

CHANGE YOUR LIFE. CHANGE YOUR WORLD.

ACTIVATED

Vol 12 • Issue 3

QUALITY OF LIFE

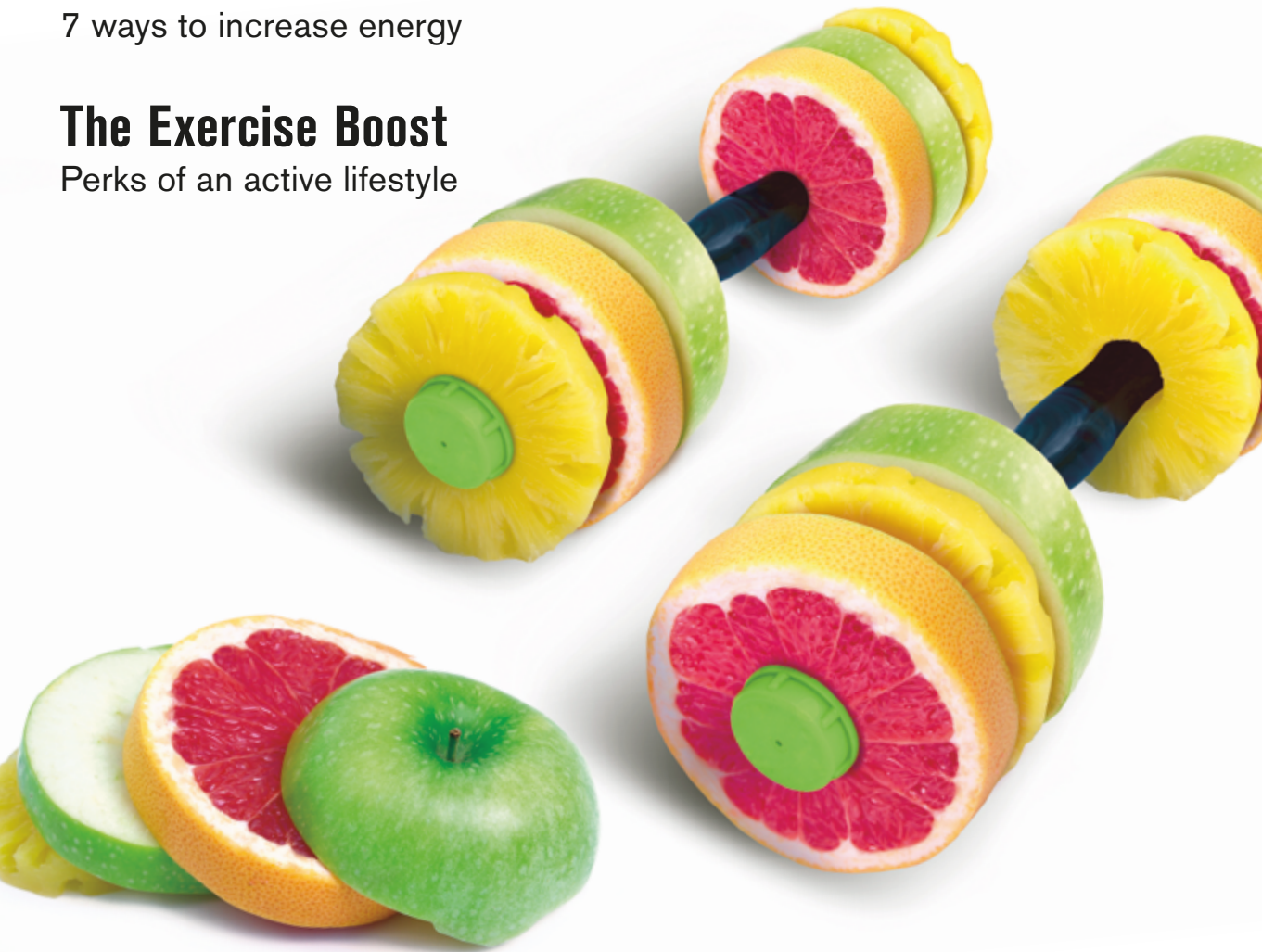
Invest to gain

Worn Out?

