

TAKING CARE OF YOUR BODY

Take Care – Week 2

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The title of this sermon is “Taking Care of Your Body.”

This is week 2 of our sermon series called “Take Care.”

The big idea behind the series is that taking care of yourself is a very spiritual thing to do, because if you don’t take care of yourself, then you won’t be able to take care of others. If you don’t take care of yourself, then you won’t be able to take care of God’s business.

So in this series we’re talking about how to take care of ourselves – our walk with God, our finances, our emotions, our time, our marriage, and today we’re going to talk about taking care of our body – your health and fitness.

Frankly, American Christians on the whole don’t do a very good job of taking care of their bodies.

A study from Purdue University found that religious people are more likely to be overweight than nonreligious people.¹

Of all religious groups, Baptists are by far the heaviest, with a 30% obesity rate.²

Why is that? Well, the fact that about 80% of church leaders are overweight probably has something to do with it.³ So we have some work to do when it comes to taking care of our bodies.

SHOULD CHRISTIANS CONCERN THEMSELVES WITH HEALTH AND FITNESS?

¹ Don Colbert, *Seven Pillars of Health*, p. 69.

² Nelson Searcy, *Healthy Renegade Pastor*, p. 223.

³ Ibid.

Now some of you might think that talking about health and fitness in church is ridiculous. That it's a new fad. That the only reason we are talking about it in church is because health and fitness are a big focus of our culture, and our church is just following the crowd.

But the truth is that very few churches are talking about health and fitness. There are very few sermons being preached about diet and exercise, about taking care of your physical body.

As well, this is not a new idea. I tracked down some quotes by some of my favorite preachers in the past.

Matthew Henry was a pastor in England during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. He wrote the most popular Bible commentary of all time. Listen to what he wrote hundreds of years ago. "It is implied, that we do, and should, love ourselves. There is a self-love which is corrupt, and the root of the greatest sins, and it must be put off and mortified: but there is a self-love which is natural, and the rule of the greatest duty, and it must be preserved and sanctified. We must love ourselves, that is, we must have a due regard to the dignity of our own natures, and a due concern for the welfare of our own souls and bodies."

In other words, we must love ourselves; not to the point of selfishness, or self-centeredness, or self-worship. But there is self-love, a self-care which is natural. And we must love ourselves by taking care of both our souls and bodies.

Another of my favorite Christian authors is **Thomas Watson**, a Puritan pastor in England during the seventeenth century. He wrote, "The commandment, 'Thou shalt not kill,' requires that we should preserve our own life and soul... We must be so far from self-murder that we must do all we can to preserve natural life. We must use all means of diet, exercise, and lawful recreation, which, like oil, preserves the lamp of life from going out."

Watson was commenting on one of the ten commandments that prohibits murder, and he says, "Don't forget about self-murder." Thomas Watson says the

true fulfillment of this command is not to merely walk with line, or walk the edge, so that as long we're not committing suicide we are okay. Instead, we must be so far from self-murder that we should do everything in our power to preserve our lives; to care for our bodies.

FOUR BIBLICAL TRUTHS ABOUT MY BODY

In order to get motivated about health and fitness, you first need to develop a Biblical perspective of your body. What does the Bible say about our bodies?

One: My body belongs to God. 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 “19 Don't you know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, 20 for you were bought at a price. So glorify God with your body.”

Your body is God's property. He owns it. When you care for health, you are caring for God's property. When you damage your health, you are damaging God's property. When you neglect your health, you are neglecting God's property.

Two: My body is God's temple. 1 Corinthians 6:19 “Don't you know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God?”

Your body is God's temple. That means that the primary purpose of your body is worship.

When you destroy your body, you are destroying God's holy temple. When you care for your body, you are caring for God's temple.

The Holy Spirit lives in you. God lives in you. Your body is God's home. When you destroy your body, you are destroying God's home. When you take care of your body, you are taking care of God's house.

Three: My body is God's tool. 1 Corinthians 12:27 “Now you are the body of Christ, and individual members of it.”

The church is the body of Christ, and every Christian a member of the body; a body part.

So your body is a part of God's body. What does it mean that we are the body of Christ? It means that we are God's hands and feet in the world, sent out to do His work.

You are God's tool. God wants to use you to do His work; to accomplish His purposes. When you destroy your body, you are destroying part of the body of Christ. When you destroy your body, you are destroying God's tool. When you take care of your body, you are taking care of God's tool so that He can be more effective at accomplishing His mission.

