

**“I have come that they may  
have life ... more abundantly”  
(John 10:10).**

On the high slopes of the Himalayas in eastern Pakistan lives a society of healthy, happy people, many of whom live to well over one hundred years. Sir Robert McCarrison (1878-1960) discovered that their health, happiness, and longevity were a result of their natural lifestyle. Dr. McCarrison also found that when these people, the Hunzas, moved to the lowlands and adopted a European lifestyle, they acquired all the diseases of “civilization.” What does this teach us?

As reported in “Secrets of Long Life,” in the November 2005 issue of *National Geographic*, we find other folks in this world who live long and meaningful lives. Some attribute their longevity to plant-based diets; others, to working outdoors from dawn to twilight; and still others, to their Christian faith and avoiding junk food and caffeine. These people suffer only a fraction of the diseases and ailments that commonly afflict others.

Although the ultimate abundant life will not be possible until God’s kingdom is forever established on the new earth, God still wants us to be happy, fulfilled, and successful *here and now!* Accordingly, He promised the Israelites, *“If you diligently obey the voice of the Lord your God, to observe carefully all His commandments,... the Lord your God will set you high above all nations of the earth. And all these blessings shall come upon you.... And the Lord will make you the head and not the tail; you shall be above only, and not be beneath”* (Deuteronomy 28:1-2, 13). Even today, God wants every person on earth to stay ...

**ON TOP**  
**PHYSICALLY AND IN**  
**ALL OTHER AREAS**  
**OF LIFE**



## 1. What is one area in which God has offered to help us stay on top?

*“If you diligently heed the voice of the Lord your God and do what is right in His sight, give ear to His commandments and keep all His statutes, I will put **none of the diseases** on you which I have brought on the Egyptians. For I am the Lord who heals you”* (Exodus 15:26). God wants everyone to be healthy. But all too often, particularly when people live in cities, the basic laws of health and safety are ignorantly or carelessly broken. Then when, as a result, someone gets hurt, becomes sick, or dies, is it fair to say, “God wanted it that way”?

## 2. Why is obeying the laws of health important?

- a) God established nature’s laws for the good of mankind, and they cannot be broken without consequences. *“Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap”* (Galatians 6:7).
- b) *“Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?”* (1 Corinthians 6:19). No matter what others may say to the contrary, our bodies are not ours. They belong to our Creator.
- c) *“For none of us lives to himself, and no man dies to himself”* (Romans 14:7). Our health affects the people we love, those who love us, and all the rest of society.

## 3. What simple virtue does God prescribe for good health?

*“The fruit of the Spirit is ... temperance”* (Galatians 5:22-23 KJV). Temperance includes (1) saying “no” to ourselves when tempted to indulge in something harmful and (2) moderately enjoying what is healthful. Overwork, lack of sleep and exercise, and consumption of junk foods are examples of intemperance. Stimulants, depressants, and empty-calorie substances—such as alcohol, coffee, non-herbal tea, sodas, chocolate, tobacco, and other narcotics—put a heavy burden on the human body. In contrast, our health is strengthened when we:

- a) get plenty of fresh air, pure water, and exercise.
- b) obtain sufficient sunlight, rest, and healthful food.
- c) are thankful and cheerful, trusting in God.

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#### 4. What are the spiritual consequences of being intemperate?

*“Everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown”* (1 Corinthians 9:25). The Holy Spirit sometimes has a difficult time getting our attention when we are intemperate or sick.<sup>1</sup> Also, when we are sick, we have less potential for being a help to others and can become a burden to people who could use their resources to serve God in other ways. Intemperance is selfish. It is not a sin to be sick, but it *is* a sin to neglect our health.

#### 5. What is “proper nutrition”?

*“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 [in today’s vocabulary, ‘meat’ means ‘food’]”* (Genesis 1:29 KJV). The diet God prescribed for sinless man consisted of fruits, grains, nuts, and seeds. After sin entered, vegetables were added.<sup>2</sup> Flesh foods were not given to man until after the flood had washed away earth’s rich topsoil and no vegetation remained. After 47 days, a dove that Noah sent out brought back an olive leaf.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, God forbade man to eat the blood and fat of animals.<sup>4</sup> Note that life expectancy plummeted from almost one thousand years before the universal flood to seventy or eighty years in the time of Moses.<sup>5</sup> It makes sense to use limited amounts of processed foods, particularly those that are extracted and concentrated, such as sugar, oil, and salt. Many altered and processed foods are actually harmful. As a general rule, whether food is cooked, baked, or raw, the closer it is to its natural state, the better it is for you.

