American continent. Although the Native Americans were most likely getting plenty of fresh air, water, exercise, and sunshine, an estimated 90 percent of them were killed by viruses they had never encountered before, like smallpox, measles, and the flu. Their immune systems were just not prepared to deal with these viruses that were novel to them.

Scientists that specialize in immunology and virology have developed vaccines to safely stimulate our immune systems to fight off the novel covid-19 virus. These vaccines are very effective at preventing serious complications with the covid-19 virus, and although they are not perfect, the benefits of receiving the vaccine far outweigh the risks, both for us individually and as a society. There is a weight of scientific evidence that shows this to be true.

SDAs know the dangers of ignoring the weight of evidence in scripture, but what about in everything else?

Let's read something from *Desire of Ages* and ask if the principles presented in regard to doubting the weight of evidence in scripture would apply to other areas of life. Ellen White said,

“God does not compel men to give up their unbelief. Before them are light and darkness, truth and error. It is for them to decide which they will accept. The human mind is endowed with power to discriminate between right and wrong. God designs that men shall not decide from impulse, but from weight of evidence, carefully comparing scripture with scripture. Had the Jews laid by their prejudice and compared written prophecy with the facts characterizing the life of Jesus, they would have perceived a beautiful harmony between the prophecies and their fulfillment in the life and ministry of the lowly Galilean.” Ellen White, *Desire of Ages*, p. 458

In truth, when it comes to health, the principle of determining what to believe is no different. We should not decide any matter from impulse, or by our preconceived ideas about what may be truth, but by what the weight of evidence shows the truth to be, whether we are talking about doctrinal issues or health issues. We need evidence – and for health, this means basing our views on the findings of science.

We are to drink water and get exercise because it is true scientifically that these things are important for our health. In the same way, getting vaccinated is important to our health. It is in living by these principles of truth that we will finally live in health for all eternity because if we only follow what is true, we will be free from error and therefore free from sin. And if we live free from error and sin, we will live in harmony with reality, including our own biological reality. Only those who live in harmony with true principles will be safe for the society of heaven and the new earth – and they are those who will be granted access to all we need to be free from sickness and free from death forever. As Revelation says, “Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city.” (Rev. 22:14).

For more on these topics, please see our studies, [“The Lost Gospel of Christ,” by Trent Wilde](#), and see also our [Branch Davidian SDA YouTube channel playlist](#) featuring studies on Ellen White's testimony to a sick woman in [Testimonies for the Church, Volume 3, in the chapter entitled, “Experience Not Reliable.”](#)