Four: My body matters to God. Many Christians think that the physical body is unimportant to God. That the body has nothing to do with godliness. But that's not true. All through the Bible God stresses the importance of our physical bodies.

Romans 6:13 (NLT) "Do not let any part of your body become an instrument of evil to serve sin. Instead, give yourselves completely to God, for you were dead, but now you have new life. So use your whole body as an instrument to do what is right for the glory of God." **Romans 12:1** "Therefore, brothers and sisters, in view of the mercies of God, I urge you to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God; this is your true worship." **1 Corinthians 6:20** "For you were bought at a price. So glorify God with your body." **2 Corinthians 7:1 (NLT)** "Because we have these promises, dear friends, let us cleanse ourselves from everything that can defile our body or spirit. And let us work toward complete holiness because we fear God."

Many Christians think that the spirit matters, but the body does not. But the truth is your body and spirit are interrelated, and they have a huge impact on each other.

The authors of *The Daniel Plan* wrote, “You have a body, but you are far more than just a body. Every area of your life affects every other area. For instance, it’s hard to be spiritual strong and mentally alert when you are emotionally stressed or physically fatigued. If you are spiritually and emotionally weak or ill, your body cannot perform at its peak.”⁴ They go on to say, “What you do with your body sets the tone for everything else. Physical health influences your mental health, your spiritual health, your emotional health, your relational health, and even your financial health.”⁵

One of my preaching books, *Power in the Pulpit*, says this: “Someone has said that the body and soul live so close together they catch one another’s diseases. Modern physiology bears out this statement. You cannot benefit one part of your life without benefitting the whole. The body is the vehicle God uses to communicate His word to men. Keep your body in good condition. Make it a finely-honed tool for God.”⁶

In other words, if you neglect your physical body, then it will take its toll on your spiritual health, as well as your mental health, your relational health, and your financial health. Your body is extremely important to your overall effectiveness and enjoyment. What you do with your body doesn’t just affect your body. It affects all of you.

EIGHT REASONS TO TAKE CARE OF YOUR BODY

Now that we’ve looked at what the Bible says about your body, now we’re ready to talk about taking care of your body. Let me give you ten reasons to take care of your body.

One: When I neglect my health, it is difficult to rejoice. We all want to be happy. And God wants us to be happy. The Bible even commands us to rejoice in the Lord always (Philippians 4:4).

⁴ Rick Warren, Daniel Amen, Mark Hyman, *The Daniel Plan*.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Jerry Vines, Jim Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, p. 79.

I'm sure you've probably noticed this, but it is hard to rejoice and to be happy when your health is failing; when your body is suffering; when you don't feel good. When you neglect your health, it is hard to be happy; it is hard to rejoice in the Lord. **Thomas Watson** said, "Health is the sauce which makes life sweeter."

Two: When I neglect my health, it is difficult to serve others.

Someone said, "Diet, exercise, rest – these things are spiritual. Try serving God without them."

John MacArthur, the great preacher, said, "When I exercise and eat right, my body and brain work better."

Pastor **Nelson Searcy** wrote, "God has an abundance of work ready for you. The question is, can you get it all done in the shape you're in?"⁷

When Peter's mother-in-law was sick, she was lying in bed; she wasn't any good to anyone. But after Jesus healed her, she began to serve them.⁸

The better you feel, and the stronger your body is, the more productive you can be for God, and the more helpful you can be to others.⁹

Three: When I neglect my health, it is difficult to resist temptation.

There are two major events in the life of Jesus immediately before beginning His ministry. First, He was baptized by John the Baptist in the Jordan River, and second, Jesus went into the wilderness for a time of prayer and fasting for forty

⁷ Nelson Searcy, *Healthy Renegade Pastor*, p. 245. Searcy went on to say, "If you refuse to take time to care for yourself -- to come apart, as some other translations put it -- you will soon come apart at the seams. Or as I like to say, if you do not come apart, you will come apart. Failing to invest in yourself by eating properly, moving your body, resting well and doing the other things required for health will destroy you and your ability to minister to those around you."

⁸ Mark 1:29-31.

⁹ Dr. Richard Swenson, author of *Margin and Overload Syndrome*, said, "The increased vitality resulting from good conditioning allows more energy and efficiency for all other endeavors."

days and forty nights. After forty days and nights, then the devil attacked him with temptation.¹⁰

The devil is very crafty. He didn't tempt Jesus when He was well fed, well rested, and full of strength. He waited until Jesus was very weak physically.

