

Fort Bend Christian Academy- Department of Worldviews and Apologetics

Chris Henderson

The Unhealthy Church

A Thesis Submitted

To the Teacher and Students of Advanced Apologetics

By

Samuel J. Gee

December 2019

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-Introduction-

The fall of mankind from their perfect union with God in the Garden of Eden resulted in sin and destruction, and from then on, people were born sinful and depraved with no hope to get back to their perfect state with God. God guided the Israelites when they were His holy chosen people and when they kept him at the forefront of their lives, but their sinful nature got the better of them and they eventually forced God off the throne of their nation. As a result, the only way for God's name to exist and not die out was through the passing on of the religion through the conversion of people who were born into sin by those who had already learned about God and His mercy. In order to save the lost, it became the present Christian's mission to show them their wickedness and lead them to their salvation. This is what Jesus commanded of every Christian, for they must have a missionary ministry where they are not afraid to suffer for Christ in order that the sinful would become saved. So this mission is serious and must not be taken lightly as it is emphasized all throughout the Bible and in the Apostles's ministries. The number of lives that must be saved is so great and the time is so short, so what little time Christians do have on Earth must be spent in the most efficient and most perfect witness of God's Kingdom possible. This requires both the mind and body to be performing at a peak level, in which modern medicine has determined that an unhealthy lifestyle is detrimental to both aspects of life. Since it is detrimental to life itself, the Christian's role in the Kingdom of God is critically endangered by any unhealthy choices. In order for a Christian to play his role to his full potential within the Kingdom of God, rather than limit it, he must practice a healthy lifestyle which includes a healthy diet and exercise.

-Historical Review-
Importance of the Human Body

The significance of the physical body to the Christian must be established in order for there to be any discussion on the significance of forming, maintaining and improving healthy habits.

Common Misconception of the Human Body and Soul

The knowledge of the outcome of the body and soul when a human dies is crucial to Christian theology, because the result determines how the Christian should view and treat the body. This has been a confusing topic, because of the intertwining of two different thoughts: the Greek belief based on Socrates teachings on immortality and the *heilsgeschichte* which is a Christian belief centered on the Christ-event. The ideas of Socrates involves the immortality of the soul, meaning “our body is only an outer garment which, as long as we live, prevents our soul from moving freely and from living in conformity to its proper eternal essence ... death, in fact, is the great liberator. It looses the chains, since it leads the soul out of the prison of the body and back to its eternal home.”¹ Socrates doctrine separates soul and body as belonging to two separate states of existence which explains the way recordings capture the state of peace Socrates was in when he met death, because he knew that when he died, his soul would finally be set free from his body. This is in stark contrast from the way in which Jesus died.

Jesus met death with fear as Mark records that “he took with him Peter and James and John, and began to be greatly distressed and troubled.”² He even begins to sweat blood and asks God if there is any way within his will that the events of the crucifixion can be avoided. Jesus

¹ Cullmann, Oscar. *Immortality of the Soul: or, Resurrection of the Dead?: the Witness of the New Testament*. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2010., 19-20.

² Mark 14:33

cries out on the cross, “‘Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?’ which means, ‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’”³ Jesus knew that death was total separation from God and so He cried out because “He wants to remain as closely tied to God as He has been throughout his whole earthly life. For whoever is in the hands of death is no longer in the hands of God, but in the hands of God’s enemy.”⁴ Oscar Cullmann wrote that because Jesus was scared of death, the grecian doctrine is faulty. Plato’s idea was based off of Socrates philosophy: that the body and the world are corrupt and that when the body dies, the soul rises to a perfect eternal state. Based on this idea, Jesus should not have been scared of death, but happy to die because in death his soul would come out of the mess and into the perfect world. Jesus would transition from all the weight of sin and excruciating pain to a perfect place where all his hurts would be no more. This is not the case, in fact Oscar Cullmann gives evidence to the opposing view using Paul’s philosophy and themes of death in which Cullman believes Paul says that ‘flesh’ is the power of death, rather than the corrupt body and world. This flesh “entered man with the sin of Adam; yet in such a way that it is very closely linked with the body ... and more taken possession even of the inner man.”⁵

The flesh is what causes the corruption of both the body and the soul, but “wherever the Holy Spirit is at work we have what amounts to a momentary retreat of the power of death, a certain foretaste of the End.”⁶ Cullman goes on to say that “body and soul are both originally good in so far as they are created by God; they are both bad in so far as the deadly power of the flesh has hold of them. Both can and must be set free by the quickening power of the Holy

³ Mark 15:34

⁴ Cullmann, Oscar. *Immortality of the Soul: or, Resurrection of the Dead?: the Witness of the New Testament*. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2010., 23.

⁵ Ibid., 34.

⁶ Ibid., 35.

Spirit.”⁷ This disapproves Socrates philosophy, because “deliverance consists not in a release of soul from body but in a release of both from flesh.”⁸

So Oscar Cullman concludes that when a human dies, the body and soul die and will be resurrected at the *End*. This is seen in Jesus’ death, his Earthly body was resurrected in which God made into a spiritual body. When John describes the Apostles encounter with Jesus, He says that “he [Jesus] showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the LORD.”⁹ Jesus’ wounds are evidence that he returned from the dead with his original body, but this body was glorified and made new by God as the Spiritual body. When Jesus comes back in the End, this type of resurrection will happen to Christians who have passed away. Paul speaks of this, saying, “who [God] will transform our lowly body to be like His glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to Himself.”¹⁰ Cullman describes death as “not a transition from this world to another world, as is the case of the immortal soul freed from the body; rather it is the transition from the present age to the future.”¹¹ The presence of sin requires a process of redemption, “where sin is regarded as the source of death’s lordship over God’s creation, there this sin and death must be vanquished together, and there the Holy Spirit, the only power able to conquer death, must win all creatures back to life in a continuous process.”¹² His conclusion means that the Christian body is of great importance, contrary to Socrates belief, the body must be maintained and treated properly for God will resurrect it in the

⁷ Cullmann, Oscar. *Immortality of the Soul: or, Resurrection of the Dead?: the Witness of the New Testament*. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2010., 35.

⁸ Ibid., 36.

⁹ John 20:20

¹⁰ Philippians 3:21

¹¹ Cullmann, Oscar. *Immortality of the Soul: or, Resurrection of the Dead?: the Witness of the New Testament*. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2010., 38.

¹² Ibid.

End into a spiritual body. The misconception of the relationship between the soul and body has affected the Christian view of the role of the body, but Cullmann concludes that the body is of great importance in the hereafter, and will not be carelessly discarded through the process of death. He states that the widely accepted idea of the immortality of the soul “is one of the greatest misunderstandings of Christianity ... the concept of death and resurrection is anchored in the Christ-event, and hence is incompatible with the Greek belief in immortality”¹³ It is crucial for the Christian to understand that the idea of the immortality of the soul is not backed by biblical references, but comes from a long time philosophy that was interwoven within the Christian definition of life after death. The correct idea of the resurrection of the body verifies the fact that the physical body has value and significance for a Christian in the Kingdom of God.

¹³ Cullmann, Oscar. *Immortality of the Soul: or, Resurrection of the Dead?: the Witness of the New Testament*. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2010., 15.

The Christian Role

The Kingdom of God and the Christian

Now that the significance of the Christian body after death has been established, there must now be instruction on what to do with the body in the time before death. There must be something in which Christians are to do in order to glorify God, or they will wander aimlessly with no purpose or reason for there would be no point in living. God gave the Bible to Christians as a recording of history, law, instruction, etc; and anything God gives to His people is important and should not be taken lightly. In this, the total message of the Bible, the Christian should find their role.

The Old Testament faith must first be analyzed, beginning with the Israelite people living in the Promised Land. The Israelites were a monotheistic people who had no leader but the one aniconic God, Yahweh, in whom they worshipped. Israel believed that her God had control over all the events of history and created all things; she was a chosen nation, set apart by God from all the rest of His creation. Israel was a theocracy, for they fully believed and knew that they were chosen by God and that He was the ruler of their nation; this faith and obedience to God led to prosperity in the Promised Land. The covenant that bound the Israelites to God was unique in that

the Old Testament never suggests that Israel was chosen for any merit that was in her; on the contrary, the Exodus narratives are at pains to depict a people who are cowardly, ungrateful, and utterly unworthy ... The covenant concluded at Sinai could, then, be understood in Hebrew theology only as a response to grace: man's *hesed* for God's *hesed* ... *The notion of a people of God, called to live under the rule of God, begins just here, and with it the notion of the Kingdom of God*¹⁴

¹⁴ Bright, John. *The Kingdom of God: the Biblical Concept and Its Meaning for the Church*. Nashville, Tenn: Abingdon Press, 1953. 28.

God's covenant to Israel was not only one of grace, but it also came with a condition: "Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples..."¹⁵ Yahweh, the creator of everything, had by grace chosen Israel to be His people and enabled them to prosper as long as they obeyed His commands and kept His covenant; this is a key concept which is traced and referenced throughout the entire rest of the Bible.

The nation of Israel was not so much a nation, but a collection of tribes under God's rule; so when Israel was attacked by outside nations, a hero would rise with the spirit of Yahweh and would rally the clans to defeat the foe. These were called judges (shôphēt) and they were not kings, for their "authority was neither absolute over all Israel nor permanent; in no case was it hereditary."¹⁶ The judges authority rested solely in those dynamic qualities which enabled them to take charge of all the clans and be victorious; this authority was called charisma which was "the direct rule of God over his people through his designated representative."¹⁷ Israel's theocratic system came to an end when the Philistines attacked Israel and crushed the people of Yahweh; this was the failure of charisma and now Israel demanded a King in order that they would not be taken into slavery.

The institution of the king was one step in a direction away from God, but God ruled through the kings, giving them charisma. Israel changed from being ruled by a perfect God, to a nation ruled by God through sinful kings. The first three, Saul, David, and Solomon ruled with

¹⁵ Exodus 19:5

¹⁶ Bright, John. *The Kingdom of God: the Biblical Concept and Its Meaning for the Church*. Nashville, Tenn: Abingdon Press, 1953., 31.

¹⁷ Ibid., 32

charisma and despite their many sins and indulgences, Israel was still prosperous under God. Near the end of Solomon's rule, he began to amass power and take for himself riches and wealth and started to indulge in pagan rituals; this was against what God had commanded Israel and Solomon's actions led to the schism of Israel. This was the splitting of Israel into two nations (Israel and Judah) as a result of a disagreement on who would become Solomon's successor, and "the price of that revolution was total political disaster from which Israel never recovered. The schism was followed by some fifty years of intermittent sectional warfare, fought to no conclusion."¹⁸ Israel's implementation of the rule of kings was ultimately what God had warned her against, her disobedience of God's commands brought an end to her prosperity.

Israel struggled through oppression and pain as they felt the full effects of their separation from God. During this time, God sent prophets who were given charisma and gave direction to Israel. The prophet Amos says "Behold, the eyes of the Lord God are upon the sinful kingdom, and 'I will destroy it from the surface of the ground, except that I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob,' declares the Lord."¹⁹ This meant that God rejected the Israelite state, and "the establishment of the Kingdom of God-the hope of the embodied in the dream of the Day of Yahweh-began to be divorced from the Israelite state and driven beyond it."²⁰ The Kingdom of Israel is not the Kingdom of God, Israel cannot be God's Kingdom nor can she inherit the Kingdom because she violated God's covenant. The prophets Isaiah, Amos, and Hosea all wrote that Israel was the chosen nation, but her covenant with God was not one sided and demanded her full obedience. She would be judged for her disobedience, however, the prophetic hope for

¹⁸ Bright, John. *The Kingdom of God: the Biblical Concept and Its Meaning for the Church*. Nashville, Tenn: Abingdon Press, 1953., 49.

¹⁹ Amos 9:8

²⁰ Bright, John. *The Kingdom of God: the Biblical Concept and Its Meaning for the Church*. Nashville, Tenn: Abingdon Press, 1953., 67.

Israel was that a righteous remnant would remain, a remnant of what God intended Israel to be that upheld His covenant and remained true. The prophetic hope was this that “God will work his purpose in history, and he will work it with stubborn Israel: *he will save some for his purpose!*”²¹ Even further began the development of the messianic hope which was “over this remnant, that shall one day be, there shall rule the Messiah Prince of the line of David.”²² The hope of the Kingdom of God shifts from the nation of Israel to a “church” within the nation.