#### 6. How do emotions affect our health?

*“A merry heart does good, like medicine, but a broken spirit dries the bones”* (Proverbs 17:22). It has been said that 90 percent of all diseases originate in the mind!<sup>6</sup>

“Many of the diseases from which [people] suffer are the result of mental depression. Grief, anxiety, discontent, remorse, guilt, and distrust all tend to break down the life forces and to invite decay and death.

“Disease is sometimes produced, and is often greatly aggravated, by the imagination.”<sup>7</sup> Someone once said, “When I suppress my feelings, my stomach keeps score.”

<sup>1</sup> 2 Corinthians 5:10.

<sup>2</sup> Genesis 3:18.

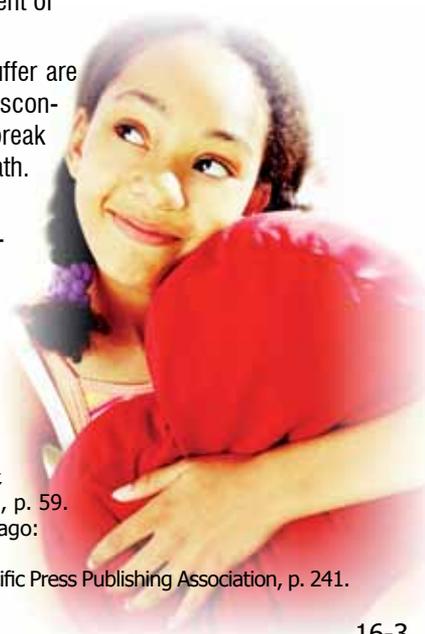
<sup>3</sup> Genesis 3:4-12.

<sup>4</sup> Genesis 9:3-4; Leviticus 7:22-27.

<sup>5</sup> Compare Genesis 5:27 with Psalm 90:10.

<sup>6</sup> White, E. G. (1977), *Mind, Character, and Personality*, vol. 1, Nashville, TN: Southern Publishing Association, p. 59.  
Unni Wikan (1990), *Managing Turbulent Hearts*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, p. 256.

<sup>7</sup> White, E. G. (1942), *The Ministry of Healing*, Omaha: Pacific Press Publishing Association, p. 241.



## 7. How may you and I obtain the “merry-heart” medicine?

Jesus said, “Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid” (John 14:27 KJV). Our trust in God’s love, forgiveness, providence, and wisdom makes it possible to have peace, even when everything seems to be going wrong.

## 8. What attitude reduces stress?

“*Godliness with contentment is great gain*” (1 Timothy 6:6). Contented people are happy, whether they have little or much, because contentment is a choice. Aging people who think positively about themselves live seven and one-half years longer than those who don’t.<sup>7</sup>

## 9. When illness strikes, what should we do?<sup>8</sup>

- a) Ask God for wisdom to determine the cause of the illness as well as its remedies.
- b) Find out whether any of the rules for good health have been violated, and correct any neglect.
- c) If the disease is serious, consult a good and, if possible, praying physician who works with nature’s efforts to heal. Don’t rush into anything. Beware of spiritualistic doctors and being pressured into having surgery. Exercise caution in the use of medications. You may need them, but be sure to check all your other options first.
- d) Confess all known sins. Then call the elders of the church to pray for healing. Finally, submit to the will of God. Accept the fact that God may not choose to heal you.

Sometimes natural treatments are safer than, and superior to, conventional medicine. Hydrotherapy (applications of hot and cold water), juice and vitamin therapies, herbs,<sup>9</sup> and the removal of harmful foods from the diet and poisons from the body (such as amalgam in the teeth) are natural ways to assist the body in healing itself.



<sup>7</sup> Levy, B. R., M. D. Slade, S. R. Kunkel & S. V. Kasl, “Longevity Increased by Positive Self-Perceptions of Aging,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 83 (2), pp. 261–270.