The worse you feel physically, the more vulnerable you are to temptation, because your body is naturally looking distractions, diversions, and pleasures to make life more comfortable.

When are you the most vulnerable to temptation? Remember the word BATTLE: Blue (sad or discouraged), Ailing (sick), Tired, Ticked (angry), Lonely (or alone), and Empty (hungry).

Four: When I neglect my health, it is difficult to glorify God.

Your purpose in life is to glorify God by displaying His goodness and greatness through your life.

You are a walking advertisement for Jesus Christ, for the religion of Christianity. Are you a good advertisement, or a bad advertisement?

Jim Rohn said, "You never have a second chance to make a first impression. God looks on the inside; people look on the outside. People shouldn't judge you on your looks, but they do. Make sure the outside is a major reflection of what's going on the inside."

God is excellent, and beautiful, and holy, and strong, and self-controlled, and wise. Does your health and fitness reflect His character?

Five: When I neglect my health, I shorten my life.

¹⁰ Matthew 4:1-3.

If you neglect your body, your life will be cut short. And when you die, you won't be able to take care of your spouse, and your kids, and your grandkids. You won't be able to witness. You won't be able to serve the church.

Some people say, "I think your lifespan is decided by your genetics." **Dr. Mehmet Oz** said, "Genetics may load the gun, but it's your lifestyle that pulls the trigger."

Dr. Richard Swenson, the author of *Margin*, said that 50% of all deaths in America are related to lifestyle choices.¹¹ Not genetics, not freak accidents, not random diseases, but poor lifestyle choices.

The two leading causes of death in America are heart disease and cancer. **Dr. Don Colbert**, author of *The Seven Pillars of Health*, wrote that studies show that you can reduce your risk of heart disease by 80 percent or more and cancer by 60 percent or more simply leading a healthier life.¹² In other words, when most people die we can't really say, "It was his time to go." Instead, their poor health choices caught up with them and cut their life short.

Our goal should be to die like Moses. **Deuteronomy 34:7** "Moses was one hundred twenty years old when he died; his eyes were not weak, and his vitality had not left him." That's a man who died because it was his time to go.

Six: When I neglect my health, I hurt myself.

Let's be honest. Nobody likes pain. Nobody likes to feel bad. Nobody likes to hurt. Nobody likes to suffer. But when you neglect your health, you increase your pain in life.

The authors of *The Daniel Plan* wrote that fifty percent of Americans are suffering from a chronic disease (such as heart disease, diabetes, cancer, acid reflux, etc.), and eighty percent of those are lifestyle preventable and reversible diseases.

¹¹ Dr. Richard Swenson, *Margin*, p. 96.

¹² Dr. Don Colbert, *The Seven Pillars of Health*, p. 2.

Many people in America are suffering and hurting, and it's their own fault. It could be prevented by lifestyle changes.

Life is painful enough as it is. Don't add to the pain by neglecting your health.

My wife's dad died of heart disease at the age of fifty-eight, and he had his first heart attack at the age of twenty-eight. That had a great impact on Lydia. She told me that one of the reasons health and fitness are important to her is that if ever she has heart trouble or gets cancer, she doesn't want it to be because she neglected her health.

Seven: When I neglect my health, it is harder to fight off illnesses.

This is another thing that I learned from my wife. It's a really good point. She said that another reason why health and fitness are important to her so that when she does get sick, especially with something serious like cancer, she wants her body to be as strong as possible so that it can fight off the illness.

You can't control everything that happens to you. Eventually, the odds are that you will get sick; very sick. Make it your goal so that when you do get sick, your body will be as strong as possible so that, if it is God's will, you can recover.

Eight: When I neglect my health, I waste time and money.

It costs more to eat healthy. It costs money to have a gym membership, and to buy exercise equipment. And it takes time. But good health saves more time and money than it takes.

Investing in your health is not spending time and money, it is not wasting time and money, it is investing time and money. You are investing in yourself.

Dr. Don Colbert said, "Health is cheap; disease is expensive."¹³

¹³ Dr. Don Colbert, *The Seven Pillars of Health*, p. 11.

The authors of *The Daniel Plan* wrote that Americans spend almost \$3 trillion a year on diseases that are lifestyle preventable and reversible.¹⁴

The authors of *Power in the Pulpit* wrote, “If you do not find time to maintain physical fitness, you will have to find time for physical illness.”¹⁵

Ephesians 5:16 (EHV) “Make the most of your time, because the days are evil.” How can you make the most of your time and money? Take care of your body. Healthy choices are cheap compared to the price of sickness and suffering.

