

FOUNDATIONS OF FAITH



AMAZING FACTS

Lesson 8

Strength: Health and Holiness




Daniel and his three friends, who became captives in a foreign land, had been selected among the promising Hebrew youth to serve in the courts of Babylon. As part of their three-year training, they were offered the rich foods and wines from the king's table. But the four young men were raised to strictly guard the health of their minds and bodies. They belonged to the God of heaven and determined to keep themselves pure.



So they made a request to Ashpenaz, the king's master, that they eat simple food and drink only water. But he was worried the youth would become weak and appear sickly and thus endanger his own life with the king. So Daniel appealed to the master's assistant and asked that they try an experiment. "Please test your servants for ten days, and let them give us vegetables to eat and water to drink. Then let our appearance be examined before you, and the appearance of the young men who eat the portion of the king's delicacies; and as you see fit, so deal with your servants" (Daniel 1:12, 13).

The assistant consented to the trial period. What were the results?



Does the Bible address the topic of healthy living? Is our physical well-being connected to our spiritual life? Does it really matter how we eat, what we drink, or how we care for our bodies and minds? You might be surprised at the number of times the Scriptures call God's people to live in moderation and guard their appetites. There is a close connection between our lifestyle and our spiritual life. Not only are the two intimately woven together, but the Bible commands us, "Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31).

Let's look at just a few of the blessings of living for the Lord.

The lifestyle of a Christian is a heartfelt response to the salvation we receive through Christ.

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God (Romans 12:1, 2).

True followers of God will develop their minds and bodies in order to honor their Creator and Redeemer. They will adopt a special lifestyle not only to stand out from the world, but also to help them reach their highest potential in serving Jesus. Rather than being just another means of gaining salvation, living a healthy life helps us to be a positive witness for Christ.

God honored the lifestyle choices of Daniel and his friends.

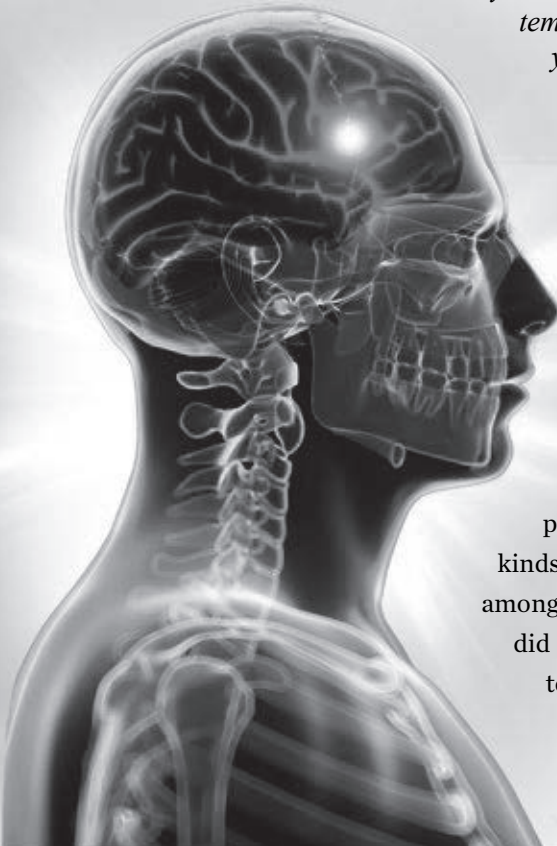
At the end of ten days their features appeared better and fatter in flesh than all the young men who ate the portion of the king's delicacies (Daniel 1:15).

Daniel and his friends looked so healthy after ten days that the steward allowed them to continue their simple diet. In addition, “God gave them knowledge and skill in all literature and wisdom; and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams” (Daniel 1:17). When their training was completed, the king interviewed the youth and “found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers who were in all his realm” (verse 20).

The Christian's body is a temple for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

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

Since the mind is what directs the life of a person, a Christian will practice good health habits to guard the place where the Holy Spirit influences him. Jesus not only preached, He was also concerned about people's physical health, for He healed “all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people” (Matthew 4:23). God did not arbitrarily give us health laws to make us miserable but to help us enjoy a Spirit-filled life.





The first home created by God for Adam and Eve was outside in a garden.

