



1. Above all things, what is God's desire for us?

3 John 2: "Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth."

Our bodies must be kept in a healthy condition if our spiritual natures are to be in health. The condition of the body affects the condition of the mind. When the health of the body is neglected and bad physical habits are established, the religious life also suffers.

2. When we come to God in simple faith desiring spiritual cleansing (forgiveness) and renewal (conversion), He freely gives. What physical blessing does He bestow upon all who obey Him?

Exodus 15:26: "... If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the LORD that healeth thee."

[Further Study]

Psalms 103:2-3 "Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases;"

3. Can the way we care for our bodies honor or dishonor God?

1 Corinthians 3:16-17: "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are."

1 Corinthians 6:19-20: "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."

Romans 12:1: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."

1 Corinthians 10:31: "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."

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1 Thessalonians 5:23 "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Daniel 1:8-16 "But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself. Now God had brought Daniel into favour and tender love with the prince of the eunuchs. And the prince of the eunuchs said unto Daniel, I fear my lord the king, who hath appointed your meat and your drink: for why should he see your faces worse liking than the children which are of your sort? then shall ye make me endanger my head to the king. Then said Daniel to Melzar, whom the prince of the eunuchs had set over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, Prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days; and let them give us pulse to eat, and water to drink. Then let our countenances be looked upon before thee, and the countenance of the children that eat of the portion of the king's meat: and as thou seest, deal with thy servants. So he consented to them in this matter, and proved them ten days. And at the end of ten days their countenances appeared fairer and fatter in flesh than all the children which did eat the portion of the king's meat. Thus Melzar took away the portion of their meat, and the wine that they should drink; and gave them pulse."

4. Since what we eat and drink should glorify God, what kind of diet did He give man to best accomplish this purpose?

Genesis 1:29: "And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat (food)."

Man's original diet consisted of fruits, nuts, grains, and legumes.

5. After sin entered the world what did God add to man's diet?

Genesis 3:18: "Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field."

After sin entered, vegetables were added, perhaps because our first parents were deprived of certain nutrients found in the tree of life.

Genesis 3:24 "So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life."

6. What further change became necessary as a result of the flood?

Genesis 9:3: "Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things."

Before the flood God gave no permission for man to eat the flesh of animals. Then, because vegetation had been destroyed by the flood, God allowed the use of flesh food for the first time. For this purpose the clean animals had been taken into the ark by sevens and the unclean by twos (Genesis 7:1-2). Even

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though this verse seems to be an unrestricted permit to eat any kind of animal, please note that it was not without limits. God said, "Even as the green herb have I given you all things." In the same way that God had given vegetation, so now He gives flesh. But all vegetation was not good to eat. There were weeds and poisonous plants that could not be eaten. It is also interesting to note that this instruction was given to Noah immediately after leaving the ark. Since it takes two (male and female) to propagate a species, and only two of the unclean were saved in the ark, it is certain that God did not give license to eat the unclean animals. If He had, the unclean species would have been exterminated, and none would exist today. As we study the Bible we find that man's lifespan was drastically reduced after flesh food was introduced into his diet.

Genesis 7:1-2 "And the LORD said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark; for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation. Of every clean beast thou shalt take to thee by sevens, the male and his female: and of beasts that are not clean by two, the male and his female."

7. What further restriction did God place upon the use of flesh food?

Genesis 9:4: "But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat."

[Further Study]

Acts 15:20, 28-29 "But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood. . . . For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things; That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well."

Our wise Heavenly Father knows that disease is communicated through the blood, therefore required that it be drained from the animal's body before eating.

8. How does the Bible differentiate between clean and unclean animals?

Leviticus 11:3, 7-10: "Whatsoever parteth the hoof, and is clovenfooted, and cheweth the cud, among the beasts, that shall ye eat. . . . And the swine, though he divide the hoof, and be clovenfooted, yet he cheweth not the cud, he is unclean to you. Of their flesh shall ye not eat, and their carcase shall ye not touch; they are unclean to you. These shall ye eat of all that are in the waters: whatsoever hath fins and scales in the waters, in the seas, and in the rivers, them shall ye eat. And all that have not fins and scales in the seas, and in the rivers, of all that move in the waters, and of any living thing which is in the waters, they shall be an abomination unto you."

[Further Study]

Deuteronomy 14:2-20

2 For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God, and the LORD hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth.

