

EXTRA! from the Creek

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This week we're passing along to you
a page from the

Pastoral Counseling Papers

Optimum Physical Health

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Have you ever thought about how your body is the earthly instrument that carries around your mind and emotions and even spirit? Sure, the Bible doesn't so much make the body out to be of paramount importance, but we are told to love God with all our physical strength. Furthermore, the apostle Paul refers to the body as a temple for the Holy Spirit's dwelling, telling us to "take your everyday, ordinary life – your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life – and place it before God as an offering." Because this temple is a masterpiece that God doesn't want us to ruin, our goal should be to live a physically healthy life. Now that doesn't necessarily mean fitting into a size six dress or having the best abs in the county. A truly healthy life is one in which we eat responsibly, exercise, and think positively – enabling us to love and serve the Lord all the more, even physically.

Each day of our lives, God offers us new opportunities to live well. It really ought to follow, therefore, that we make choices that honor His will and His plan.

Develop a decent eating plan. Take responsibility for what you put in your mouth. Learn about the different food groups, about calorie values for different foods, and about how much constitutes a portion. (Where most of us go wrong are with the super-sized portions!) Don't depend on others to manage your food intake.

Take inventory. List the top five or ten activities, relationships, and circumstances that you know typically zap your energy, get you down, or make you feel depressed or angry. Maybe you can't change the situations, but what can you do to improve the way those situations make you feel?

Speed up your metabolism. Commit to thirty minutes of active stretching, walking, weightlifting, or some kind of aerobic fitness at least every other day. This will

raise your metabolism, eat up calories, and most importantly, increase your energy – and you'll feel good about yourself.

Lose the sugar. Reports indicate that adults consume, on average, twenty tablespoons of sugar a day – 135 pounds a year! Especially watch out for sodas, most desserts, and all those foods canned or packaged with hidden sugars.

Stop eating fat-free. No, you didn't read that wrong! The problem is that most people increase their portions while eating fat-free, which results in eating too much of the wrong kinds of fat. You need fat – but the right kinds: polyunsaturated and monounsaturated. Of course, even the good fat should be limited to only twenty to thirty percent of your daily caloric intake.

Drink six to eight (eight-ounce) glasses of water a day. Water enhances metabolism and increases the flushing process of all those bad fats. And when consumed before a meal, water reduces both hunger and food intake.

Quit smoking. It's well documented that smoking increases the risk of not only lung cancer, but also of heart attack, osteoporosis, stroke, and even hearing loss. Don't you be part of the statistics. Make a plan for quitting, then stick to it!

Sources

Todd Duncan. *Closing the Gap* (J. Countryman)

Eugene H. Peterson. *The Message: The Bible in Contemporary Language* (NavPress)

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