

The Gift of Health

Imagine this scenario. Two neighbors both receive an anonymous gift of a luxury car. The new cars are identical with all of the bells and whistles, high performance engine, sleek and attractive design. What a wonderful, free gift.

One of the neighbors takes prudent care of his car, washing it frequently, changing the oil on schedule and faithfully complies with all of the service plan recommendations. The other, however, drives the car frequently but does nothing to maintain it. Too busy doing other things. The once beautiful car quickly decreases in its value.

Fast forward a few years and compare the condition of each car. The well-maintained car looks and sounds great. It performs well on the road and still turns heads in the neighborhood. The neglected car is a different story. You can actually hear it coming down the street, the motor laboring and the clicking of the valves is a dead giveaway of its poor maintenance. Luckily this car is parked in the garage because it looks unsightly, needing both a wash and wax job to try and restore its exterior luster. It is too late to restore it mechanically, even if you replace the engine and most of its components. The lifespan and usefulness of each car differs significantly.

At birth God gave you a perfect luxury body, with all the possible features you could ever want. Your birth was a one-time gift with a warranty only valid if you followed the service plan. Did you park it on the sofa? Did you follow the well documented service plan of regular exercise and healthy living, or did you feed it with junk food? Were you too busy to maintain your body?

Research over the years has clearly given us an owner's manual for our body, recommending the fuel and exercise plan that keeps us as healthy as possible. Don't let the busyness of life rob you of the opportunity to be a well-balanced, healthy person.



Be thankful for the gift of health, as it is a gift from God. God gave you this gift for a reason. A well-tuned body gives you maximum opportunity to serve Him – in your families, in the workplace and in the community. Take care of your body by choosing a healthy lifestyle. After all, God lives within you, hoping you use it to further His Kingdom. *So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God (1 Corinthians 10:31).*

If you treat your body with respect and honor, God will more likely reward you with good health and healing. *Nevertheless, I will bring health and healing to it; I will heal my people and will let them enjoy abundant peace and security (Jeremiah 33:6)*

Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies (1 Corinthians 6:19-20).

So, how do we do this when there is so much pressure to produce at work and maintain the fast pace of life our world seems to require? Consider these thoughts:

What are the priorities God wants for your life. God doesn't want the frantic pace of life that threatens your health and keeps you from serving Him. Seek better balance in your life.

Know that if you are healthy your **production at work will improve**. Your capacity will increase so you can do more with less time. You'll be a better

employee.

Develop an exercise plan and stick with it. There will be days when excuses take you out of your routine. Once you give in to excuses, another will soon come up. Before you know it you are back to your old, unhealthy habits of neglect. If you are too busy to exercise you desperately need it more than anyone, because your stress level is probably through the roof.

Find someone else who can hold you accountable to your promise to make an effort to improve your health habits. You can mutually be an encourager with others. *Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing (1 Thessalonians 5:11).*

Keep worship in your schedule. You have much to be thankful for, and that thanks goes to God. He may hear your prayers from the couch but he will respect the sincerity of your prayers from His house of worship. Ask God to keep you strong in your commitment to health. You need His help to change old habits.

Rest on the Sabbath. *Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work ... (Exodus 20:8).*



Eat, drink and do things in **moderation** so that you enjoy life, but will enjoy it longer. *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law (Galatians 5:22-23).*

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Worried about your ability to support your family, causing you to put pressure on yourself at work? God promises abundance, but to those who show an effort to be **good stewards** of this gift. *Moreover, when God gives someone wealth and possessions, and the ability to enjoy them, to accept their lot and be happy in their toil—this is a gift of God. (Ecclesiastes 5:19).*

You have much to live for, especially your family who loves you and counts on you to be there for them. Your family is also a gift from God, deserving of your best. *Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows (James 1:17).*

So, which car do you want: the neglected car on the fast track to the junkyard or the well-kept car that will perform well for many years to come? It is up to you, at least until that decision is taken away from you by your body, revolting from the abuse of poor choices.

Question: What can you do to take care of your body so that you will be able to fully serve Him?

Prayer: Dear Lord. It is easy to get swept up in the pace of life, the desire to succeed and the excuses we make to not fully take care of ourselves. We pray we will honor the gift of health God gave us at birth. Amen.