A period came where Israel was conquered by many nations and the plea of the prophets was never let up as she continued to indulge in paganism and religions of the many nations that occupied Israel. The only reform came under Josiah’s rule, Israel experienced a period of independence and in that Josiah believed that “if she is to survive, she must put away foreign gods and serve Yahweh alone. If Israel is to be the people of God-she must reform!”²³ Josiah was killed in battle and so reform came to an end, this did not bode well with Israel, because she felt that nothing came out of the reform and it had ultimately failed to produce God’s Kingdom. They continued to suffer at the hands of the Egyptians and Babylonians, until they felt that they must flee to Egypt in order to save the remnant, for the preachings of the prophets Jeremiah and Ezekial were that “God’s purpose could go on without it.”²⁴ There remained a remnant still that continued in Egypt, and the same still remained for them, “by keeping the law Israel might become what God had always destined her to be: a people holy to himself.”²⁵ A crucial time in the history of the Jews was during Cyrus’ reign, he issued an edict of restoration for the Jews and

²¹ Bright, John. *The Kingdom of God: the Biblical Concept and Its Meaning for the Church*. Nashville, Tenn: Abingdon Press, 1953., 87.

²² Ibid., 91.

²³ Bright, John. *The Kingdom of God: the Biblical Concept and Its Meaning for the Church*. Nashville, Tenn: Abingdon Press, 1953., 105.

²⁴ Ibid., 122.

²⁵ Ibid., 133.

the hope for the Kingdom of God skyrocketed for they now felt that God had made a way for them to prosper. In this hope came the greatest prophecy out of Isaiah, one that would change the course of Jewish and Christian history forever, this was the prophecy of the messiah.

Isaiah speaks of a coming victory for the Kingdom of God, but it seemed like it was the exact opposite of victory, because it called for humiliation, suffering, defeat and somehow this was to result in victory. Isaiah paints a picture of a figure named the Suffering Servant of Yahweh, he “sets forth both the destiny and the victory of the people of God, and the means by which God will establish his Kingdom.”²⁶ Isaiah writes the “Servant poems” and in them the servant describes Yahweh saying, “he [Yahweh] says: ‘It is too light a thing that you [servant] should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to bring back the preserved of Israel; I will make you as a light for the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth.’”²⁷ The servant is instructed to preach to the Gentiles, such an odd description of the Servant is offered in Isaiah:

He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not ... but he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed ... yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him; he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for guilt, he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days; the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.²⁸

This servant is beaten and broken for sin that was not committed by him, but the “discharge of his mission is impossible without suffering, for suffering is the means by which that mission is to

²⁶ Bright, John. *The Kingdom of God: the Biblical Concept and Its Meaning for the Church*. Nashville, Tenn: Abingdon Press, 1953., 146.

²⁷ Isaiah 49:5-6

²⁸ Isaiah 53:3, 5,10

be accomplished.”²⁹ Isaiah does not specifically make known who the Suffering Servant is to be or represent, but it is believed that it is

a very fluid one; it seems to refer now to one thing, now to another; and any attempt to interpret it too rigidly will do violence to the evidence and almost certainly distort what the prophet wishes to say ... the figure of the Servant oscillates between the individual and the group. In many places throughout the book the Servant is merely Israel (e.g., 41:8; 43:10; 44:10; 44:21; 45:4) ... [in other places] it is clear that he is something other than the visible people, because his first duty (49:5) is to lead Israel itself back to its destiny under God. Here it is plain that the Servant is not Israel itself but the righteous ‘Remnant’ in Israel (e.g., 44:1; 51:1; 7) ... but at all times the Servant is described in individual terms. And it is clear that sometimes this figure overshoots all that Israel, all that the true Israel, all that any individual in Israel ever was, and becomes a description of an ideal figure.³⁰

No matter who the Servant is or how it is depicted, the most important lesson is that the Servant mission is Israel’s calling, this is the only way she can continue to be God’s people. For the Jewish belief tended to explain suffering as punishment for sin, but Isaiah makes the claim that suffering also comes from doing the will of God, which was seen in many of the prophet’s lives. This idea of the Suffering Servant was too much for the Jews to handle, they could not change their traditions and beliefs so drastically and so quickly. Instead, they saw the Servant as righteous individuals in Israel or sufferings of the entire nation, but not as a depiction of themselves or their destiny. Isaiah’s call to servanthood was never realized, for the Jews felt that God’s victory would come through a Messiah not of suffering, but one that brings victory through the defeat of all other oppression and the establishment of God’s Kingdom. The rest of the Old Testament shows Israel seeking the Messiah and the victory of God’s Kingdom in the way they feel is the quickest based off of an apocalyptic view, the Holy commonwealth, or

²⁹ Bright, John. *The Kingdom of God: the Biblical Concept and Its Meaning for the Church*. Nashville, Tenn: Abingdon Press, 1953., 149.

³⁰ Ibid., 150

military action. The apocalyptic view is the idea that God's Kingdom is coming soon and present events foreshadow and reflect the cosmic struggle between God and evil, the Jews believed that they had already been purged and they were the Remnant that would be blessed with the coming of the Kingdom. The Holy Commonwealth was the idea that law was crucial to the Kingdom of God, in order for God's establishment, the Jews must follow every single law and create an almost perfect state to precipitate God's Kingdom. The military action view was that in which they felt the Messiah would lead them through military action to restore their independence from Rome. The Jews did all this because they rejected the idea of suffering, but they were willing to do all this and go so far for what they believed would bring God's Kingdom and the Messiah to save them.

The Old Testament remains incomplete, leaving the reader "with the awareness of the rule of God over His people; it is upheld by the hope and the longing, expressed in a dozen divergent forms, for the coming establishment of the Kingdom of God."³¹ Now the New Testament must be addressed for it is the culmination of all of Israel's Old Testament hopes, the establishment of God's Kingdom. The hope for a Messiah is finally fulfilled in the New Testament, as Jesus enters the scene, however, "he was not at all the Messiah that was expected. Although he claimed for himself that office and made use of the various messianic titles, he understood that office and used those titles in such a way as to ensure his rejection."³² Jesus ministry was overrun with the theme that the Son of Man would have to suffer, but through this suffering he finds victory. Jesus was the Suffering Servant, the Servant was "like a root out of

³¹ Bright, John. *The Kingdom of God: the Biblical Concept and Its Meaning for the Church*. Nashville, Tenn: Abingdon Press, 1953., 191.

³² Ibid., 198.

dry ground”³³ which Jesus is described “this the carpenter’s son?”³⁴ and “can anything good come out of Nazareth?”³⁵ The Servant is to be “a light for the nations,”³⁶ and Jesus was “the light of the world.”³⁷ The amount of parallels and fulfillments of Jesus’ ministry with that of the Suffering Servant is extensive, but the main point is that “Christ summoned men to the Kingdom of the Servant ... who has so little pride that he will consent to wash his fellow’s feet.”³⁸ Jesus’ death on the cross was victory for the Kingdom of God, “the decisive blow has been dealt the powers of Evil.” and therefore the “Cross thus stands in the eyes of the New Testament faith as the very pivot of history.”³⁹ Christ broke the power of sin on the cross and by resurrecting, he defeated death; the cross is the beginning of the new age and an end to the old age. Jesus, by the fulfillment of all the prophecies, the actions of the servant, and his defeat of death; brought the Kingdom of God.

The Kingdom of God is at hand, and is composed of everything, all of God’s creation is the full embodiment of His Kingdom. Within His Kingdom, the Church is the New Israel, the remnant of Israel, and is to become the missionary servant people of the Kingdom of God. Now exists a paradox:

thus the confidence of the Church in the certain victory-indeed, the already accomplished victory-of the already present Kingdom of God. But therein lie the seeds of extreme tension. For it was equally clear, bitterly clear, that that Kingdom had *not* come and its victory had *not* been won nor, from a human point of view was there any way to produce that victory.⁴⁰

³³ Isaiah 53:2

³⁴ Matthew 13:55

³⁵ John 1:46

³⁶ Isaiah 42:7

³⁷ John 8:12

³⁸ Bright, John. *The Kingdom of God: the Biblical Concept and Its Meaning for the Church*. Nashville, Tenn: Abingdon Press, 1953., 210.

³⁹ Ibid., 231.

⁴⁰ Bright, John. *The Kingdom of God: the Biblical Concept and Its Meaning for the Church*. Nashville, Tenn: Abingdon Press, 1953., 233-234.

The New Testament Church went through unparalleled persecution under the Roman rule, how could this be God's Kingdom and how could the Church of Christ, which the gates of Hell could not prevail against, be subject to Caesar's totalitarian Rome? The answer lies within the definition of the Church, the "New Testament teaches us that the people of Christ's Kingdom are his obedient followers, his Church, there is never the slightest hint that the visibly existing church can either be or produce that Kingdom."⁴¹ The Parable of the Weeds in Matthew 30:24-30, describes the Kingdom of God and the weeds that exist within it; the field is the church in which there is sin amongst the good crop, the visible Churches are sinful and will be purged by God. For the true Church which is being referred to "is the community of all who have heard the sound of the Kingdom of God drawing near, and have said Yes to its coming. It is the new Israel, the new people of God, One Holy Church Universal."⁴²

Now the New Testament Kingdom of God "has come and is even now in the world; it is also yet to come. The present Church is the same Church of the New Testament

as we discharge it, we live under the same tension-however much we try to forget it-for we, too, live in that end-time between a victory won in Christ and a victory anything but won, between a Kingdom which is present and which we may enter and a Kingdom we can neither be nor create."⁴³

As a part of the New Testament Church, the present Church faces this tension between the victory over all powers by the Kingdom of God and the Church of God at the mercy of all the powers of the Earth. So then modern Christians find that in order to bring the Kingdom of God

⁴¹ Bright, John. *The Kingdom of God: the Biblical Concept and Its Meaning for the Church*. Nashville, Tenn: Abingdon Press, 1953., 236.

⁴² Ibid., 256.

⁴³ Ibid., 245-246.

to full victory they must implement programs such as political and social action or organizations, but “the New Testament answer is: there shall no program be given you-except to *be the Church!*”⁴⁴ According to the Bible, the Church is: “the Israel of God”⁴⁵, “a remnant, chosen by grace”⁴⁶, and “a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession ... you are God’s people.”⁴⁷ So as the true Israel, the remnant and holy nation; the Church is to carry Israel’s servant mission. This Servant mission requires full devotion, for every action must be towards furthering the Kingdom of God through the salvation of others.

So the Christian’s role in the Kingdom of God is that of the Suffering Servant: devoting everything to the spreading of the gospel and salvation and not withholding anything, even to the point of persecution and suffering. The Church is to be victorious in the end, but

the Church’s path of victory is no triumphant path which moves from conquest to conquest till all men have been won for Christ ... it is in that [Servant’s] Cross that this tension, which she can by no means escape, is resolved and the victory won. For the Servant’s cross and the Servant’s victory are inseparable.⁴⁸

Jesus commanded that “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me”⁴⁹ God’s purpose for the Church is not to become spoiled and live a life of ease, but to be disciplined at the cost of their bodies in order to become obedient servants of his Kingdom. Christians must lay down all unrighteousness, fear, and selfishness; “this is our cross: our total surrender, in faith, to the Kingdom of God.”⁵⁰ The Kingdom of God is everything, but

⁴⁴ Bright, John. *The Kingdom of God: the Biblical Concept and Its Meaning for the Church*. Nashville, Tenn: Abingdon Press, 1953., 253.

⁴⁵ Galatians 6:16

⁴⁶ Romans 11:5

⁴⁷ 1 Peter 2:9-10

⁴⁸ Bright, John. *The Kingdom of God: the Biblical Concept and Its Meaning for the Church*. Nashville, Tenn: Abingdon Press, 1953., 267.

⁴⁹ Mark 8:34

⁵⁰ Bright, John. *The Kingdom of God: the Biblical Concept and Its Meaning for the Church*. Nashville, Tenn: Abingdon Press, 1953., 271.

this does not mean that everything operates under His rule; the Kingdom is here, but it is not fully made manifest. The Holy Spirit brings the Kingdom to full fruition through the fully devoted, selfless, and totally surrendered Christian who is willing to take upon themselves the mission of the Suffering Servant.

