



**METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH**

MINISTRY OF BIBLICAL STUDIES Handout

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# Honoring God Through Healthy Living



**Welcome to the Metropolitan Community Church**  
**Ministry of Biblical Study Classes**  
February 7, 2024

**"Can You Envision OPEN DOORS in Your Life?:  
Honoring God Through Healthy Living"**

"Health and Wellness: God is opening a door to improved health and vitality in your body. Your physical and emotional well-being will be restored giving you the strength to pursue your dreams and accomplishments in this season."

Today, we're diving into a topic that is central to our lives – health, both physical and spiritual. Our purpose is not only to address the importance of healthy living but also to explore why it's crucial from a Christian perspective.

Have you ever considered your body as a sacred temple? And not just any temple, but a temple of the Holy Spirit. Sounds a little far-fetched? Well, it isn't.

In the Bible, Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 6:19-20,

"Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies."

These verses serve as the foundation for our discussion.

It's often easy to forget that our bodies are not truly ours. From the food we consume to the activities we participate in, we sometimes neglect the physical aspect of our beings. However, according to Paul, our bodies are more than just vessels for our souls. They are sanctuaries of the Holy Spirit and as such, we have a divine responsibility to maintain and care for them.

The idea of our bodies being temples of the Holy Spirit implies that God Himself dwells within us. This realization can be both inspiring and humbling. It inspires us to strive for purity, holiness and health because we house the Spirit of God. At the same time, it humbles us because it reminds us of the price paid for our bodies – the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ on the cross.

When we view our bodies through this lens, it becomes clear that taking care of our physical health isn't just about looking good or living longer. It's an act of worship. It's a way of honoring God, showing gratitude for the life He has given us and acknowledging the Holy Spirit within us.

When we eat healthily, exercise regularly, get sufficient sleep and avoid harmful behaviors, we are maintaining the temple that God has entrusted to us. We are showing respect for His creation and His sacrifice.

The key to understanding this biblical mandate lies not in guilt, but in love. Our loving God has granted us these beautiful, complex bodies to navigate our earthly existence. When we care for them, it's not out of fear of divine retribution but out of love for the One who created us.

Join me as we embark on this journey towards better physical health, not only for the sake of longevity or vanity but for the sake of honoring the One who lives within us.

Let's strive together to make our bodies, these temples of the Holy Spirit, places of health, vitality and divine worship.

## **1 - Reflect God's Image**

How marvelous and beautiful is God's creation! There's an uniqueness and intricacy in all of His works, but humanity holds a distinctive place in creation. We're told in Genesis 1:27:

"So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them."

This divine echo resounds in every fiber of our being, calling us to reflect God's image in everything we do, including how we care for our bodies.

Reflecting God's image isn't about physical resemblance—God is Spirit (John 4:24)—but rather our capacity to express His character and attributes. As image-bearers, we reflect God's creativity, wisdom, love and many other attributes. However, this reflection isn't merely an abstract or spiritual concept; it extends to our physical bodies, which are a fundamental part of who we are.

What does it mean to reflect God's image in terms of our physical health and appearance? It means to respect and care for our bodies as precious gifts from God, recognizing that through them, we mirror His divine handiwork. Our bodies are the vessels through which we love, serve and communicate and they should, therefore, be kept healthy and well.

### **Appreciate our bodies in their diversity.**

Just as no two faces are the same, our bodies, with their various shapes, sizes and colors, reflect the infinite creativity of God. To reflect God's image isn't to strive for an artificial standard of beauty set by society, but to celebrate and care for our bodies as they are, unique and specially crafted by God Himself.

When we're in good health, we are better equipped to carry out God's work and fulfill our divine purpose on earth. Health is a resource for everyday life and being in good health enables us to serve God and others wholeheartedly and energetically. It's harder to reflect God's love, kindness and generosity to the world when we are physically unwell.

## **2 - Stewardship of God's Creation**

When we think of stewardship, we often picture the care of natural resources, our communities and even our time and talents. Rarely, though, do we consider that the concept of stewardship extends to our bodies as well. But let's pause and remember, our bodies are magnificent works of divine craftsmanship.



Psalms 139:14 "...I am fearfully and wonderfully made..."

As part of God's creation, they are entrusted to us to be cared for and cherished.

Honoring God through healthy living may seem like an abstract idea, but it is profoundly practical and deeply spiritual.

**Recognizing that our bodies are gifts from God we are responsible for.**

Honoring God through healthy living means making conscious choices that reflect our awareness of this divine stewardship. It's about choosing a salad over fast food, going for a walk instead of watching TV, getting adequate sleep and rejecting habits that could harm our health. These daily decisions might seem small, but they accumulate over time, profoundly impacting our health and well-being.

Stewardship of our bodies is not about avoiding disease or aiming for longevity. It is fundamentally about reverence for our Creator. Every time we choose to eat healthily, to exercise, to rest, we are essentially saying, "Thank you, God, for this incredible body You have given me. I want to honor You by taking the best care of it that I can."

As believers, we are called to be stewards in every aspect of our lives, reflecting God's love and wisdom in how we manage His gifts. This call to stewardship should inspire us to honor God through healthy living. We can start this journey of stewardship today by treating our bodies with the love and respect they deserve, recognizing them as divine creations to be nurtured and preserved.

As we carry on with our lives, let's embrace the calling to be stewards of God's creation. Let's strive to honor God through healthy living, caring for our bodies with the same dedication and reverence we give to the world around us. In doing so, we will not only reap the benefits of good health but also draw closer to God, growing in gratitude and reverence for His incredible creation.

