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## Seeing the Bigger Canvas

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# HEALTHY CHOICES

Health is more than the absence of disease.

## Seeing the Bigger Canvas

BY WINSTON J. CRAIG

Health is more about God than us.

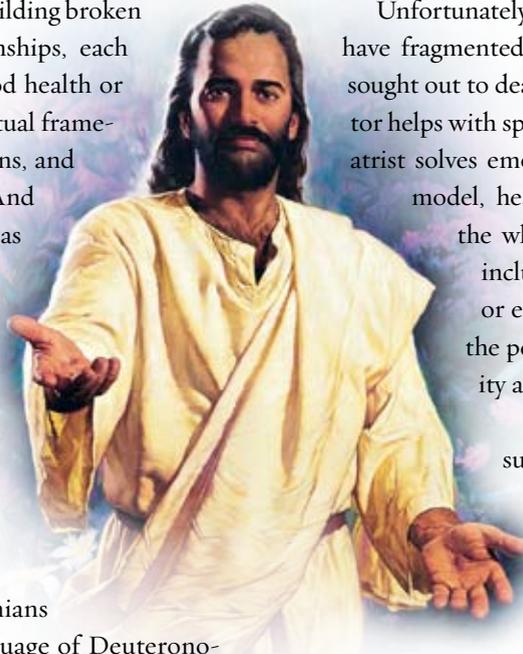


**Y**ou won't find a "sermon on the mount" devoted to the benefits of a healthy lifestyle anywhere in Scripture. There is no wellness list in the Bible—a list that admonishes us to get eight hours sleep a night, eat nine or more servings a day of fruit and vegetables, exercise 30 minutes a day and drink six to eight glasses of water a day, in order to secure good health.

Since God is in the business of rebuilding broken lives and restoring fractured relationships, each passage of Scripture that refers to good health or disease prevention is set within a spiritual framework. God says, "I will forgive your sins, and heal your diseases" (Psalm 103:3). And again, "I wish for you good health, as your soul prospers" (3 John 2). If we walk in partnership with God, we are promised protection from common diseases (Exodus 15:26), and the enjoyment of a long and prosperous life (Deuteronomy 5:33).

Since our body is a priceless temple of God, all our eating and drinking practices and our total life should bring glory to Him (1 Corinthians 6:19, 20; 10:31). In the covenant language of Deuteronomy 28, God's people are promised success, their families and possessions would be blessed, and they would not be afflicted with fevers and inflammations if they followed God's commands.

When Jesus was here on this Earth, He combined comprehensive teaching and preaching with a broad-spectrum healing ministry (Matthew 4:23) that weakened the oppressive power of the devil (Acts 10:38). Jesus often told people that their faith in Him was the trigger for their healing (Matthew 9:22).



Unfortunately, following the Greek model, we have fragmented human beings. The physician is sought out to deal with physical problems, the pastor helps with spiritual problems, while the psychiatrist solves emotional problems. In the Hebrew model, healing involved the restoration of the whole person. Health and wellness included the spiritual, physical, mental or emotional, and social well-being of the person, and included their prosperity and security.

Our health message could be more successful and have wider appeal if we worked from the bigger canvas.

Health is about more than just lowering blood pressure and cholesterol levels, and turning people into fitness gurus.

A healthy lifestyle must be understood within the context of a Christian life reflecting the image of God.

On the other hand, an unhealthy lifestyle can handicap us, preventing us from enjoying a meaningful partnership with Him. Inactivity encourages the advancement of disease processes, and alters the quality and length of our ministry. Sleep deprivation, unmanaged stress and the use of unhealthy substances can affect our memory and depreciate the quality of both our service to God and our relationships with others.

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