<sup>8</sup> James 1:5; Colossians 4:14; James 5:14-16; 2 Corinthians 12:7-9; Matthew 26:42.

<sup>9</sup> 2 Kings 20:7; Revelation 22:2.

These approaches require some research. If the illness is serious, the treatments should be administered in cooperation with a physician who respects nature. Relying on herbs or natural treatments for serious illnesses, or illnesses that have gone without natural treatment for too long—instead of seeking professional help—can be dangerous or even fatal.

## 10. In what other areas does God want us to be “on top”?

### a) Work

*“Then the Lord took the man and put him in the garden ... to tend and keep it”* (Genesis 2:15). Physical exercise and labor promote self-respect, happiness, and a sense of satisfaction and accomplishment. Temperate activity strengthens both physical and mental health.

### b) Finances

*“Owe no man any thing”* (Romans 13:8 KJV). To borrow and spend is easier than to earn and repay. (Having to repay is no fun! It’s a burden.) Credit can be a trap; the interest, oppressive. Using credit seldom makes good sense.

### c) Words and actions

What we say and do affect not only the people around us but often even more so ourselves more than we realize. What’s more, several single acts together form *habits*. Habits form *character*. Character is who we are. *The purpose of this life is to build a character fit for eternity!* We might ask, *“Who is sufficient for these things?”* (2 Corinthians 2:16). Thank God, He and all the rest of the heavenly host are waiting to help us form balanced characters and live successful lives. If we cooperate, His sure promise is:

***“I will make a man more precious than fine gold; even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir.”<sup>10</sup>***

Now, that’s being On Top!

<sup>10</sup> Isaiah 13:12 KJV.



## STAYING ON TOP?

- **Isn't flesh meat one of the best sources of protein?**

In fact, scientists have discovered that meat contains *too much* protein. This interferes with our defenses against cancer and robs our bodies of calcium. It is also interesting to note that carnivores, such as dogs, cats, and lions, have very short digestive systems and very strong digestive juices. Human beings have a long digestive system in which meat actually becomes toxic before it is eliminated. The American Cancer Society reports a direct correlation between meat eating and colon cancer. Meat also has excessive uric acid that harms the kidneys and joints. Furthermore, animal fat has been linked to cancer and heart disease.

- **We are told in the Bible that a little wine is good for the stomach. Is it OK to drink temperately?**

The Bible uses the word “wine” for both fermented and unfermented grape juices. All the beneficial elements in wine are present in grape juice, without the harmful effects of alcohol. Even small amounts of alcohol destroy brain cells. “Moderate drinking” is really a misnomer, for even a small amount can lead emotionally vulnerable people to alcoholism. Wise King Solomon warned us against even *looking* at (fermented) wine.<sup>11</sup>

- **What about faith healing by charismatic TV evangelists?**

Jesus' miracles of healing were done quietly, quickly, and without show; He did not encourage the sensational display of miracles. In fact, when the Pharisees, and later Herod, demanded a miracle, Jesus refused.<sup>12</sup> Except when He resurrected Lazarus just before His arrest and crucifixion, to give the Jews and us a crowning evidence of His divinity,<sup>13</sup> Jesus healed people because He loved them—not to gain attention. We should be suspicious of loud, sensational activities. One way we can tell if a “healer” is from God is by his humility and his regard for God's law.<sup>14</sup> God indeed can and *does* heal people today in response to the prayers of those who love and trust Him, but He doesn't need a crowd or television cameras for that.

It is often said that stress is a killer—and that the most challenging people to deal with are one's own family. Is your family one of your “Anchor Points”? Lesson 17 deals with family, friendships, courtship, marriage, and those little ones whom God gives parents to train up in righteousness—but never to “provoke to wrath.”

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<sup>11</sup> Proverbs 23:29-35.

<sup>12</sup> Matthew 12:38-40; 16:1-4; Luke 23:8-9.

