

Stewardship of the Body

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Worldwide more people die by suicide than by homicide and war. Suicide is the second leading cause of death for youth and young adults (age 10-24). It is also one of the leading causes of death for adults (ages 25-44). Most people think about suicide at some point in their lives. In 2004 the estimated number of attempted suicides in the U. S. was 800,000. On average, someone attempts suicide every 40 seconds in the U.S. and 88 people die by suicide each day. We are not to judge these people. Yet Scripture is clear by telling us not to kill (Exod 20:13) which includes ourselves.

On the other hand, people try to enjoy life to the fullest without caring about God and the future, abusing their bodies in various way (Luke 17:26-30). There seems to be a problem with the stewardship of our bodies.

I. God's Will

(1) Which role does physical health play in the plan of God?

- Gen 1:31 – God wanted humans to be healthy forever.
- Exod 15:26 – After the fall God became the great physician.
- Luke 4:38-40; 7:22; Mark 3:10 – Jesus healed people and preached the gospel.
- Rev 21:4 – On the new earth, suffering and death will be no more.

(2) Why does God care for our bodies and our physical health?

There is a connection between physical well-being and mental and emotional well-being. Physical problems can lead to psychological problems and even to problems with believing in God. Today psychosomatic illnesses are well-known. However, God wants us to live fulfilled lives and be good representatives of him. He is opposed to sin and suffering.

- 3 John 1:2 – God wants us to enjoy health in all respects.

II. Our Responsibility

(1) Why are we responsible for our bodies?

- John 1:3, 11 – As our creator God is interested in our health. He owns us, including our body. He also wants us to be fit for ministry.
- 1 Cor 6:19-20 – God has also a right to us because of salvation. Our body is to be God's dwelling place.

(2) What is our goal when we take care of our bodies?

- Rom 12:1-3 – We want to serve God and please him.
- 1 Thess 5:23 – We want to be ready for Christ's second coming and grow in all respects.
- 1 Cor 10:31 – We want to glorify God and want to become like him.

(3) How can I keep my body healthy and be a good steward?

- For example, by eating good food, doing exercise, having sufficient sleep and moderate work, and attending to personal hygiene.
- Because of psychosomatic effects other means should also be included, such as singing, listening to or performing good music, reading uplifting and thought provoking books, studying Scripture, praying, loving the neighbor, spending time in nature, having a helpful hobby.
- However, there is also gradual suicide from which we should stay away. The sixth commandment may also address this issue.

III. Health Tips

God cares for our health. Therefore, he has given us tips to better preserve it. As the creator he knows what is harmful and what is beneficial to us. Therefore, even Scripture addresses health principles which we may study more closely later.

For now, basic health tips can be summarized in eight points:

- Air: We need sufficient pure air and need to breathe right.
- Sunlight: We need to go outside regularly and enjoy sunlight.
- Self-control: We need self-control with eating, drinking, and in all things.
- Rest: It is not good to work only. We need enough rest.
- Exercise: We need to walk or jog and do sports.
- Food: Well-balanced and adequate nutrition is important.
- Water: We need to drink enough pure water.
- Trust in God: Trust in God creates stability and resilience.

IV. Personal Questions

- (1) What am I going to do, if God gives me new insights with regard to the stewardship of my body?
- (2) How will I be able to put in practice what I have and will discover?