3 Thou shalt not eat any abominable thing.

4 These are the beasts which ye shall eat: the ox, the sheep, and the goat,

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- 5** The hart, and the roebuck, and the fallow deer, and the wild goat, and the pygarg [antelope], and the wild ox, and the chamois.
- 6** And every beast that parteth the hoof, and cleaveth the cleft into two claws, and cheweth the cud among the beasts, that ye shall eat.
- 7** Nevertheless these ye shall not eat of them that chew the cud, or of them that divide the cloven hoof; as the camel, and the hare, and the coney: for they chew the cud, but divide not the hoof; therefore they are unclean unto you.
- 8** And the swine, because it divideth the hoof, yet cheweth not the cud, it is unclean unto you: ye shall not eat of their flesh, nor touch their dead carcase.
- 9** These ye shall eat of all that are in the waters: all that have fins and scales shall ye eat:
- 10** And whatsoever hath not fins and scales ye may not eat; it is unclean unto you.
- 11** Of all clean birds ye shall eat.
- 12** But these are they of which ye shall not eat: the eagle, and the ossifrage, and the osprey,
- 13** And the glede, and the kite, and the vulture after his kind,
- 14** And every raven after his kind,
- 15** And the owl, and the night hawk, and the cuckoo, and the hawk after his kind,
- 16** The little owl, and the great owl, and the swan,
- 17** And the pelican, and the gier eagle, and the cormorant,
- 18** And the stork, and the heron after her kind, and the lapwing, and the bat.
- 19** And every creeping thing that flieth is unclean unto you: they shall not be eaten.
- 20** But of all clean fowls ye may eat.

Unclean creatures are God's scavengers to cleanse the earth. It is impossible for the flesh of any creature to be healthy when filth is their natural element. They are composed of what they eat. Even if they are fed good food their digestive system is different than clean animals which still renders them unfit for food. Please read all of Leviticus 11.

9. Well, these dietary restrictions were good for the Jews, but what about New Testament Christians?

Acts 10:9-15, 28: "On the morrow, as they went on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the housetop to pray about the sixth hour: and he became very hungry, and would have eaten: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance, and saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth: wherein were all manner of fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat. But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean. And the voice spake unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common. . . . And he said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath showed me that I should not call any man common or unclean."

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Some people contend that Christ cleansed all food when He was here, but, if so, Peter knew nothing about it. He had spent three and a half years with the Master and listened to His instructions. Yet Peter had gathered no intimation that those unclean animals could be eaten. This vision was symbolic, and he was shown that he should not refer to Gentiles as unclean.

10. What will happen to those who are in the habit of eating unclean meat when Jesus comes?

Isaiah 66:15-17: "For, behold, the Lord will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire and by his sword will the Lord plead with all flesh: and the slain of the Lord shall be many. They that sanctify themselves, and purify themselves in the gardens behind one tree in the midst, eating swine's flesh, and the abomination, and the mouse, shall be consumed together saith the Lord."

Deuteronomy 14:3: "Thou shalt not eat any abominable thing."

[Further Study]

Revelation 21:27 "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."

11. Besides eating unclean meat, what is another way we can defile our bodies?

Proverbs 20:1: "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise."

1 Corinthians 6:9-10: "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? ... nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God."

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Proverbs 23:29-35 "Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine. Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder. Thine eyes shall behold strange women, and thine heart shall utter perverse things. Yea, thou shalt be as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea, or as he that lieth upon the top of a mast. They have stricken me, shalt thou say, and I was not sick; they have beaten me, and I felt it not: when shall I awake? I will seek it yet again."

12. What does the apostle Paul say we must do if we are to receive an incorruptible crown?

1 Corinthians 9:25: "And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible."

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Acts 24:25 "And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee."

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Galatians 5:22, 23 "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law."

Titus 1:8 "But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate;"

2 Peter 1:6 "And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity."

True temperance is abstaining from all things harmful and using moderately that which is good. Christians who desire to glorify God in their bodies will not use tobacco, alcohol, harmful drugs, large quantities of sugar, or anything that will knowingly defile their body temple. They will endeavor to stay physically fit that they may be blameless before God; body, soul, and spirit.

13. In light of the wonderful gift of eternal life which God so freely offers, and the power to overcome sin through the indwelling Holy Spirit, like whom will we become?

1 John 3:2-3: "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure."

*There are some Bible texts which may be taken out of context in order to justify the use of that which the Word of God plainly condemns. We will closely examine some of the "problem" texts that deal with our health. The following references are adapted from **Answers to Difficult Bible Texts, by Joe Crews.***

Matthew 15:11: As a setting for this text begin reading from verse 2. The Jews had a tradition requiring that the hands should be ceremonially washed after each contact with a Gentile. They chided Jesus and the disciples for not following the custom. Then Christ spoke the words of verse 11, "Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man."

Matthew 15:1-11

1 Then came to Jesus scribes and Pharisees, which were of Jerusalem, saying,

2 Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread.

3 But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?

4 For God commanded, saying, Honour thy father and mother: and, He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death.

5 But ye say, Whosoever shall say to his father or his mother, It is a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me;

6 And honour not his father or his mother, he shall be free. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition.

7 Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying,

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8 This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me.

9 But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.

10 And he called the multitude, and said unto them, Hear, and understand:

11 Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man.

In verse 15, Peter said to Jesus, "Declare unto us this parable." Please notice that this is a parable and should not be literally applied. In fact, Jesus explained the parable so that we need not speculate about the meaning. He concluded His explanation with these words, "For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: these are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man." verses 19, 20.