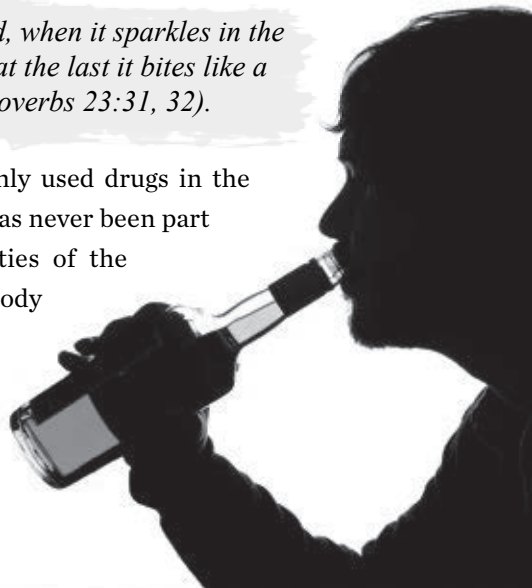
The LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there He put the man whom He had formed (Genesis 2:8).

Our Creator made the best possible environment for humans in the beginning. The Lord did not intend for people to live continually in buildings but to exercise outside in the sunlight. “The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it” (Genesis 2:15). It is the simple agencies of nature—such as exercise, fresh air, and pure water—that bring strength to the body and peace to the mind.

The Bible warns against the dangers of alcoholic beverages.

Do not look on the wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup, when it swirls around smoothly; at the last it bites like a serpent, and stings like a viper (Proverbs 23:31, 32).

Alcohol is one of the most commonly used drugs in the world, and it has destroyed millions. It has never been part of God’s plan, for it numbs the faculties of the mind, causes confusion, breaks down body organs, and leads to premature death. Addiction to alcohol has broken untold numbers of homes, caused millions of accidental deaths, and has created major financial woes.





Proper rest is conducive to a healthy body and mind.

[Jesus] said to them, “Come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while.” For there were many coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat (Mark 6:31).

Christ understood the need for proper rest for His own disciples and called them at times to cease their labors. Adequate sleep, along with times of healthy recreation, helps energize the mind, body, and spirit. In the beginning, the Lord intended for humans to enjoy a weekly rest called the Sabbath. “Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God. In it you shall do no work” (Exodus 20:9, 10).

Christians will guard their exposure to media, seeking input that is of a high standard.

Whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things (Philippians 4:8).

While visual and audio media are not evil in themselves, these channels have been used by Satan to bring into our lives unwholesome, violent, and impure music and movies. The Christian will be careful to choose entertainment that is uplifting, for by “beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, [we] are being transformed into the same image” (2 Corinthians 3:18).

A vegetarian diet was God's original and best plan for humanity.

God said, "See, I have given you every herb that yields seed which is on the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed; to you it shall be for food" (Genesis 1:29).

God planned for people to enjoy fruits, nuts, grains, and vegetables. These foods provide the best nutrition for enjoying optimal health. Most health problems today (such as heart disease and cancer) have been directly traced to a poor diet and lifestyle. Studies have revealed that a meat diet increases a variety of disorders. The Lord permitted humans to eat some meats after the flood but commanded people to not eat unclean flesh foods (see Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14).

The Bible encourages Christians to dress neatly, simply, and modestly while discouraging outward adornment.

Do not let your adornment be merely outward—arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel—rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God (1 Peter 3:3, 4).

Our dress reveals to others our values and love for God. A Christian does not try to draw attention to himself but to Christ. He or she will not wear styles that arouse sexual desires but will dress and act modestly. Christians will also practice economy when purchasing clothes—not buying cheap clothes, but choosing good quality while avoiding excessive amounts of and overly expensive clothing. The apostle Paul wrote that “in like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing” (1 Timothy 2:9).

I choose to live a healthy, balanced, and moderate life showing that I seek to glorify God by my diet, entertainment, and dress.



Reformer Highlight



Roger Williams (1603–1683) was a Puritan and later a Reformed Baptist. He was banished by the Puritan leaders from the Massachusetts colony for spreading “new and dangerous ideas.” Williams founded the Providence Plantation where he provided religious liberty to all. He is best known for upholding the principle of separation of church and state.

“God requireth not a uniformity of religion to be enacted and enforced in any civil state; which enforced uniformity (sooner or later) is the greatest occasion of civil war, ravishing of conscience, persecution of Christ Jesus in his servants, and of the hypocrisy and destruction of millions of souls.”