SEVEN CHOICES FOR A HEALTHIER BODY

One: Enthroned Jesus Christ over your physical body.

1 Corinthians 6:20 “for you were bought at a price. So glorify God with your body.”

The first choice to a healthier body is to make a commitment to glorify God with your body.

Not just your mind, or your thoughts, or your words, or your sexuality, or your politics, but with every arena of your life, including your body – your health and fitness.

Two: Eat healthy.

Nelson Searcy said, “Good health doesn’t happen by chance; it is earned one bite at a time.”

This is not easy. **Someone** said, “Dieting is easy. It’s like riding a bike. Except the bike is on fire. And the ground is on fire. And everything is on fire because you’re in hell!”

¹⁴ Rick Warren, Daniel Amen, Mark Hyman, *The Daniel Plan*, p. 36.

¹⁵ Jerry Vines, Jim Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, p. 79.

Mankind's addiction to food goes back thousands of years. Esau sold his birth for a bowl of lentil soup!¹⁶

But if you want a healthy body, you have to eat a healthy diet.

Eating healthy means two things.

One: Eat smaller portions.

Nelson Searcy said, "We suffer from portion distortion in this country."

Think about this. The stomach is the size of a human fist, not the size of a human head.¹⁷

Two: Eat healthy foods that give your body the nutrition that it needs. I don't have the time to tell you which foods are healthy and which foods are not, but here's the big idea: "We are what we eat – literally."¹⁸

The foods you eat play a huge part in the health of your body.

Nelson Searcy wrote, "Most of the ailments filling our prayer request lists are reversible – better yet, altogether preventable – with some simple dietary changes."¹⁹

I like how **Dr. Don Colbert** put it. "... everything you put in your mouth has the potential to produce life or death.... Are you at war with your health because of the foods you eat?"²⁰

The authors of the ***The Daniel Plan*** wrote, "Food is medicine. Food has the power to heal us. It is the most potent tool we have to help prevent and treat many of our chronic diseases – including diabetes and obesity. Truly, what you put on

¹⁶ Genesis 25:27-34.

¹⁷ Nelson Searcy, *The Healthy Renegade Pastor*.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Dr. Don Colbert, *The Seven Pillars of Health*, p. 65.

your fork dictates whether you are sick or well, slim or fat, depleted or energized.”

What should you eat? In short, a lot more raw fruits and vegetables, seeds, nuts, and whole grains, and a lot less meat and processed foods.

And you also need a lot of water. In general you need about eight cups a day, or 64 ounces. About fifty percent of Americans suffer from mild dehydration.²¹

Three: Exercise plenty.

An overweight man goes to his family doctor for a checkup. When the doctor expresses his concern over his weight, the man says, “Doc, the problem is that obesity runs in my family.” To which the doctor replies, “No, the problem is that no one in your family runs.”²²

A study in 2012 said that lack of exercise is causing nearly ten percent of deaths worldwide, roughly as many as smoking.²³

According to the CDC eighty percent of Americans don’t exercise enough.

Another study reported that eighty percent of kids age 13 to 15 don’t get enough exercise.²⁴

Research shows that lack of exercise significantly raises the risk of heart disease, cancer, and obesity.²⁵

Dr. Don Colbert lists the following benefits of exercise: Prevents cancer; Prevents heart attacks and heart disease; Lowers stress; Promotes weight loss and decreases appetite; Increases perspiration (which is one of the primary ways that

²¹ Dr. David Jeremiah.

²² I’m not sure, but I think I read this joke in Nelson Searcy’s book *The Healthy Renegade Pastor*.

²³ [Lack of exercise kills roughly as many as smoking, study says](#)

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Nelson Searcy, *The Healthy Renegade Pastor*.

your body gets rid of toxins); builds strong bones; reduces depression; improves memory and reaction time; increases lung capacity; increases energy level.

Dr. Colbert says you need two types of exercise.

Aerobic or cardio exercises such as brisk walking, jogging, cycling; sometimes these are called cardio exercises. It gets you breathing deeper and more rapidly; it's great for your heart and lungs.

And then anaerobic exercises or weight training, which is working out with weights and calisthenics.

He recommends cardio four days a week for thirty minutes, and weights three days a week.

