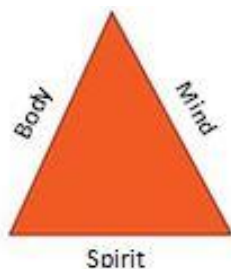


The Triangle and the Square

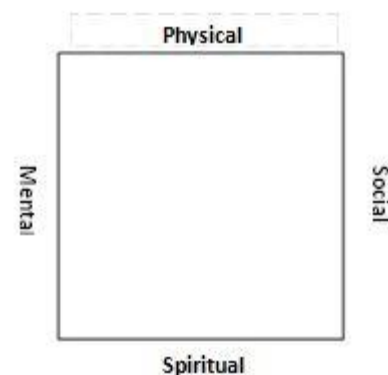
Many people go to a gym to get healthy. For me, “the gym” is our local YMCA. People view the Y as a great place to exercise for their health. The obvious benefits are weight loss, improved cardiovascular healthy and lower cholesterol numbers. My own physician told me that my risk of developing diabetes would be significantly lower if I lost 20-25 pounds. So, I did. But, the Y is much more than a fitness center.



This devotion is not intended as a commercial, but to show the interrelationship of physical, mental and spiritual health, conducted in a positive social environment. The symbolism of the Y logo hints of those key aspects of health. Embedded in the Y logo is an equilateral triangle, with the three sides representing Spirit, Mind and Body. Optimal health is dependent on all three working together and being of equal importance.

Incidentally, the triangle is known to be the strongest geometric figure known to man. We, too, are stronger if we are healthy in all three areas.

A specific YMCA traditional program adds recognition of the social element. The Y’s “Rags and Leathers” program, founded back in 1914, teaches that a well-rounded life is symbolized by a square with the four equal sides representing physical, social, spiritual and mental aspects of a person. What does all this have to do with health? Everything!



Good health is all about wholeness. The World Health Organization’s definition of health is consistent with the biblical definition. “Health is a state of complete physical, mental, social and spiritual well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.” The Bible refers to these in Luke 2:52, “*Jesus grew in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and all the people.*”

- “Stature” refers to physical health.
- “Wisdom” refers to both emotional and mental health.
- “In favor with God” speaks to our relationship with God; “with others” refers to social/relational health.

The Bible tells us to be good stewards of our temples – our bodies. *Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? ... (1 Corinthians 6:19).* Medical research affirms that our emotional health is linked to physical health, and so does the Bible. *A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a broken spirit saps a person’s strength (Proverbs 17:22).*

Life is not perfect. Sometimes disease occurs in people who are physically fit. In these situations the other aspects of a person help people handle their physical affliction.

- Good emotional and spiritual health allows a person to cope with their situation.
- Good mental health also helps even the most physically healthy person to deal with everyday issues.
- A person’s social network of family and friends helps them to build each other up and provide support, to equip people to handle adversity.
- A strong relationship with God helps a person more fully understand God’s design for physical, emotional, social and spiritual health.

You can find resources and relationships all around you that strengthen health physically, mentally, socially and spiritually. It is part of the total environment in which we live. For me, a key resource is the YMCA but I also experience it in my family and relationships with friends. While I exercise regularly at the Y, it is part of my total health network. Staff and fellow Y members create a caring, supportive social atmosphere. The Y is a community faith-based organization with its origin in Bible study. Many Y’s today reinforce that Jesus Christ is the Light of the

World, and a personal savior for all who believe. I urge you to find people and places that encourage and strengthen you to improve your overall health.

Take a preventative look at your life and see what relationships will help you to be healthy physically, mentally, socially and most important of all, spiritually. Make sound lifestyle decisions based on your acknowledgement of God's design for your life.

Question: What relationships are you building to achieve health physically, mentally, socially and spiritually?

Prayer: Most gracious heavenly Father. We only get one chance to live a healthy life this side of heaven. We pray that we will take care of ourselves as we seek to do your Will. We pray for good health physically, mentally, socially and spiritually. Amen.

Note: The research for this devotion is based on an article written by Walt Larimore, M.D., in the book Game Plan for Life, by Joe Gibbs.