The Apostle's Teaching of the Christian Role

Jesus' equipped his apostles with the knowledge and skills to carry out his instruction and exemplify the way in which Christians are to carry out their mission. Through careful study of the writings and actions of the apostles, Christians may understand how they are to carry out their role in God's Kingdom.

The Mind

The apostles teach that training of the mind and accumulation of knowledge is a crucial aspect that Christians must hone in order to effectively serve God's Kingdom through missions. In the book of Romans, the apostle Paul writes, "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect."⁵¹ Paul's call to the Roman congregation "summarizes the claim of his gospel, which sets out the basis for all Christian lifestyle and relationships, and which deliberately indicates the balance necessary between personal commitment and divine enabling."⁵² Paul wrote this letter to the Christians residing in the City of Rome, but his instruction must be applied to all Christians; therefore, every Christian must

⁵¹ Romans 12:1-2

⁵² Dunn, James D. G. *Word Biblical Commentary: Romans 9-16*. 38b. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1988., 707.

renew their mind so that they may determine what is God's will. This is part of the call to Christians, for

the 'mind' is a key category in Paul's vision of renewal. Instead of the 'unfit mind' of 1:28, Paul holds out a vision of a mind renewed, able now at last to think for itself what will please God, instead of being darkened by the deceitfulness of sin ... the Christian is not meant to rely simply on lists of ethical commands, but to be able to discern (NRSV), to test and approve (NIV), what God's will is-God's will, it seems, primarily for general ethical conduct but also, perhaps, for specific decisions and occasions.⁵³

Being able to understand God's will and critically think is important, because through this the Christian is to determine what they are to do within God's Kingdom. Having a trained mind is important, because God's plan for each Christian is different and oftentimes His plan is not straightforward. The Christian must work to determine this plan and in training the mind on God they may be able to discern what they are called to do.

The mind should be maintained not only for determining God's will, but also in carrying out His will. Peter instructs the Gentile Christians in Asia Minor that, "therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ."⁵⁴ Peter begins with "a call to action and holy living in light of the great salvation that the prophets have asked about and the readers of the epistle have received."⁵⁵ He told the Christians in Asia Minor that they are to be different, preparing their minds to accomplish their call to spread what they experienced in their Salvation through Jesus Christ. This mental preparation for their call to action is any studying, meditating, or the acquiring of a specific mindset for their tasks they are to take action in. The Christian should

⁵³ Keck, Leander E. *The New Interpreter's Bible Commentary: Volume IX - Acts, Introduction to Epistolary Literature, Romans, 1 & 2 Corinthians, Galatians*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2015., 705-706

⁵⁴ 1 Peter 1:13-16

⁵⁵ Michaels, Ramsey J. *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter. 49*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1988., 70.

also acquire knowledge that is useful for preaching, teaching, and ultimately spreading God's Kingdom, this concept is brought up many times in the New Testament: "but as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all earnestness, and in our love for you—see that you excel in this act of grace also;"⁵⁶ "so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;"⁵⁷ and "for this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness," ... "For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."⁵⁸ In order to retain qualities of virtue and bear proper witness to nonbelievers, Christians are instructed to gain knowledge. This knowledge is the wisdom that is called for by the Apostles, it "is the wisdom and discernment which the Christian needs for a virtuous life and which is progressively acquired. It is practical rather than purely speculative wisdom."⁵⁹ Paul instructs the church in Ephesus to "look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise."⁶⁰ Thus, Paul

links [his] new instruction in a general way with the previous overall exhortation [of his letter to the Ephesians] to walk as children of light and to expose the works of darkness. This can only be obeyed if believers take care that their conduct is characterized by wisdom. The new exhortation is not simply 'walk/live as wise people,' but its importance and urgency are reinforced by the use of both 'watch,' and 'carefully.'" ... "To live as a wise person is not just to have knowledge but to have skill in living, to have the sort of

⁵⁶ 2 Corinthians 8:7

⁵⁷ Colossians 1:10

⁵⁸ 1 Peter 1:5-6; 8

⁵⁹ Keck, Leander E. *The New Interpreter's Bible Commentary: Volume X - Ephesians; Philippians; Colossians; 1 & 2 Thessalonians; 1 & 2 Timothy; Titus; Philemon; Hebrews; James; 1 & 2 Peter; 1, 2 & 3 John; Jude; Revelation*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2015., 83.

⁶⁰ Ephesians 5:15

perception that authenticates itself in practice ... those who have insight will have the right attitude to time, using it to discover and practice the will of the Lord.”⁶¹

The apostles believed that understanding God’s will required critical thinking and training of the brain to determine what is right and wrong and what God was communicating to them. They also left instructions to train the mind in order to accomplish their goal within God’s Kingdom. The Apostles mission within God’s Kingdom was given to them by Jesus when he said, “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”⁶² In order to teach the nations all that Jesus had commanded them, the Apostles needed to remember everything Jesus had said to them when they were on the Earth; for Jesus commanded them to teach *all* that he had commanded them, if they forgot any of his instruction then they are not teaching all of what Jesus had said. The Apostles had to maintain their mental faculties in order to recite all that they had heard from Jesus, as well as determine what was right and wrong in the eyes of God.

The Apostles experienced deep persecution and suffering, which required mental toughness and rigidity. After being thrown in jail and flogged, the Apostles “left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name. Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Messiah.”⁶³ The Apostles went through persecution and suffering like the Suffering Servant verses alluded to in Isaiah, and what Jesus mentioned when he spoke of taking up the cross daily. Even to the point of near death, the Apostles rejoiced that they had

⁶¹ Lincoln, Andrew T. *Word Biblical Commentary: Ephesians*. 42. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1990., 341.

⁶² Matthew 28:19-20

⁶³ Acts 5:41-42

been persecuted and that they grew closer to Jesus through that persecution, they continued to preach with no fear of those who oppressed them. Paul writes that the reason he is able to stay strong is “for the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.”⁶⁴ The ability to withstand persecution and suffering was a result of the Apostles training and mental toughness; this was crucial in order for them to continue their work for the furtherance of the Kingdom of God. The mental fortitude demonstrated by the disciples is important to all Christians as the call to the Kingdom is one of suffering and full devotion.

The Body

The Apostles allude to and demonstrate through their ministry that the fitness and maintenance of the physical body is a necessary part of the Christian’s ability to accomplish God’s will for their lives. In Paul’s letter to the Christians living in Rome, he discusses his ministry and what he felt his call as a Christian was that “from Jerusalem and all the way around to Illyricum I have fulfilled the ministry of the gospel of Christ; and thus I make it my ambition to preach the gospel, not where Christ has already been named, lest I build on someone else's foundation, but as it is written, ‘Those who have never been told of him will see, and those who have never heard will understand.’”⁶⁵ This is an astounding claim,

to have announced the gospel message of the Messiah in a long arc from Jerusalem in the southeast too Illyricum in the northwest ... before Paul began, neither Asia Minor nor Greece had heard of Jesus of Nazareth; by the time he was writing this letter, there were

⁶⁴ 2 Corinthians 12:10

⁶⁵ Romans 15:19-21

little communities all over that part of Caesar's empire in which Jesus was being celebrated as the risen Messiah, the world's true Lord.⁶⁶

Paul's ministry was not uncommon, for before his ascension Jesus commanded the Apostles in what is known as the Great Commission that they "will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."⁶⁷ Jesus called the Apostles to spread their knowledge of the Kingdom of God and of himself to "the end of the earth," thus the Apostles then decreed that this is the ministry of all Christians.⁶⁸ Since this call is directed to all Christians, then the end of the earth must be reached; all nations and tribes must know the name of Jesus through the Christian ministry. With such a charge requires people that are capable of traveling through rough terrain, reach remote areas, stand long hours, and do various other tasks that require physical fortitude or at least a basic level of fitness in order to reach all people groups. The Christian is called so that "...whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."⁶⁹ This servant mission has been traced the entire way throughout the Bible, and now falls upon the new church, "the type of service appropriate for the kingdom of God ... If Jesus' followers are to make any headway against very long odds, they must seek to serve and not vie for positions of authority; they must be willing to suffer and not flee from persecution; they must be willing to be last and not insist on being first."⁷⁰ In order to

⁶⁶ Keck, Leander E. *The New Interpreter's Bible Commentary: Volume IX - Acts, Introduction to Epistolary Literature, Romans, 1 & 2 Corinthians, Galatians*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2015., 754.

⁶⁷ Acts 1:8

⁶⁸ For more on the call to missions, see Matthew 24:14-15 and Matthew 28:18-20

⁶⁹ Mark 10:43-45

⁷⁰ Evans, Craig A. *Word Biblical Commentary: Mark 8:27-16:20. 34b*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2001., 15.

serve and to suffer, Christians must train their bodies to withstand toil and stress, Paul wrote about this idea, saying:

do you not know in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.⁷¹

Paul speaks of disciplining his body and maintaining self control as being crucial to his preaching, “so it is with him, Paul says. He runs not aimlessly. He does not simply shadowbox, but he keeps his body under the most rigorous, deliberate discipline; indeed (to no one’s surprise), he likens it to a sort of self imposed slavery once again”⁷² thus, he claims that it is also crucial to all Christian ministries. In his letter to the Romans he says, “I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.”⁷³ Paul’s exhortation “summarizes the claim of his gospel, which sets out the basis for all christian lifestyle and relationships, and which deliberately indicates the balance necessary between personal commitment and divine enabling.”⁷⁴ He also instructs Timothy in a letter to

Have nothing to do with irreverent, silly myths. Rather train yourself for godliness; for while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come. The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance. For to this end we toil and strive, because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Savior of all people, especially of those who believe.⁷⁵

⁷¹ 1 Corinthians 9:24-27

⁷² Keck, Leander E. *The New Interpreter's Bible Commentary: Volume IX - Acts, Introduction to Epistolary Literature, Romans, 1 & 2 Corinthians, Galatians*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2015., 909.

⁷³ Romans 12:1-2

⁷⁴ Dunn, James D. G. *Word Biblical Commentary: Romans 9-16*. 38b. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1988., 707.

⁷⁵ 1 Timothy 4:8-10

This instruction is often misinterpreted, as

Many understand the basic argument to be that although physical exercise, or perhaps asceticism, has some value, godliness has more value. The main problem with this interpretation is that the text does not say that godliness has more value; it says that godliness has value forever. The issue is not how much value exercise and godliness have, but how long they last ... [the verse] clarifies that the relative value of bodily exercise is primarily because of its temporal nature.⁷⁶

Thus, Timothy, as well as all Christians “is to practise a vigorous development and application of all his strength and ability that he might serve the glory of God with every thought and action. Such exercise is not restricted to a negative physical asceticism, nor even to the self disciplinary ... but rather implies a positive developing of his strength nourished above all ‘by the words of faith’”⁷⁷ Similarly, according to John,

we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him ... we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure. Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness. You know that he appeared in order to take away sins, and in him there is no sin. No one who abides in him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him.⁷⁸

John is emphasizing that the world does not know God’s people, because the world did not know God, and the children of God (Christians) must continue to act like God, and purify themselves from all sin and defilements. These defilements may include poor health and other physical and internal issues; John is saying that if they are not removed in order to represent God properly, Christians are preventing nonbelievers from knowing and receiving salvation. This indeed is horrible, for over and over again the gospels proclaim that Christian’s are the body of Christ,

⁷⁶ Mounce, William D. *Word Biblical Commentary: Pastoral Epistles*. 46. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2000., 252.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 251.

⁷⁸ 1 John 3:1-6

God's temple, his witness to the lost and should be properly cleansed and treated as such.^{79 80 81 82}

For the Christian calling is not to a life of ease or comfort, but Jesus "calling the crowd to him with his disciples, he said to them, 'If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it.'"⁸³ Mark says Jesus summoned 'the crowd together with his disciples,' this additional context was "apparently added ... to widen the application of Jesus' words. His call for self-denial and taking up the cross is not for the apostles only, but for all who would follow him."⁸⁴ The call to a life of suffering and missionary work was dedicated to all Christians and with this goal they are to train their bodies.

This section set out to determine how Christian's are to fulfill their role in the Kingdom of God by interpreting the instruction and ministry of the Apostles and the early church. What has been found is that Christians are to live: set apart by God to do His work, with the ability to discern what is right and wrong, with a strong mind able to withstand persecution and temptation, training the body for suffering, and devoting everything to God's will. Thus the state of the Christian's mind and body is critical, according to the Apostles, because of its huge impact on God's Kingdom.