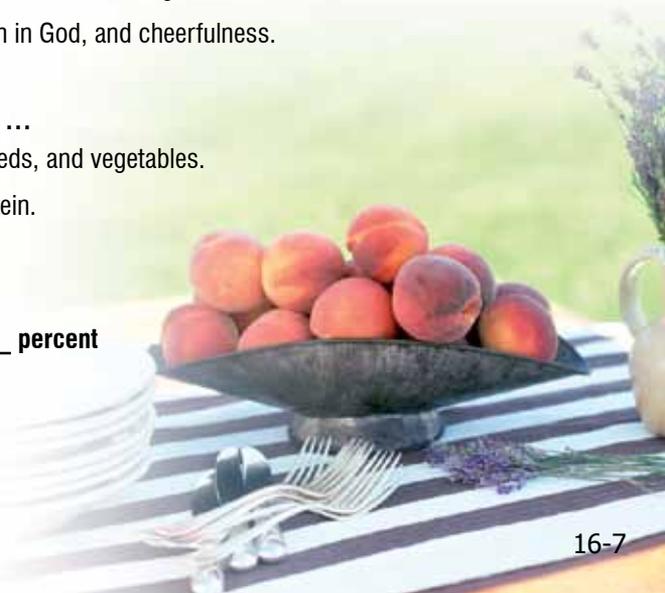
<sup>13</sup> John 11:39-44.

<sup>14</sup> Isaiah 8:20; Matthew 7:21-23.

# REVIEW QUESTIONS

Please answer the following questions—and send them to us so we can help you with any misunderstandings. Note that multiple-choice questions may have more than one correct answer. *Circle the letters of all correct answers.*

1. “I have come that they may have \_\_\_\_\_ ... more \_\_\_\_\_”  
(John 10:10).
  
2. **Accidents and sickness often happen ...**
  - a) because God is not interested in our quality of life until after the resurrection.
  - b) and are wrongfully attributed to “God’s will.”
  - c) because people violate the basic laws of health and safety.
  
3. **Practicing temperance means to ...**
  - a) abstain from everything harmful.
  - b) enjoy moderately that which is good and healthful.
  - c) abstain from everything that is enjoyable.
  
4. **The rules of good health are these:**
  - a) Get sufficient sunlight, nutrition, and rest.
  - b) Enjoy an abundance of fresh air, pure water, and exercise.
  - c) Get plenty of entertainment, stimulating foods, and excitement.
  - d) Practice gratitude, faith in God, and cheerfulness.
  
5. **Proper nutrition includes ...**
  - a) fruits, grains, nuts, seeds, and vegetables.
  - b) plenty of meat for protein.
  - c) anything we choose.
  
6. “Of all diseases, \_\_\_\_\_ percent originate in the mind.”



**7. When a person becomes sick, after prayer, he should ...**

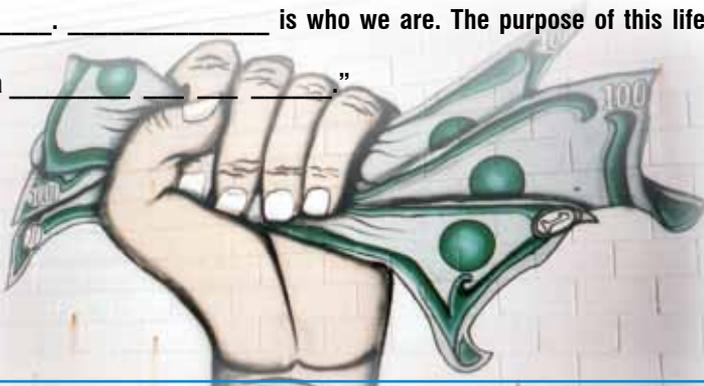
- a) use natural remedies as quickly as possible.
- b) consult a reliable physician.
- c) find out whether any of the rules for good health have been violated, and correct any neglect.
- d) save expense by not getting a diagnosis and then proceeding directly to treatment.

**8. Other things God wants us to understand are that:**

- a) Work is detrimental to mental and physical health and should be avoided as much as possible.
- b) Work promotes health, self-respect, happiness, and a sense of satisfaction and accomplishment.
- c) Debt is difficult to get into and easy to get out of.
- d) Credit cards are a good way to get more money.

**9. "Single \_\_\_\_\_ together form \_\_\_\_\_ . Habits form \_\_\_\_\_**

\_\_\_\_\_. \_\_\_\_\_ is who we are. The purpose of this life is to build a \_\_\_\_\_."



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