Some people object, "Jesus didn't exercise." "One New Testament researcher added together all of the miles that Jesus is documented as having walked and estimates that he averaged at least twenty miles per day during his three years active ministry."²⁶

Four: Eliminate excess weight.

For the first time in history, as many people are suffering from too much food as not enough. Many are suffering from not enough food, but just as many are suffering from the consequences of too much food.

Seven in ten Americans are overweight.²⁷ More than one third are obese. Seventeen percent of children and teenagers are obese. Ninety percent of men are overweight.²⁸

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Rick Warren, Daniel Amen, Mark Hyman, *The Daniel Plan*, p. 15.

²⁸ "The Problem With Belly Fat Source: Study: 90 Percent Of American Men Are 'Overfat'," by Daniel Steingold, StudyFinds.org, July 25, 2017.

Excess belly fat (fat stored in the abdomen area) is associated with an increased risk of cancer, stroke, heart disease, type 2 diabetes, higher levels of disease and mortality, and reduced quality of life.

How do you lose weight? Eat less and exercise more.

How do you know if you are overweight? The two best ways to check your weight are your BMI (Body Mass Index), and your waist circumference.

If your BMI is higher than 25, then you are overweight.²⁹

If your waist circumference (from your belly button) is more than half your height, then you are overweight.

Five: Enjoy eight hours of sleep.

About sixty million Americans suffer from insomnia and other sleep disorders.³⁰

Every year about forty-two million sleeping pill prescriptions were filled in America.³¹

Dr. Don Colbert wrote, “By sleeping less, you increase your chances of suffering from heart attack, stroke, diabetes, weight gain, and premature aging.”³²

Research suggests that inadequate rest and sleep may short your life span by eight to ten years.³³

When you sleep, your body recharges your immune system and restores your organs. Your body shuts down and repairs itself.³⁴

²⁹ There are many websites that help you check your BMI for free.

³⁰ Dr. Don Colbert, *The Seven Pillars of Health*, p. 37.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

Dr. William Dement said, “You’re not healthy unless your sleep is healthy.”

Doctors say that adults need between seven to nine hours of sleep each night.

Six: Expel the poisons from your body.

What do I mean by poisons? We’ve already talked about unhealthy foods. Now I’m referring excessive alcohol consumption, recreational drug use, and tobacco products.

Every year almost half a million people die in America from tobacco use.

Twenty percent of deaths in the United States is related to smoking.

Smoking kills more Americans than alcohol, car accidents, suicide, AIDS, homicide, and illegal drugs combined.

Thirty percent of all cancer deaths are attributed to tobacco use, tying it with obesity for the number one risk factor of cancer.³⁵

I feel kind of silly saying this, but don’t put poisons in your body.

Seven: Educate yourself about health and fitness.

Most Americans don’t read. And that means that most Americans haven’t read anything about health and fitness. But if you want to take care of your body, you have to read up on the subject.

The more you read, the more passionate you will become about health and fitness, and the more equipped you will be to take care of your body.

³⁵ Dr. Don Colbert, *The Seven Pillars of Health*.

Let me give you three recommendations: *The Seven Pillars of Health*, by Dr. Don Colbert. *The Daniel Plan*, by Rick Warren, Dr. Daniel Amen, and Dr. Mark Hyman. And *Bod 4 God*, by Steve Reynolds.

But let me warn you. Most Americans are clueless about health and fitness. The first time I read a book on health and fitness I was shocked at what I didn't know, and it changed my life.

ARE YOU PASSIONATE FOR GOD'S HOUSE?

John 2 tells the story of Jesus cleansing the temple. **John 2:14-17 (NLT)**

14 In the Temple area he saw merchants selling cattle, sheep, and doves for sacrifices; he also saw dealers at tables exchanging foreign money. 15 Jesus made a whip from some ropes and chased them all out of the Temple. He drove out the sheep and cattle, scattered the money changers' coins over the floor, and turned over their tables. 16 Then, going over to the people who sold doves, he told them, "Get these things out of here. Stop turning my Father's house into a marketplace!" 17 Then his disciples remembered this prophecy from the Scriptures: "Passion for God's house will consume me."

Jesus was passionate about God's house. When He saw that God's house was being misused and abused, He took action. He got physical.

God's house is no longer the temple in Jerusalem, it is you and me. Your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. God lives in you.

And my prayer is that passion for God's house would consume you. That you would take action to clean up God's house and keep it health to the glory of God.