⁷⁹ 1 Corinthians 6:19

⁸⁰ 1 Corinthians 3:16-17

⁸¹ 1 Corinthians 6:14-15

⁸² Ephesians 5:29

⁸³ Mark 8:34-35

⁸⁴ Guelich, Robert A. *Word Biblical Commentary: Mark 1:1-8:26. 34a*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1989., 25.

Consumption of Food

Biblical Context of Food in the Bible

Although there was no complex research on the effects of food on the body, much can be learned from tracing the diet of people during biblical times. It is important to understand and establish that there was no scientific research into the makeup of foods like proteins, carbohydrates, sugars, and saturated fats during this time, and millions of news articles, published research, and television experts telling them what to eat and what not to eat would not be published until another two thousand years or so. These people simply ate what was available to them, and it is important to recognize the quality of what they were eating to understand the context of food and meals in the Bible. Bread, wine, and olive oil make up what is called the Mediterranean triad which is mentioned in the Old Testament and accounted for the vast majority of Israelite land under cultivation.

The basis for most of the meals in ancient Israel was bread, “for the typical Israelite, bread or other grain-based foods such as porridge probably provided over half their caloric intake, with estimates varying between 53 and 75 percent.”⁸⁵ Durum wheat was the main type cultivated in ancient Israel which was ground into flour and combined with water and salt that was cooked on a hot flat stone into cakes, thus bread was made. This bread was unlike any modern loaf, it was rich with nutrients and other healthy substances that are fleshed out by the refining process in modern day wheat and bread factories. Wine was a very symbolic beverage to ancient Israel, and was found alongside many of their meals. It was “the principle drink”⁸⁶ of

⁸⁵ MacDonald, Nathan. *What Did the Ancient Israelites Eat?: Diet in Biblical Times*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2008., 19.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 22.

the people of Ancient Israel. The wine drunk during this time was not as potent as many of the modern alcoholic beverages, they generally had a lower percentage of alcohol content.

In terms of general categories, “textual and archaeological evidence agree in the centrality for the so-called mediterranean triad: bread, wine, and olive oil.⁸⁷ Fruit, vegetables, legumes, milk products, and meat made a much smaller contribution to caloric intake.”⁸⁸ It has been noted that bread was nutrient rich rather than modern bleached bread that lacks all the good nutrients and contains only the bad; which was the same with all the foods of the time: there was no added trans fat, saturated fat, sugars, or any other harmful ingredients that are common in modern cooking techniques. This means that generally it can be believed that overall food quality was much healthier in regards to nutrient supply and quality during Biblical times compared to modern times.⁸⁹

Modern Scientific Approach to the Effect of “Healthy” Foods

During ancient biblical history, the ability and capability of science and research did not exist, therefore the understanding of food and its deep relationship to functionality was not made clear. Much of the understanding of food in those times came as a result of cause and effect relationships, where a certain food, say a berry, was eaten and after eating this certain type of berry the person notices their stomach becomes uneasy; the connection between the berry and an

⁸⁷ Grumett, David, and Rachel Muers. *Theology on the Menu Asceticism, Meat and Christian Diet*. Abingdon, Oxon: Taylor & Francis, 2010.

Read for more information on Israelites and historical context of food.

⁸⁸ MacDonald, Nathan. *What Did the Ancient Israelites Eat?: Diet in Biblical Times*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2008., 91.

⁸⁹ Soza, Joel R. *Food and God: a Theological Approach to Eating, Diet, and Weight Control*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2009.

Read for more information on the Biblical context of food

uneasy stomach was made thus resulting in the avoidance of that berry in the daily diet. The other guide to food that was possessed during the Old Testament was the Levitical Law and instruction on what was unclean and clean to eat, this was instruction from God to the Israelites to set them apart as a holy people, “for I am the LORD your God. Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am holy. You shall not defile yourselves with any swarming thing that crawls on the ground...”⁹⁰ Little was known about this topic, but they were overall a healthier nation because of their agrarian and more labor based society. Those in the Old Testament had greater problems to attend to and the maintenance of health through a shift in eating habits did not present itself because of their lack of modern science and knowledge of health and medicine.

With modern science and medicine, the studies and statistics go far beyond simple cause and effect relationships and laws that were determined to set apart a nation from its surrounding neighbors. Modern society is constantly bombarded by brand new studies claiming certain foods have incredible health benefits, or news articles claiming common foods have been discovered to cause cancer, or even televised doctors claiming to have found the perfect diet. Each source makes a new claim or states findings that contradict other research, and much of nutritional studies are sponsored by food companies and are altered to push their products. Even the USDA’s Food Guide Pyramid, which claims its purpose is to “provide authoritative advice for people two years and older about how good dietary habits can promote health and reduce risk for major chronic diseases,”⁹¹ was unfortunately found that it “illustrated the goals of U.S.

⁹⁰ Leviticus 11:44-45

⁹¹ “Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2005. 6th Edition.” U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, January 2005.
<https://health.gov/dietaryguidelines/dga2005/document/default.htm>.

agriculture as much as it represented the principles of healthful eating,”⁹² offering no guidance on grains; lumping red meat, poultry, fish and beans in the same category, promoting three glasses of low-fat milk per day; and leaving out the distinction between types of fats and recommending they be consumed sparingly.⁹³ Improper data and findings presents a major roadblock in defining perfect foods and diets, but there has been a history of certain foods generally being understood as healthy with little dispute. In order to maintain accuracy, most data on specific foods and nutrients must be ignored to grasp what truly is healthy, because of the implications of false research and the confusion based on conflicting sources. Therefore, what remains is the dissection of specific nutrients that are healthy and broad areas of foods that are widely accepted as healthy along much of history.

Nutrients

Modern research has found that food is composed of molecules that organisms depend on in order to make energy, grow, and live; these are called nutrients, and are broken up into two categories (1) macronutrients which are carbohydrates, protein, and fat, and (2) micronutrients which are vitamins and minerals. “Good” nutrients exist in certain foods; however, they do not provide an accurate assessment of the food as a whole, because there may exist “bad nutrients” or other harmful substances within the food that cancel out or surpass the amount of good nutrients. Humans consume the food not the nutrients, this means that there are much more variables to food that must be understood and a food cannot be determined healthy solely based

⁹² Skerrett, Patrick J., and Walter C. Willett. “Essentials of Healthy Eating: A Guide.” National Institutes of Health Public Access. Elsevier Inc., October 15, 2012. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3471136/>.

⁹³ Ibid.
(paraphrased from the original writing)

on one healthy nutrient it contains. All nutrients, risks, circumstances and conditions, and harmful substances must be taken into account. Therefore, it is important to understand which nutrients are actually healthy for the body so that it may be possible to sift through the risks and weigh the benefits. Research is not perfect and in order to avoid inaccuracies or steer the readers in the wrong way, only two of the most researched and accepted nutrients have been presented along with the impact on the body and implications for positive human health.

One of the most beneficial nutrients for the overall health and fitness of the brain and body is omega-3 Polyunsaturated fatty acids (PUFA). Eicosapentaenoic Acid (EPA), and Docosahexaenoic Acid (DHA) are the most common of the long chain dietary fats which “are incorporated in many parts of the body including cell membranes and they play a role in antiinflammatory processes and the viscosity of cell membranes. EPA and DHA are essential for proper fetal development and healthy aging. DHA is a key component of all cell membranes and is found in abundance in the brain and retina.”⁹⁴ DHA is important, because it composes most of the membranes, but the “human body is not efficient at synthesizing DHA, so we are largely dependent on dietary DHA ... it is crucial for maintaining membrane integrity and, consequently, neuronal excitability and synaptic function.”⁹⁵ It maintains the ability for ions to be able to permeate cell membranes which enables the function of transmembrane receptors, this plays a huge role in the smooth functioning of synaptic transmission and enhances cognitive abilities.

⁹⁴ Block, Robert, and Shaker A. Mousa. “Advances in Nutrition.” *Advances in Nutrition*. American Society for Nutrition, January 5, 2012. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3262608/>.

⁹⁵ Gomez-Pinilla, Fernando. “Brain foods: the effects of nutrients on brain function” HHS Public Access. *Nature reviews. Neuroscience* vol. 9,7 (2008): 568-78., January 12, 2010. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2805706/>.

Omega-3 fatty acids also activate energy-generating metabolic pathways that subsequently affect molecules such as brain-derived neurotrophic factor (BDNF) and insulin-like growth factor 1 (IGF1). IGF1 can be produced in the liver and in skeletal muscle, as well as in the brain, and so it can convey peripheral messages to the brain in the context of diet and exercise ... acting at presynaptic and postsynaptic receptors ... which facilitate synaptic transmission and support long-term potentiation that is associated with learning and memory.⁹⁶

Omega-3s not only support the structure of the brain, but they also activate pathways that allow for proteins (BDNF and IGF1) that retain the longevity of synapses which is correlated with the ability to learn and retain memory. Along with improving learning and memory abilities, they are also “associated with reduced cognitive deficits (in reading and spelling, and teaching-rated behaviour) in children affected with developmental coordination disorder -that is, in children with specific impairments of motor function that are independent of their motor ability.”⁹⁷ A low intake or deficit of Omega-3 Fatty Acids, more specifically EPA and DHA is “associated with increased inflammatory processes as well as poor fetal development, general cardiovascular health, and risk of the development of Alzheimer’s disease (AD).”⁹⁸ There are physical implications to EPA and DHA, because of their “anti-inflammatory, antithrombotic, antiarrhythmic, hypolipidemic, and vasodilatory properties. Excessive radical formation and trauma during high-intensity exercise leads to an inflammatory state that is made worse by the increased amount of γ -6 fatty acids in Western diets, although this can be counteracted by eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA) and docosahexaenoic acid (DHA).”⁹⁹ Omega-3s reduce

⁹⁶ Gomez-Pinilla, Fernando. “Brain foods: the effects of nutrients on brain function” HHS Public Access. Nature reviews. Neuroscience vol. 9,7 (2008): 568-78., January 12, 2010. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2805706/>.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

In order to continue to the main argument of my paper, I only briefly touch on this subject, but if one is curious about the research behind my assertion, the scholarly source above and, “Brain foods: the effects of nutrients on brain function,” by Fernando Gómez-Pinilla, are good sources.

⁹⁹ Simopoulos, Artemis P. “Current Sports Medicine Reports.” Current Sports Medicine Reports, August 2007. https://journals.lww.com/acsm-csmr/Fulltext/2007/08000/Omega_3_Fatty_Acids_and_Athletics.8.

inflammation, enabling higher intensity and all around better workouts. Omega-3 Fatty Acids are extremely healthy because they increase and allow cognitive abilities, memory, and learning; prevent poor fetal development, mental impairments, and AD; and reduces inflammation allowing the physical body to remain in shape. These nutrients play major roles in the structure of cells that are crucial for brain function and are game changers when it comes to all around health.

The next category of nutrients that are highly beneficial are antioxidants, which “originally was used to refer specifically to a chemical that prevented the consumption of oxygen.”¹⁰⁰ In this section, Antioxidants and Vitamins are grouped together, because there are many similarities between them and some researchers and professionals present them as the same. In order for the human body to maintain the release of toxins, and function smoothly there must be a balance between free radicals and antioxidants. Free radicals “overwhelm the body’s ability to regulate [themselves], a condition known as oxidative stress ensues. Free radicals thus adversely alter lipids, proteins, and DNA and trigger a number of human diseases. Hence [the] application of [an] external source of antioxidants can assist in coping [with] this oxidative stress.”¹⁰¹ Free radicals attack macromolecules that leads to cell damage and homeostatic disruption; they accumulate over time with age; and may occur in tissues where there has occurred trauma, infection, and heat injury”¹⁰² To counteract this, “antioxidants can safely interact with free radicals and terminate the chain reaction before vital molecules are damaged ... the principle micronutrient (vitamin) antioxidants are vitamin E, Vitamin C, and B-carotene.

¹⁰⁰ Lobo, Vijaya Chavan, A. Chavan Phatak, and N. Chavan Chandra. “Free radicals, antioxidants and functional foods: Impact on human health.” *Pharmacognosy Review* vol. 4,8 (2010): 118-26, December 2010. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3249911/>.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Ibid.