### 3 - Promotion of Self-discipline

Here we venture into a territory that requires both perseverance and grace: the practice of self-discipline in maintaining our health. This aspect is more than just a physical challenge; it's a spiritual journey, a way of honoring God through healthy living, by exhibiting self-control in our eating habits and committing to regular exercise.

The Bible frequently talks about the virtue of self-discipline. Paul uses the metaphor of a race to illustrate our spiritual journey. He emphasizes the importance of discipline.

1 Corinthians 9:24-25

Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever.

Just as athletes discipline themselves for the sake of a perishable crown, we are called to exercise self-discipline in our lives for the sake of an imperishable one.

**Living a healthy life requires self-discipline.**

Let's make intentional choices every day, such as opting for a nourishing meal over an unhealthy one or setting aside time for physical exercise, even when we'd rather do something else. But it's essential to remember that we are not in this race alone. We have the Holy Spirit within us, providing strength when we feel weak and guiding us towards choices that honor God.

Honoring God through healthy living isn't just about the food we eat or the exercise we get. It's about nurturing a disciplined spirit that aligns our physical practices with our spiritual beliefs. It's about acknowledging that our bodies are vessels of the Holy Spirit and treating them accordingly. This

commitment to self-discipline in our physical lives often translates into increased discipline in other areas as well, including our prayer life, Bible study and service to others.

The discipline we develop through healthy eating and regular exercise can significantly impact our spiritual growth. Self-discipline helps us grow in perseverance and resilience, qualities essential for our spiritual journey. As we learn to say no to unhealthy foods or push ourselves to exercise when we don't feel like it, we also learn how to resist temptation, persevere through challenges and remain focused on our spiritual goals.

When we see the results of our discipline in improved health and vitality, we're encouraged to be disciplined in our spiritual lives too, expecting that the same God who helps us maintain physical health will help us grow spiritually.

Honoring God through healthy living is a journey of grace. It's about inviting God into our efforts, relying on His strength when ours falls short and trusting that He is working in us to make us more like Him. So, as we strive for self-discipline in our physical lives, let's also seek to grow in spiritual discipline, allowing our physical practices to reflect and enhance our spiritual walk. And remember, just as with our spiritual journey, it's not about perfection, but about direction. Every step taken in self-discipline is a step closer to honoring God in all aspects of our lives.

#### **4 - Serve Others with Vitality and Strength**

Our physical health plays an instrumental role in how effectively we serve others. When we are healthy, we are full of vitality, equipped with the strength and energy needed to extend a helping hand, to be a shoulder to lean on, to step up when the need arises. And as Christians, service to others isn't just a nice thing to do, it's a fundamental call from Christ Himself, who spent His life in service to humanity.

In the Gospels, we read countless examples of Jesus' tireless service. He healed the sick, fed the hungry and offered comfort to the broken-hearted. Jesus moved among people with a vitality that drew crowds, transforming lives with His love and compassion. His physical stamina enabled Him to minister effectively to people's spiritual needs.

Take a moment to reflect on Jesus' disciples, too. These men were fishermen, tax collectors - individuals accustomed to physical labor. When they followed Jesus, their lifestyles changed, but they needed their health and strength as much as ever. They traveled far and wide, faced countless trials and built the foundations of the Church we are part of today. Their physical health was an essential tool in the service of others and the spread of the Gospel.

Of course, we're not all called to travel extensively or perform miraculous healings. But we are all called to serve, to show God's love to others in practical, tangible ways. It might be volunteering in your local community, offering help to a struggling neighbor or being a source of support for a friend in need. When we are healthy, we can do these things with more energy and endurance.

Maintaining our physical health allows us to answer Christ's call to service more effectively as it gives us strength to be active in our communities, energy to give of ourselves and the resilience to keep going when things get tough

As we strive to serve others in our daily lives, let's remember to take care of our health, too. Let's eat nutritious food, engage in regular physical activity and get the rest we need.

**Caring for our bodies is not only an act of self-care, it's a commitment to the call of service.**

The healthier we are, the more equipped we are to serve others with the vitality and strength that echoes the ministry of Jesus and His disciples.



In the end, our health is a gift from God, so that we can also be a blessing to others. Let's honor this gift by using our vitality and strength in the service of those around us. In doing so, we are living out our faith, following in the footsteps of Jesus and His disciples and transforming our corner of the world with God's love.

## **5 - Witness to Non-believers**

In our society today, health and wellness are at the forefront of many discussions. People are increasingly conscious about their lifestyle choices, seeking balance and wellness. And here lies an opportunity for us, as Christians. When we prioritize our physical wellness, it serves as a living testimony of our faith and God's work in our lives. It can pique curiosity, spark conversations and allow us to share the hope we have in Jesus.

Think about it: Physical wellness isn't just about looking good or feeling good. It's a reflection of the respect and stewardship we have for the bodies God has gifted us. And when others see us making conscious choices for our health, they often want to understand the 'why' behind it. This opens a beautiful pathway to share our faith.

As we prioritize our health, our bodies that benefit but it's also our spiritual mission. When our lives reflect balance, discipline and respect for our bodies, it catches the attention of those around us, including non-believers. And this often leads to deeper, more meaningful conversations about our faith.

Let's remember that our physical wellness is a means to honor God, serve others and share our faith.

When non-believers see the joy, peace and strength we carry, it can lead them to wonder about the source of our vitality

And in that wondering, there lies an opportunity for us to point them towards the eternal wellspring of life, our Lord Jesus Christ. So, let's continue on this journey of physical wellness for ourselves, and more importantly, the many lives we might touch along the way.