Get the picture. The Jewish leaders were upset about the custom of ceremonial washing of hands, while at the same time, they had murder in their hearts toward Christ. Jesus was exposing the absurdity of their posture. The ceremonial uncleanness was only an imagined defilement. The evil thoughts were true defilement. The question of diet was not involved at all. There was no eating or drinking at the heart of the issue. It was ceremonial washing of the hands versus murder in the heart. One defiled and the other did not.

Romans 14:2, 14, 21: It is well to consider this entire chapter in it's context.

1 Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations.

2 For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs.

3 Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him.

4 Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand.

5 One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.

6 He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks.

7 For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself.

8 For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, wedie unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.

9 For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.

10 But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ

11 For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.

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12 So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.

13 Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way.

14 I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean.

15 But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died.

16 Let not then your good be evil spoken of:

17 For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

18 For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men.

19 Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.

20 For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence.

21 It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak.

22 Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth.

23 And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.

Paul was writing about a problem of judging among the apostolic believers. Verses 4, 10 and 13 exhort against the sin of judging one another. And it was true that a serious division existed in that early church. The Gentile Christians were judging the Jewish Christians, and the Jewish Christians were judging the Gentile Christians.

What was the basis of the problem? What were they judging each other over? The Gentiles who had come into the church from paganism were offended because the Jewish Christians ate food that had been offered in sacrifice to idols. And the Jewish Christians judged the Gentile church members because they had no regard for the ceremonial days that they still observed from Judaism. Some of the Gentile converts were so fearful of eating meat offered to idols that they ate only vegetables. Paul spoke of them in verses 1 and 2. Paul elaborated on the "weak brother" further in 1 Corinthians 8:8-12, and how he esteemed the food unfit to be eaten. He counseled against becoming a stumbling-block to the weak brother. "And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died? But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ." 1 Corinthians 8:11-12.

Compare this language with Romans 14:13-15: "Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way. I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean. But if thy brother be grieved with thy

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meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died."

The food offered to idols was not unclean food (Acts 14:13) but was only esteemed so by the Gentile converts. It was not a moral issue. Neither was the matter of the ceremonial days which Paul mentioned in Romans 14:5. He told them to stop judging over those issues and get on with the work. These matters had nothing to do with the moral questions of the seventh-day Sabbath and the forbidden unclean food.

The foods referred to in this chapter were not biblically unclean, but were "esteemed" (verse 14) unclean because they had been used in sacrifice to idols. (1 Corinthians 8:1,13). The wine approved by God is described as "wine in the cluster" (Isaiah 65:8), so both meat and wine were clean of themselves. Though Paul concedes that an idol is "nothing in the world," (1 Corinthians 8:4) and therefore food offered to it is not defiled by being offered, many did not view it that way. They felt the food was contaminated and unfit for Christian consumption. For the sake of such objectors who felt that it was unclean Paul said it was better not to offend their weak conscience (verse 1) by eating it before them. [1 Corinthians 8]

1 Timothy 5:23: The Greek word "omos" which is translated "wine" may be either fermented or unfermented, depending on the context. But since alcoholic drink is categorically condemned in Proverbs 23:29-32 and Proverbs 20:1, it is inconceivable that the New Testament church leaders would condone it.

There is nothing in Paul's counsel to Timothy which would indicate that this "little wine" was fermented. Since Timothy had an apparent problem of digestion and also other infirmities, the recommended use of grape juice might well have been an effective dietary supplement.

The Bible writers also recommend the unfermented grape juice as a blessing to the body. "Thus saith the LORD, As the new wine is found in the cluster, and one saith, Destroy it not; for a blessing is in it: so will I do for my servants' sakes, that I may not destroy them all." Isaiah 65:8. The kind of wine which is "in the cluster" is nonalcoholic. Some authorities today urge the drinking of grape juice based on its rapid therapeutic ingestion into the system.

1 Timothy 4:1-4: The warning against a latter day apostasy in these texts involves a number of heresies – following devils, forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from certain foods.

Perhaps the greatest misunderstanding has arisen over verse 4, where it is stated that "every creature of God is good". This means that every created thing has been made for a need and a purpose. But some suppose that every animal is therefore good to be eaten if it is properly prayed over and blessed by the prayer of thanksgiving. But not so! Praying over a buzzard, or mole, or bat will not make it fit for food. Paul hastens to add verse 5 in case anyone should come to wrong conclusions from verse 4. He says, "For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer."

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Ah, now we know what sanctifies it as proper for the diet. The Word of God must approve it, and then the prayer of thanksgiving will sanctify it to be eaten.

Please take note also of the fact that this discussion is not involved with biblically unclean animals. Those meats which some had forbidden were "meats which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth." verse 3. Now it is easy to find in the Bible God's description of the meats which he created to be received with thanksgiving. (Leviticus 11:2-20) Those who "believe and know the truth" will receive those things with thanksgiving because they are "sanctified by the Word of God and prayer". God's word is the truth. Those only who "believe and know" that word will be led to those things that "are sanctified" and "created to be received with thanksgiving". Those who "sanctify themselves" while eating unclean meats will be destroyed at Christ's second coming. See Isaiah 66:15-17.