The body cannot manufacture these micronutrients, so they must be supplied in the diet.”¹⁰³ The brain is largely affected by oxidative damage, because extremely high metabolic loads and abundance of oxidizable material forms the plasma membrane of the neural cells; this is why “several ‘antioxidant diets’ have become popular for their publicized positive effects on neural function.”¹⁰⁴ Like antioxidants, vitamins also improve brain function and the overall health of the body. B vitamins have positive effects on memory performance and combats cognitive impairment; vitamin E improves the cognitive impairment of the brain after trauma and reduces cognitive decay in the elderly; vitamin C in high concentrations are incredibly toxic to cancer cells; folic acid reduces the risk of colon, rectal, and breast cancer; and vitamin D preserves cognition in the elderly, inhibits the growth of various cancer cells, and prevents bone fractures by maintaining bone strength.^{105 106 107} Antioxidants are incredibly important to the natural functioning of the body, and they also serve as combatants against disease, cancer, and other health problems.

Food

Omega-3 fatty acids and antioxidants are some of the most beneficial nutrients for the fitness of the brain and body; ranging from cancer preventatives, increased cognitive abilities,

¹⁰³ Lobo, Vijaya Chavan, A. Chavan Phatak, and N. Chavan Chandra. “Free radicals, antioxidants and functional foods: Impact on human health.” *Pharmacognosy Review* vol. 4,8 (2010): 118-26, December 2010. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3249911/>.

¹⁰⁴ Gomez-Pinilla, Fernando. “Brain foods: the effects of nutrients on brain function” HHS Public Access. *Nature reviews. Neuroscience* vol. 9,7 (2008): 568-78., January 12, 2010. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2805706/>.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Donaldson, Michael S. “Nutrition and cancer: A review of the evidence for an anti-cancer diet.” *BioMed Central. Nutrition Journal*, October 20, 2004. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC526387/>.

¹⁰⁷ Skerrett, Patrick J., and Walter C. Willett. “Essentials of Healthy Eating: A Guide.” National Institutes of Health Public Access. Elsevier Inc., October 15, 2012. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3471136/>.

bone strength, and prevention of cognitive decay. All of these nutrients can be found in one category of foods: fruits and vegetables. Throughout history, fruits and vegetables have been recognized as healthy, this category is the least debated amongst science and research for there is little to no harmful effects from the consumption of fruit and vegetables; even “historically, the consumption of certain plant foods, fruits, vegetables, and legumes was thought to prevent or cure ailments ranging from headaches to heart disease. Early medicine revolved around the prescription of specific foods for certain disorders. Many of these plant foods are also high in dietary fiber.”¹⁰⁸

The category of fruits and vegetables is extremely broad, but generally most “supply dietary fiber, and fiber intake is linked to lower incidence of cardiovascular disease and obesity. [They] also supply vitamins and minerals to the diet and are sources of phytochemicals that function as antioxidants, phytoestrogens, and antiinflammatory agents and through other protective mechanisms.”¹⁰⁹ Also, studies have determined that consumption of fruit and vegetables, 85% of the time produced a protective result against cancers,^{110 111} “a joint report by the World Cancer Research Fund and the American Institute for Cancer Research found convincing evidence that a high fruit and vegetable diet would reduce cancers of the mouth and pharynx, esophagus, lung, stomach, and colon and rectum; evidence of probable risk reduction

¹⁰⁸ Slavin, Joanne L., and Beate Lloyd. “Advances In Nutrition: An International Review Journal.” *Advances In Nutrition: An International Review Journal*. American Society for Nutrition, July 6, 2012. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3649719/>.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Donaldson, Michael S. “Nutrition and cancer: A review of the evidence for an anti-cancer diet.” *BioMed Central. Nutrition Journal*, October 20, 2004. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC526387/>.

¹¹¹ Le, Lap Tai, and Joan Sabate. “MDPI: Nutrients.” *MDPI: Nutrients*, May 27, 2014. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4073139/>.

was found for cancers of the larynx, pancreas, breast, and bladder.”¹¹² Fruits and vegetables come to mind when the word “healthy” is mentioned, and rightly so for it is backed up by tons of research and studies. In general, they are some of the healthiest foods; but, type of food, cooking/preparation style, environmental factors, organic vs. nonorganic, GMO vs. nonGMO, the area in which they are grown, etc. are all factors that must be considered when discerning to what degree vegetables and fruits are healthy. It is impossible to determine the perfect food and the perfect diet, because it is near impossible to find unity within the databases of scientific studies past and present on food; therefore, fruits and vegetables are focused on because their reputation as being healthy has never changed, and so far they are the most accurate category of healthy foods.¹¹³ When a healthy diet is mentioned, what should be understood is that it consists of higher concentrations of fruits, vegetables, and healthy nutrients; and less of the harmful substances and foods, because a much healthier human results from this combination.

Modern Scientific Approach to the Effect of “Unhealthy” Foods

Unhealthy foods must be approached differently than healthy foods, because they are extremely common within the western diet and most people have a general understanding of what makes something unhealthy. Therefore, going in depth on unhealthy foods proves to be unnecessary, but the bulk of this section shall provide evidence for the effects of bad foods and nutrients on the body and not specifically naming every harmful food.

¹¹² Laviano, Alessandro Laviano, MD, PhD. “WCRF/AICR: Food, nutrition and the prevention of cancer: a global perspective.” Science Direct, 1997. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/journal/nutrition>.

¹¹³ Granville, Zoe. “Kingdom Apologetics.” *A Christian Approach to the Consumption of Animals*. Chris Henderson, 2017. <http://www.hendyamps.com/kingdomapologetics/resources/The-Christian-View-of-Diet---Zoe-Granville.pdf>.
Read for more information on Vegetables and the Christian Diet

What comes to mind when ‘unhealthy food’ is mentioned? To most, fast food, which dominates most of Western diets, is the first thing that pops into their heads. It is quite obvious and undisputed, because of all the research proving “frequent consumption of fast foods is one of the main reasons for rising trends of overweight and obesity, cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes and other metabolic abnormalities.”¹¹⁴ Diets that have trans fat, saturated fat, and sucrose, “have shown a decline in cognitive performance and reduced hippocampal levels of BDNF- related synaptic plasticity after only 3 weeks of dietary treatment.”¹¹⁵ This means that diet has a direct effect on neurons, and “it elevated the neurological burden that was associated with experimental brain injury, as evidenced by worse performance in learning tasks and a reduction of BDNF- mediated synaptic plasticity. A meta analysis of eight different studies shows that,

compared to non-consumers or < 1 time/ week, regular consumption of fast foods and out-of-home meals \geq 1-3 times/week was associated with an 20-129% elevated risk of general and abdominal obesity. Increased risk of type 2 diabetes and metabolic syndrome in subjects with higher consumption of fast foods (mean \geq 2 times/week) was reported 27-68% and 85-150%, respectively. Higher consumption of fast foods and higher exposure to multiple sources of accessible, cheap, energy-dense fast foods were also accompanied with a 56-162% increased risk of coronary heart disease mortality.¹¹⁶

The amount of fast food consumed directly correlates with the risk of obesity, diabetes, and death from heart disease; because of

¹¹⁴ Bahadoran, Zahra, Parvin Mirmiran, and Fereidoun Azizi. “Fast Food Pattern and Cardiometabolic Disorders: A Review of Current Studies.” *Health Promotion Perspectives*, January 30, 2016. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4772793/>.

¹¹⁵ Gomez-Pinilla, Fernando. “Brain foods: the effects of nutrients on brain function” *HHS Public Access. Nature reviews. Neuroscience* vol. 9,7 (2008): 568-78., January 12, 2010. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2805706/>.

¹¹⁶ Bahadoran, Zahra, Parvin Mirmiran, and Fereidoun Azizi. “Fast Food Pattern and Cardiometabolic Disorders: A Review of Current Studies.” *Health Promotion Perspectives*, January 30, 2016. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4772793/>.

large portion size, high amount of refined carbohydrates and added sugar, and high glycemic load ... higher content of industrially produced trans fatty acids in fast foods is an important component leading to weight gain, abdominal fat accumulation, development of insulin resistance and cardiovascular events. Furthermore, sodium content of fast foods is often higher than recommended amounts ... increasing blood pressure also intensifies insulin resistance and metabolic syndrome features.¹¹⁷

Western dietary patterns are generally high in processed foods and “are strongly correlated with an increased risk of developing depression, mild cognitive impairment, and ADHD,” because they “tend to be abundant in omega-6 fatty acids, and quite low in omega-3s, a phenomenon that has occurred with the shift towards industrialized and processed food. Omega-6 fatty acids are the primary fatty acid in many vegetable oils, such as corn oil and soy oil, often the cooking fats of choice in packaged and restaurant food.”¹¹⁸ Also, a greater omega-6 to omega-3 ratio in the blood was found to be linked to major depressive disorder.¹¹⁹ Fast Food is a broad category of unhealthy foods that cause depression, fatigue, and leads to mental deterioration and disease.

The increase in fast food consumption has led to “several nutritional deficiencies, such as vitamin B12, B9 (folate), and zinc.”¹²⁰ These may cause symptoms of dementia and depression, low mood, fatigue, cognitive decline, and irritability; while “decreasing serum levels of vitamin E were associated with poor memory performance in older individuals.”¹²¹ A deficiency of omega-3 fatty acids is related to impaired learning and memory, increased risk of several mental disorders, including attention-deficit disorder, dyslexia, dementia, depression, bipolar disorder,

¹¹⁷ Bahadoran, Zahra, Parvin Mirmiran, and Fereidoun Azizi. “Fast Food Pattern and Cardiometabolic Disorders: A Review of Current Studies.” *Health Promotion Perspectives*, January 30, 2016. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4772793/>.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Gomez-Pinilla, Fernando. “Brain foods: the effects of nutrients on brain function” HHS Public Access. *Nature reviews. Neuroscience* vol. 9,7 (2008): 568-78., January 12, 2010. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2805706/>.

and schizophrenia.¹²² A diet lacking necessary nutrients and healthy foods leads to deficiency issues and extremely negative effects. Bad food, especially fast food, comes with a heavy price tag when it comes to harmful effects. Even not eating enough healthy foods or the right healthy foods may lead to deficiencies in nutrients that are vital to the body and brain. A major reduction in the consumption of extremely unhealthy foods like fast foods and others that are full of trans and saturated fats, highly processed ingredients, and sugars lends itself to a higher functioning healthy person.

This section on modern scientific research on good and bad foods can be concluded with the statement: good foods and nutrients improve brain and body function, and bad foods and deficiencies damage functions of the brain and body. The diet has such a large impact on the human function and capabilities, that it is crucial to maintain health through the diet. It is almost impossible to decipher and organize all the modern research and form a proper diet, but fruits and vegetables have been proven to be healthy throughout history and should be the basis for a healthy diet. Optimizing the amount of nutrients in vegetables and the food consumed is important, because nutrients like omega-3 fatty acids and antioxidants are beneficial to the body and brain, allowing them to function at or above a normal rate. Foods that are high in trans fat, saturated fat, and low in healthy nutrients should be avoided. Fast Food is commonly known to be high in unhealthy nutrients and related to adverse health problems, and therefore should be avoided. When determining what is the proper diet, take into consideration meal size, for “overeating is a well established risk factor for stroke, and recent epidemiological data suggest

¹²² Gomez-Pinilla, Fernando. “Brain foods: the effects of nutrients on brain function” HHS Public Access. *Nature reviews. Neuroscience* vol. 9,7 (2008): 568-78., January 12, 2010. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2805706/>.

that individuals with high calorie intakes may also be at increased risk of AD and PD.”¹²³ In order to prevent overeating, minimizing the amount of food and not eating until satisfaction, but until a planned limit is reached would be smart, for it is believed that “a daily calorie intake in the range of 1800-2200 calories for moderately active adults may dramatically reduce the risk of age-related disorders of the nervous system including AD, PD, and stroke. Foregoing one or two meals a day might be an alternative to reducing meal size”¹²⁴ if for some reason a reduction in size cannot be achieved. Another factor to keep in mind is that “particularly hyperpalatable (e.g., high-fat, high sugar) [foods], may possess addictive qualities. Stress is an important factor in the development of addiction and in addiction relapse, and may contribute to an increased risk for obesity and other metabolic diseases.”¹²⁵ Stress causes the human body to crave foods, and oftentimes pleasurable unhealthy foods are reached for first, which have addictive qualities and create more of a problem. To reduce this behavior, slowly begin to replace any hyperpalatable foods with healthy alternatives that will result in better health when under stress, eventually reducing the amount of unnecessary eating will become beneficial. There is no perfect diet, but sitting idly and not doing research into what is going into the body is detrimental to a person’s health. The quality and amount of food consumption has direct effects on the functionality of the body. In order for the body to function properly and be capable of a higher level, a healthy diet must be implemented.

¹²³ Mattson, Mark P., Wenzhen Duan, and Zhihong Guo. “Meal size and frequency affect neuronal plasticity and vulnerability to disease: cellular and molecular mechanisms.” *The Official Journal of the International Society for Neurochemistry*, January 13, 2003.

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1046/j.1471-4159.2003.01586.x?sid=nlm:pubmed>.

¹²⁴ Ibid. (read this article for more on the effect of meal size and frequency of meals)

¹²⁵ Yau, Yvonne H. C., and Marc N. Potenza. “Stress and Eating Behaviors.” HHS Public Access, September 2013. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4214609/>. (read this article for more information on stress eating and behaviors).

Physical Activity

Biblical Context of Activity

Not much is known about the levels of physical activity throughout the Bible, because there is no record of such practices in the text. Really the only reference to heightened physical strength in a person is the story of Sampson in Judges 13-16, however Sampson possessed superhuman strength that came from God and not exercise. Physical activity during the time periods in which the Bible accounted was high, but there was hardly any record of exercise other than the allusions to training for sport in Paul's writings. Physical activity is defined as "any body movement generated by the contraction of skeletal muscles that raises energy expenditure above resting metabolic rate, and is characterized by its modality, frequency, intensity, duration, and context of practice," and exercise is similar, as it is "a subcategory of physical activity that is planned, structured, repetitive, and that favors physical fitness maintenance or development."¹²⁶ Although the average individual in the Bible did not exercise, it is believed that the average person then had a higher rate of physical activity than the average person today. During that time there were no cars, bicycles, planes, motorcycles, trains, or any modern transportation vehicle. Those who possessed animals such as: horses, donkeys, and mules not strictly for farming use; sometimes used them for transportation. For the poor and often common man, the most common mode of transportation was walking. There was not as much distance from home to work for people then (especially since they often did their work at home) than there is now,

¹²⁶ Thivel, David, Angelo Tremblay, Pauline M. Genin, Shirin Panahi, Daniel Riviere, and Martine Duclos. "Physical Activity, Inactivity, and Sedentary Behaviors: Definitions and Implications in Occupational Health." *Frontiers In Public Health*, October 5, 2018. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6182813/>.
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6182813/>.

but the amount of walking required for simple transportation still exceeds the amount of physical activity done in a modern person's average sedentary life. Greater physical activity is not only accomplished in their modes of transportation, but also their occupations. Modern jobs, after the invention of the computer and complex machines, are more commonly done in a sitting position requiring more education and brain function; however, during biblical times, the usual occupation required more physical aptitude and knowledge of land and common skills, because their jobs were usually required more labor like: gardening, farming, carpentry, and other jobs requiring skilled hands. Many of these jobs required them to work on their feet or exert more physical energy rather than mental. With the shift in modes of transportation and the change from unskilled to skilled labor, within the context of the Bible, the average person then had greater daily physical activity than people now; and because physical activity is "positively correlated with physical fitness,"¹²⁷ the general population should appear to have greater physical ability than the general population now.

Modern Scientific Approach to Exercise

Exercise, as defined above, is "planned, structured, and repetitive bodily movement done to improve or maintain one or more components of physical health."¹²⁸ The purpose of exercise is to improve the health of the body. It is obvious that exercise reaps benefits for the body, but a study of such effects must be conducted in order to grasp how large of an impact exercise has

¹²⁷ Laporte, Ronald E., Henry J. Montoye, and Carl J. Caspersen. "Assessment of Physical Activity in Epidemiological Research: Problems and Prospects." Public Health Reports, 1985.
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1424733/>.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

and whether or not it is important enough and if it the benefits are worth spending the time, effort, and money.

Exercise increases the body's level of physical fitness, which is “a set of attributes that people have or achieve that relates to the ability to perform physical activity.”¹²⁹ An increase in physical fitness means major benefits in all different areas of the body, like “your body’s ability to create ATP¹³⁰ is critical because it determines your capacity for physical exertion. And the reverse is true: your physical conditioning influences how well you can generate ATP.”¹³¹ This means that exercise optimizes the amount of energy that powers the bodies functions. During exercise, the body switches back and forth between aerobic production of ATP and anaerobic production of ATP and once exercise ceases Lactic acid production stops, muscles begin recovering, and the acid balance goes back to normal,

your level of fitness determines how swiftly this happens. Regular exercise conditions the lungs, heart, and blood vessels, enabling them to deliver oxygen to muscle cells more quickly and efficiently [for] ... the amount of blood your heart pumps and the oxygen your body consumes rise[s] in direct proportion to the amount of work our muscles are performing. And once again, your level of physical conditioning dictates how well this system works.¹³²

Exercise increases the amount of blood and oxygen flow which conditions and increases the efficiency of the body and

your circulatory system [which] adapts by boosting your cardiorespiratory endurance. Your body creates more plasma ... [ensuring that] a greater volume of blood is available

¹²⁹ Laporte, Ronald E., Henry J. Montoye, and Carl J. Caspersen. “Assessment of Physical Activity in Epidemiological Research: Problems and Prospects.” Public Health Reports, 1985.
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1424733/>.

¹³⁰ ATP: Adenosine Triphosphate, an energy molecule that powers the functions of cells (anything from walking to thinking).

¹³¹ Minter-Jordan, Myechia, MD, MBA; Irene S. Davis, PhD, PT, FAPTA, FACSM, FASB; and Zolt Arany, MD, PhD. “Healthy Mind, Healthy Body: Benefits of Exercise.” The Harvard Medical School. Harvard Health Publications, March 13, 2014.
https://hms.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/assets/Sites/Longwood_Seminars/Exercise3.14.pdf.

¹³² Ibid.

to pump. That blood is slightly thinner than usual, which lowers the resistance it encounters while circulating. The main pumping chambers of your heart, called the ventricles, stretch to hold more blood and contract with greater force. Over the long term, the heart muscle increases in size, which strengthens the heart.¹³³

Also, the number of capillaries that transport oxygen and other nutrients to the muscles increase in number.¹³⁴ This means that the muscles are receiving more oxygen rich blood and the left ventricle of the heart has a greater energy supply enabling it to pump blood with greater ease. It has been found that a “more efficient pumping action allows you to do more work with less effort”¹³⁵ so that the body is more efficient and as exercise increases, so does the efficiency. An increase in capillary count and blood flow to the muscles improves muscular endurance as well as “stockpile more glycogen ... [and] burn fat for energy more directly, which preserves glycogen stores.”¹³⁶ Another study suggests that “physical activity or exercise may play a pivotal role at all points of interest on the cancer survivorship trajectory. Participation in physical activity is associated with a reduced likelihood of developing cancer.”¹³⁷ Physical activity and exercise conditions the different organs and organ systems of the body enabling it to be more efficient and productive. Physical activity is a process that must be repeated and practiced to maintain this increased state of production and quality, because it must be used and trained often

¹³³ Minter-Jordan, Myechia, MD, MBA; Irene S. Davis, PhD, PT, FAPTA, FACSM, FASB; and Zolt Arany, MD, PhD. “Healthy Mind, Healthy Body: Benefits of Exercise.” The Harvard Medical School. Harvard Health Publications, March 13, 2014.
https://hms.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/assets/Sites/Longwood_Seminars/Exercise3.14.pdf.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Brown, Justin C., Kerri Winters-Stone, Augustine Lee, and Kathryn H. Schmitz. “Cancer, Physical Activity, and Exercise.” HHS Author Manuscript. *Compr Physiol*, October 2, 2012.
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4122430/>.

For brevity, the research has not been included within my thesis, but for more information on the effect of exercise on cancer visit: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4122430/>.

like the brain or it will begin to deteriorate and lose its function. For the smooth function of the body and an increase in its efficiency and endurance, working out is a crucial practice.

Modern Approach to physical inactivity

Much evidence exists to prove the benefits of physical activity as well as the detriments of inactivity. This section will consist of a study into the effects of inactivity and sedentary behaviors.

Sedentary behaviors and inactivity have become more common recently than in previous years, as “a workers activity has evolved throughout the last century, clearly shifting to more sedentary occupational tasks, and this “tertiarization” results in workplaces that are of particular concern.”¹³⁸ The shift in the way of life has proved to be detrimental, for “we are currently living in a paradoxical time where our society has become more “technophilic,” favoring strategies to avoid and/or minimize physical effort (and *per se* human motion) with more time devoted to sedentary behaviors; while on the other hand, there is a growing interest and concern for healthy lifestyles.”¹³⁹ Shocking is the statistic that 92% of U.S. adolescents and greater than 95% of adults do not meet the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services guidelines for physical activity.¹⁴⁰ Sedentary behaviors are energy expenditures with ≤ 1.5 metabolic equivalent of task (MET); while awake in a sitting, reclining, or lying posture.¹⁴¹ This may include sitting at a desk

¹³⁸ Thivel, David, Angelo Tremblay, Pauline M. Genin, Shirin Panahi, Daniel Riviere, and Martine Duclos. “Physical Activity, Inactivity, and Sedentary Behaviors: Definitions and Implications in Occupational Health.” *Frontiers In Public Health*, October 5, 2018. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6182813/>.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Booth, Frank W., Ph.D., Christian K. Roberts, Ph.D., and Matthew J. Laye, Ph.D.. “Lack of Exercise is a Major Cause of Chronic Diseases.” HHS Public Access, November 23, 2014. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4241367/>.

¹⁴¹ Thivel, David, Angelo Tremblay, Pauline M. Genin, Shirin Panahi, Daniel Riviere, and Martine Duclos. “Physical Activity, Inactivity, and Sedentary Behaviors: Definitions and Implications in Occupational Health.” *Frontiers In Public Health*, October 5, 2018. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6182813/>.

for long lectures, typing on a computer for the bulk of a work day, or sitting in a recliner watching television late at night. This trend of inactivity “is a modifiable risk factor for cardiovascular disease and a widening variety of other chronic diseases, including diabetes mellitus, cancer (colon and breast), obesity, hypertension, bone and joint diseases (osteoporosis and osteoarthritis), and depression.”¹⁴² Many diseases and health issues come from a sedentary lifestyle, and “the mortality rate is increased by 2% for every seated hour and can reach up to 8% per hour when the total consecutive time spent seated is above 8 hours per day.”¹⁴³ A higher mortality rate is related to the amount of physical inactivity, which means that life is shortened by a lack of exercise,

The lack of physical activity affects almost every cell, organ, and system in the body causing sedentary dysfunction and accelerated death. The massive multifactorial nature of dysfunction caused by sedentarism means that just as food and reproduction remain as requirements for long-term continued human existence, physical activity is also a requirement to maximize healthspan and lifespan. The only valid scientific therapeutic approach to completely counter sedentary dysfunction is primary prevention with physical activity itself.

Physical activity is necessary for the well being of the body and mind, and without it, all types of problems arise. The endurance of the body and its alertness is minimized when exercise is minimized. The body structure deteriorates when it is not exerted and continuously trained. A lack of exercise results in many malfunctions of the body which decreases the efficiency and hinders performance. Sedentary lifestyles and low to no amounts of physical activity and

¹⁴² Warburton, Darren E.R., Crystal Whitney Nicol, and Shannon S.D. Bredin. “Health Benefits of Physical Activity: the Evidence.” CMAJ Medical Knowledge that Matters. CMA Media Inc., March 14, 2006. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1402378/>.

¹⁴³ Thivel, David, Angelo Tremblay, Pauline M. Genin, Shirin Panahi, Daniel Riviere, and Martine Duclos. “Physical Activity, Inactivity, and Sedentary Behaviors: Definitions and Implications in Occupational Health.” *Frontiers In Public Health*, October 5, 2018. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6182813/>.

exercise leads to poor health and an increased risk of diseases; cancer; bodily deterioration; and, in some cases, death.

-Thesis Proof-

Discussion

The Afterlife

The resurrection of the body was explored in order to prove that the Christian's body is significant and it must be maintained for the afterlife. If it is not, the state in which it is in upon death (aside from their sin and the effects of sin), is the state it will remain in when Jesus raises everybody from the dead. This means whatever physical state a person passes away in will be the exact state they are risen, just they will lack all sin, disease, cancer, mental disorders, and death. So a man weighing 328 pounds with a height of 5'3" when he died will rise as the same gender weighing 328 pounds and with the same height of 5'3". This means that the body is not thrown off once a person dies, and any preparation or fitness level a person trains to reach is not wasted for it will remain in the afterlife. Thus, the body plays a major role in the afterlife, and should be maintained.

Present Condition

Next, it must be proven that the body and its health is crucial in the present life to the Christian. Therefore, the overarching theme of God's Kingdom and His plan for Christians must be researched and clearly stated to determine what the body's role is and how it may affect God's Kingdom. Tracing the beginnings of God's people starting with the Israelites all the way to Jesus' ministry leads to the Christian's role in the Kingdom of God, which is summed up in a single calling, "to be the Church and that is a call to be a far greater church than [the present]. To

be that and to do that is the summation of all programs.”¹⁴⁴ This ‘Church’ does not refer to the church that meets every Sunday for Bible Study, it is God’s chosen people set apart and made holy, the ones who truly trust in God and do His will. In order to be the Church, Christians must “exhibit the righteousness of Christ not merely in private morality but in all matters of human relations. The church which “sticks to the gospel” and utters no word of judgement or of exhortation to society’s sin, is no prophetic church and, what is worse, is preaching an incomplete gospel.”¹⁴⁵ In every way possible, the Church must present itself as if to hold up a mirror reflecting the very nature and majesty of the perfect and sovereign God. This is only one part of being the Church, showing who God is in word and deed, every action must be pleasing to him. For the Church is to be a witness to the outside world, it is a model of what God’s community looks like and proves that they are set apart and different from the world around them. Like the nation of Israel, the Church is God’s chosen people who must be different than every nation and culture. The Church “is to exhibit before the world a sort of community which transcends all barriers that human society has erected, so that men may see in it a reflection of God’s redemptive community. She is to extend her good works and her brotherly compassion beyond herself into the world; for the church can no more keep her agape to herself than she can keep her gospel to herself. It too must go out into society to witness to the coming kingdom.”¹⁴⁶ The next part in being the Church is “we must be a more missionary church. We must rise to our calling; [the Church] must become a missionary people ... we must take our servant calling seriously. As a church and as individuals we must learn and learn at once that the vigorous

¹⁴⁴ Cullmann, Oscar. *Immortality of the Soul: or, Resurrection of the Dead?: the Witness of the New Testament*. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2010., 266.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 263.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 265.

propagation of the faith is the Church's life blood."¹⁴⁷ The Church must take missions seriously, for their call to go to every nation and people group is not an idle one. God calls each Christian to different missions; whether locally, nationally, or globally; Christians are called to never stop proclaiming God in all areas, even to the point of suffering and persecution. The entirety of the Christian's life and surroundings is their mission field; a Christian doctor finds his mission to be his nurses and patients, a Christian engineer's mission field is her coworkers and bosses, a mechanic must witness to his clients, and teachers find their role in setting up children for the future is not just an educational responsibility but also a spiritual one. To be the Church is to live differently, as holy people and to take Jesus' call to missions seriously each day.

In order to live like the Church and serve on missions for the building of the Kingdom, the body and the mind must be conditioned and capable. They must be prepared and ready to discern and carry out God's will. The Apostles wrote about this, saying that they must be wise and they must be able to stand persecution and suffering like Jesus went through. Jesus' ministry was meant to be controversial, it was offensive to the self centered population; this means that the current Christian ministry will turn many heads and cause problems with many nonbelievers and so persecution should be expected. In order to remain upright and steadfast under oppression, a strengthened mental and physical state must be maintained which the Apostles explain through their example and writings. As noted in the Consumption of Food section, the mental faculties and capabilities are strengthened with the consumption of healthy nutrients and foods and reduced by the consumption of unhealthy nutrients and foods. Likewise, exercise conditions the body and increases its ability to deal with physical stressors which enables the

¹⁴⁷ Cullmann, Oscar. *Immortality of the Soul: or, Resurrection of the Dead?: the Witness of the New Testament*. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2010., 265; 266

Christian to remain strong in suffering. Mental and physical fitness is not only necessary in persecution, but it is also required to accomplish God's calling for all Christians which is the mission field. The mission field at the very basic level for a Christian starts with every single person that the Christian interacts with on a daily basis. Whatever the environment, whether the: workplace, school, family gathering, meet up with the neighbors, fancy restaurant, kid's soccer game, or library; the Christian must work on the salvation of all that they come across. For the Christian to be able to witness effectively to those they come across on a daily basis they must have good memory, cognitive functions, physical fitness, and a strong immune system. Take for example a 62 year old petroleum engineer who works for a large corporation, has children, likes to eat out at fancy restaurants, and enjoys playing racquetball on weekends with some of his longtime friends. Every person he encounters is his mission field; at work: his boss, his team of six people, the secretary at the front of the building, the cleaning lady that he sees each friday early in the morning, the IT guy that comes to fix his malfunctioning computer, and the cafeteria lady who overcharges; at home: his wife, his children, his aging mother, his rebellious brother, his drunken uncle, and his muslim cousin that married in; at fancy restaurants: the waiter, the bus boy, and the people waiting in the lobby who forgot to get a reservation; at the raquetball court: the janitor, his longtime friends, and other players he does not know. These people rely on the Christian engineer as their sole connection to God, for God calls the engineer to save those people and to devote his life to this mission. All of these people are lost and depend upon the engineer as their way of meeting God, because he is responsible for all of these lives he must be training and equipping himself to be able to present himself as the best witness of Jesus possible. In order to do this, he must know the scriptures of God, he must be able to communicate and

maintain conversation, and he must be able to answer tough questions about what he believes; that way he will be able to structure a proper argument and convince them of the validity of the Christian faith. In order to function with full cognitive capabilities, research in previous sections have shown that health is directly proportional with mental faculties. Healthy nutrients and a healthy amount of exercise enables the engineer to have greater focus, quicker synapses, better brain development, improved health, improved memory, better problem solving skills, a more efficient use of energy, healthier organs, and less of a risk to disease and cancer. Greater focus and better brain development is needed so that the engineer does not lose sight of the mission and may concentrate on his tasks. Quicker synapses, improved memory, and enhanced problem solving skills are necessary for the engineer to recall verses from the Bible and work with those who do not believe forming and combatting arguments in locations where he does not have direct access to a Bible. A healthier body increases the amount of people that the engineer may witness to, because it improves his quality of life and he can do more within the time he is given. The engineer has greater endurance and lasts longer when his body uses energy efficiently. A healthy diet and exercise plan is the means through which Christians can bring more people to Christ, and effectively build God's Kingdom.

Most Christians do not exercise or eat healthy foods, because they believe that either it takes up too much time that they should be devoting to God, or they justify that what they eat or do will not affect them. In the section on unhealthy foods and effects of not exercising, this topic was analyzed and it was discovered that an unhealthy diet causes diseases, disorders, a higher risk of cancer, a decreased life expectancy, and cognitive decay. This means that the excuse that unhealthy eating and not exercising is ok because it does not have an effect on the body, is

completely incorrect and should not be used as proof that Christian's can be unhealthy.

Christian's also say that exercise takes up the time they devote towards God, and focusing on eating healthy draws their minds off of him, however, when there is no exercise or healthy food intake their minds will not be able to focus on God and they will not be able to devote everything to God. They will be exhausted and their efficiency will decline, even their life expectancy will decrease and they will be affected by disease, and all of these problems will inhibit the Christian's walk with God and their mission. Therefore, it is better to spend time and thoughts on a healthy lifestyle, because of the greater improvements of the mind and body that will effectively lengthen and sharpen missionary work. Take for example a 36 year old nurse at MD Anderson who gets home from work too exhausted to exercise and is tired of the hospital food so she generally eats meals from fast food restaurants. The nurse is Christian and so her role in the Kingdom of God is to serve others and bring the unbelieving to Christ, which includes her fellow nurses and doctors, her patients, and everybody else that she comes in contact with each day. She does not exercise and her diet is very poor in healthy nutrients and high in saturated fats, this is considered an unhealthy lifestyle in which the nurse has a higher susceptibility to contracting disease, a higher risk of cancer, quicker cognitive decay, weaker bones and muscles, lower nutrient blood quality, increased risk of obesity, and decrease in memory capacity. All of these factors are detrimental to her role in the salvation of the nonbelievers around her, as it limits her capabilities and decreases the quality of her witness. As a nurse, bad health may make her susceptible to the diseases that her patients are suffering, which may cause her to have to stay home and essentially miss days that should be spent building up God's Kingdom. All the nurse has to do is pack meals or go to healthier restaurants and begin a small exercise program, and she

will not be as exhausted and be able to work longer and harder. The Kingdom of God is hindered by the nurse's poor decisions, just like almost all Christians, these poor dietary decisions and lack of exercise are fairly easy to eliminate.

It must be recognized that every Christian, not just those called to missions across the globe, has a role in mission work and that every contact they have that does not know God must be brought to salvation in order for the expansion and building of God's Kingdom. In order for every Christian to accomplish what God has called them to do, they must eliminate unhealthy habits from their lives and take up healthy practices. Because an unhealthy lifestyle contrasts God's Kingdom, any Christian practicing an unhealthy lifestyle is in fact contrasting God's Kingdom and should do as much as possible in order to rid themselves of anything that hinders it. For anything that slows or blocks God's Kingdom was either placed by God to direct His Kingdom in the way it should go, or it is something that Christians must fight against and remove in order that His Kingdom may not be limited. The lack of a healthy diet and exercise in a Christian's life is a choice that is made, not something that God has in place to limit and direct His Kingdom in the way it should go, this means that the second option is correct and this limit on God's Kingdom is placed by Christians and must be removed. This means that every Christian, no matter their role or who they are to witness to whether locally or globally, is supposed to have a basic level of healthiness in diet and fitness. There is no excuse for anybody to continue living an unhealthy lifestyle, because no matter the excuse, a hindrance on that person's ability to build God's Kingdom continues to exist.

Therefore, this basic level of fitness for all Christians requires a certain degree of exercise, but it is known that overworking the body and overstress of muscles is more

detrimental than beneficial, so the graph of amount/intensity of exercise versus benefits is not an exponential one, instead, it eventually tops out. Everybody has a different body type and different conditions produce different results, so some can train with extremely high intensity without increasing risks substantially, whereas most people generally see the greatest benefits at a safer level of intensity and

if you're just getting started with an exercise program, aim for a moderate pace. (if health problems or disabilities make moderate activity impossible, simply do as much as you can.) As you build up, try a mix of moderate and vigorous activities to help build endurance. As you work out more often, you'll notice gains as exercises become easier. Whenever an activity becomes easy, boost the length of your workout or your intensity again.¹⁴⁸

Christians with no active lifestyle and no exercise, must start somewhere, they must start slow and increase only when the body is acclimated to the level of exercise, so that they do not shock their body and cause injury. For people at any state of exercise, they should work to improve their state and increase workouts when their body is able to handle it. Staying within a moderate level of exercise is optimal for most people, because “if you're not fit, [you must] work up to vigorous activities slowly. Higher-intensity activities raise your chances for muscle or joint injury and very slightly increase the odds of developing a serious heart problem.”¹⁴⁹ This is maintained, because an injury from working out too much will prevent the Christian from being able to reach their full potential, thus hindering God's Kingdom.

A healthy diet is another requirement for the basic level of fitness that Christians should practice, because of the massive role that food plays on the body and mind, and therefore,

¹⁴⁸ Minter-Jordan, Myechia, MD, MBA; Irene S. Davis, PhD, PT, FAPTA, FACSM, FASB; and Zolt Arany, MD, PhD. “Healthy Mind, Healthy Body: Benefits of Exercise.” The Harvard Medical School. Harvard Health Publications, March 13, 2014.
https://hms.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/assets/Sites/Longwood_Seminars/Exercise3.14.pdf.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

indirectly, on the Kingdom of God. Unlike exercise, the benefits versus the intensity of the healthy diet graph does not top out, but it continues to increase exponentially. This means that there are no dangers of eating super healthy diets like there are for overworking muscles, therefore, there should be no limit to the healthy diet. Every Christian at each level of health should work towards a healthier diet, because the healthier the diet, the less of a block on the Kingdom of God. This means that those who currently have an extremely unhealthy diet should start with: limiting the total amount of food they consume, implementing healthy foods, decreasing the amount of fast food consumed, and begin decreasing the amount of unhealthy food consumed. Someone who already employs a moderately healthy diet still has room for improvement and should move towards a more healthy diet. Take for example someone who has eliminated all fast food from their diet, eats one serving of vegetables and fruit per day, but still enjoys eating certain sugary foods for desert and sometimes as a snack. This person's case may fall under the category of a basic to moderate level of healthiness in the diet, but they should constantly seek improvement. This means continuing to stay away from fast food, and maybe cutting the amount of sugar intake in half and increasing the number of servings of fruit and vegetables to make up for it. The evolution of the healthy diet should be a slow progression where the Christian must work their way up to a completely healthy diet, meaning that the Christian is always improving because the Kingdom of God depends on it.

The normal Christian's daily life demands a basic healthy diet, but God calls each Christian to different ministries which require different levels of health. Sometimes God calls a Christian to go outside of their normal life and serve on a specific mission trip in the city next to theirs, another part of the country, or across the entire globe. This mission normally requires an

improved diet and level of exercise, because more work is being done on the trip than in regular life. A local mission may include helping nonprofit organizations or passing out food to the homeless, which requires the Christian to be able to stand on their feet for long periods of time or be able to lift heavy objects. If the Christian has planned their service in advance, then they can begin directing their diet towards foods that provide more energy that lasts longer and increase exercise in the legs and certain parts of the upper body to work on. If a Christian feels called to a mission outside of the state they live in, they may be helping with disaster clean up. This requires strength to lift extremely heavy things, endurance to continue working, and focus and awareness. This requires an even stricter training regiment so that they will be equipped and ready to serve. Proper training is most useful when it comes to missions in different countries, where climate, air quality, elevation, food quality, and workload are completely foreign to the individual. Take for example Howard Gee, a 63 year old man who has followed his call to missions in India two times and Nepal and Honduras once. Each time before he goes he has a strict training regiment of walking, running, cutting unhealthy foods out of his diet, and acclimating himself to the temperature that he will be experiencing; which is often extreme heat. He prepares his body and mind reading scripture and meditating on it so that he understands what God wants him to say and do while he is there witnessing to lost people. He understands that at his age his physical fitness is beginning to deteriorate and that he must train, he does all this so that his health problems and level of fitness will not get in the way of his ministry, allowing him to continually spread God to as many people as possible with the best message he can possibly communicate. For the young and fit Dillon Noltensmeyer, an eighteen year old who felt called to spread God's word in the foothills of the Himalayas, preparation and fitness

was extreme. His trip was a month long backpacking trip through the foothills of the Himalayas where they camped and hiked each day into remote villages that have not even been reached by the word of God. This trip demanded everything from him physically, mentally, and emotionally; as he felt called to serve the lost in Nepal. Dillon was already in a highly conditioned state of fitness, but his calling still required extreme training, including running countless miles and eating extremely healthy foods. This trip was demanding, and if he was not in peak physical shape, he would not have won so many lives for Christ, instead, he would have slowed down the entire group. When called to missions outside of regular interactions, Christians must increase the intensity of the healthy habits that they should already be practicing. This does not mean that Christians do not need to exercise or eat healthy if they do not feel called to a mission field broader than daily interactions, for the section above shows that a basic level of health must be maintained for every Christian; however when a Christian does feel called, they must take every action to be ready and prepared physically and mentally so that they do not hinder God's work through them.

Now it must be addressed that a limit on the healthy lifestyle does exist, based on the proper mindset and devotion. A Christian crosses the line when their healthy lifestyle begins to consume them, this means that they devote all their time and energy towards reaching peak performance. The Christian loses sight of God's call for their lives when they let their fitness consume them, always in the gym trying to reach a certain body fat percentage and counting their calorie intake and number of macronutrients and micronutrients that they consume. The Christian loses sight of their main goal of serving and they lose their focus on God when they become consumed by themselves and how they look. Fitness should not get in the way of the

Christian's mission to spread God's word, it is supposed to improve their mission not hamper it; if it takes up the time and brain activity of the Christian instead of service, then fitness has taken priority over God and His Kingdom and must be reduced. The Christian focus must always be on God and centered around their ministry. The physical and mental fitness of the Christian is meant to enhance their ministry rather than get in the way, this means that it should not take up all of the Christian's thoughts and actions. The Christian's ministry is the central goal to which health should be based off of, and not the other way around.

Anticipated Objections

Can Christian's not have fun? Can they not enjoy pleasurable foods?

Previously, it was discussed that a healthy diet should always be improving, as healthy foods are increased and unhealthy ones decreased. This change from unhealthy to healthy may be gradual or instant depending on the preference of the person, but as long as the Christian is moving towards a healthier diet, then they are increasing their capacity to do more for God's Kingdom. A gradual shift may still include pleasurable or unhealthy foods, but the point is to begin reducing them and eventually eliminate them from the diet all together. By doing so, the Christian may find that certain healthy foods are pleasurable and replace their unhealthy favorites with healthy options. It may take only a few days to eliminate all deserts, fast foods, and any food that is unhealthy but pleasurable; or it may take many years, or the cravings may never be fully overcome. The point is to work on it, Christian's are not called to have the perfect diet, they are called to a ministry that they devote everything to, this is not an easy calling and it does not mean that if a Christian succumbs to one piece of cake it is grounds for condemnation. It is not a crime for a Christian to occasionally eat small portions of unhealthy foods while still maintaining the overall general good health, as long as they are working to improve their diet they should never go backwards and become unhealthier. It is expected that Christian's may mess up on their journey to becoming healthier, however it becomes wrong when they indulge in pleasurable foods at the expense of the Kingdom. When the Christian does not make an effort to become healthier or finds it "too hard" to give up their old ways; they are being completely selfish, they are essentially saying that their pleasure is more important than God's Kingdom. An unhealthy lifestyle inhibits God's Kingdom, and if this is neglected or ignored then the

Christian is putting their pleasure at the forefront of their lives and allowing their ministry to slip away. Christian's can have fun, but when it comes to their health they must be serious because of the major implications it has on their ministry. So when the question arises "can Christians not have fun?," the answer is they can have fun, but in the context of the diet, Christians should be serious and find healthy foods that they find pleasurable or "fun" if possible. When the Christian puts aside his pleasures from unhealthy food, then his ministry will increase which will be the greatest reward and pleasure of all.

What about unhealthy meals during celebrations?

The holiday season rolls around and that is when true feasting begins on all types of meats, casseroles, greasy dishes, and extravagant desserts. In a setting like this it is ok to feast and eat all kinds of unhealthy foods right? Well not exactly, most people go into Thanksgiving feeling like they must fill up their plate and eat everything that is being served, but this is not true. It is possible to leave the table not stuffed full of food like the stuffed turkey that nobody likes but is traditionally made or bought every year. In fact, holidays are no excuse to drop dietary restrictions, it is actually a time when they might be the most useful. Holidays are perfect opportunities for Christians, because they are normally spent with extended family and friends in a close personal setting which is perfect for witnessing to them. During the holidays, Christians must be at the top of their game and this means they must be eating healthy. They must avoid the super greasy, high in fat and sodium, and sugary foods; focusing on vegetable based foods and fruit can be extremely beneficial. The same goes for celebration like birthday parties or wedding banquets, healthy options should be sought and if there are none available, then limiting

the quantity of food consumed is a good habit. Celebrations are no excuse for Christians to ignore their health and thus limit God's Kingdom. The exposure that Christians have to extended family and friends in a close setting during celebrations and holidays offers a perfect opportunity to witness to those nonbelievers, therefore dietary restrictions should not be dropped, but in some cases they may be increased. Overall, a single day of feasting out of a month of healthy mindful consumption will not have a major impact on the total fitness and health of a Christian. During these celebrations, the Christian has a great opportunity to minister to their family and friends, but it is not required of them to be strict and not enjoy their food. Instead, they should make sure that they are maintaining a general level of health that would not be thrown off by these celebrations, which is detailed in the answer to the objection: *Is having an unhealthy lifestyle a sin?*

Are old people or physically disabled people limiting God's Kingdom if they cannot exercise?

This objection is of minor importance, but it must be addressed in case somebody believes they have found fault in the argument presented. Each person is quite unique in the way that they function which may be affected by certain handicaps and aging. This uniqueness corresponds with their unique role in the Kingdom of God, some are called to long term missions and some are called to stay locally. God will not call or require somebody to do something that He does not give them the ability to do. Instead, He will call them to a mission that they can do that may not require physical exercise, but more mental and spiritual acuity. Somebody who is handicapped or elderly is not restricting the Kingdom of God, because God would not call

somebody to a role that requires more than they can give. This does not mean their role will be easy to accomplish, just that it will not be impossible.

Isn't this going a little overboard or extreme? You are focusing too hard on the body and not enough on reading scripture and witnessing to others.

As long as human health does not become an obsession, measures to improve the fitness of the body and mind is not overboard or extreme. As discussed previously, going from an inactive lifestyle with a poor diet to an active lifestyle with a healthy diet has major implications including improvements in the quality and length of life. So if somebody were to ignore the fitness of their body and mind and place all focus on studying the Bible and witnessing to others; the quality of their witness, the length of their ministry, and their ability to witness will be a lot less than if they were to devote a portion of their time to maintaining a healthy lifestyle. A healthy lifestyle does take some time that could be spent towards the Christian ministry, but the healthy lifestyle makes up for the loss of time because the Christian ministry is greater and encompasses more within the time. Therefore, it is not overboard or extreme to exercise a healthy lifestyle, as long as there exists a period that is devoted to studying scripture and spiritual preparation for the Christian's ministry.

Is having an unhealthy lifestyle a sin?

This topic was not explored in depth, because the main question this thesis focused on was whether or not an unhealthy lifestyle was detrimental to the building of the Kingdom of God, however this question must be answered. It must be emphasized that an unhealthy lifestyle

is composed of many different decisions. These decisions are what combine to create an unhealthy lifestyle, not one single action or decision defines a lifestyle as unhealthy. In regards to the consumption of food, there must be this basic level of healthiness established that runs as a current through every action and decision the Christian should make. With this, there is leniency, because one unhealthy action like eating a piece of cake, may not cause a Christian to be unhealthy as long as they maintain a general level of health. This level can be described by a dietician, and what they would define as healthy. A dietician is a professional in the nutrition field and should be capable of determining a person's level of health and whether or not they are maintaining an overall healthy diet. Same with exercise, a doctor or trainer would be a good judge of whether or not a person is maintaining a healthy level of activity. A Christian may enjoy life and is not required to remove all enjoyment from their food and exercise, but they should maintain and improve their health.

-Conclusion-

The unhealthy habits that are common in most of the human population today are counterproductive to the Christian's role as a missionary within God's Kingdom. Neglecting exercise and consuming unhealthy foods exposes the body to a greater risk of illness, a higher chance of contracting cancer and other diseases, a decrease in cognitive ability and rapid cognitive decay, lower morale and increased decline in bodily function, greater fatigue and poor muscular efficiency, a lower level of fitness and endurance, a greater risk of injury, and many other health issues. Each of these health concerns are roadblocks in the Christian's ministry; because they hinder their progress, get in the way, restrict their potential, and take up valuable time and money.

On the other hand, a healthy diet that compliments the Christian ministry is valuable and brings incredible benefits. In order for a Christian to fully serve God, he must be willing to devote everything to Him. Everything does not just mean time, money, and resources; it includes the entire body and its health. The Israelites bound themselves by every law they could create from the ten commandments in hopes that they would bring upon themselves the Kingdom of God, the Apostles of Jesus risked their lives and suffered great persecution for the Kingdom of God; yet modern day Christians are unwilling to give up some of their time to workout and give up some of their pleasure and ease to eat healthy as they continue to hinder the Kingdom of God. One of the most selfish things a Christian can do is place their enjoyment and luxury over the salvation of nonbelievers. Many lives can be saved, many churches formed, and many movements started when Christians decide to put the loaded cheeseburger down and pick up the dumbbell.

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