7 ways to increase energy

The Exercise Boost

Perks of an active lifestyle





PERSONALLY SPEAKING

Once there was a rich man who had two sons whom he loved dearly and showered with good things. When his sons were grown, he gave them the deeds to houses he had put in their names the day they were born. Besides being amazingly well designed and constructed, the

two houses had another thing in common: they needed regular upkeep. One son kept on top of repairs and even made a few improvements, but the other son let his house go to rack and ruin. Which do you think could expect more good things from his father?—Yes, the one who showed gratitude by taking care of his gift.

That's not one of the parables Jesus told, but I think it could have been. (He would have told it better, of course.) Or maybe it would have gone like this:

Once there was a rich man who gave each of his two sons a house. One son took good care of his house, and the other didn't. And the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on the houses. The house that had been cared for made it through the storm, but the house that had been neglected collapsed.

Then I think Jesus would have explained the parable like this:

The rich man is our heavenly Father, we are His sons (and daughters), and the houses are our bodies. They are amazing—"fearfully and wonderfully made,"¹ as the Bible puts it—but they require upkeep, especially if they're going to withstand the storms of life. One way we can show God how grateful we are for our bodies is by taking care of them. When we do, we win in two ways: We are better prepared for life's troubles, and we can better enjoy all of the other good things our Father showers on us.

Keith Phillips
For *Activated*

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1. Psalm 139:14

Rose's Curly Toes

BY ABI F. MAY

MY FRIEND ROSE HAS BEEN GOING THROUGH A DIFFICULT TIME. Her knees and toes are swollen and inflamed, and sharp pains in her legs keep her awake at night. She has had these problems off and on since she was a teenager, but it was only recently that a series of tests at a rheumatology clinic revealed that she suffers from a particularly debilitating type of inflammatory arthritis. Rose is normally an energetic person, living a busy and full life. Naturally she wondered why she was afflicted with this incurable disease, so she did some research.

When we met up over coffee, I was rather mystified by her initial exclamation. “It’s all due to my curly toes.” Then she told me what her research had yielded. Her condition was primarily

genetic. Like the unusually curly toes that ran in her family, Rose had inherited a susceptibility to this disease. Something environmental—probably an infection—had triggered her first episode.

“Doesn’t that make you feel down?” I asked.

“I’ll live with it,” she replied. “Just because my toes are curly doesn’t mean I have to curl up in a corner. I may have a predisposition to this disease, but I don’t have to let it ruin my life. God has been good to me!”

X-rays had revealed that despite the many years she had been battling arthritis, she had minimal damage in her joints, which surprised the doctors. No doubt her active lifestyle, determination to stay mobile, and positive outlook had all contributed to her being in relatively good shape.

After Rose had hobbled off with a mix of grins and grimaces,

I thought about this long and hard. It’s true we can’t choose our genetic makeup, and not all of the physical traits we inherit are positive, but we *can* choose what we do with what we are given. The Bible describes our body as the temple for our spirits, and admonishes us to take care of it.¹ My temple may be imperfect; like Rose, I have flaws that I have inherited and other conditions I have acquired. However, none of that changes my duty to “take care of my temple” by keeping up good living habits. By giving God my cooperation, He can help me make the best of things.

Enough sitting at this keyboard! The sunshine is beckoning me outside.

ABI F. MAY IS A MEMBER OF THE FAMILY INTERNATIONAL AND AN ACTIVATED STAFF WRITER. ■

1. 1 Corinthians 3:16–17



BY MARIA FONTAINE

Quality of



IF YOU WANT TO ENJOY A GOOD QUALITY OF LIFE IN YEARS TO COME, YOU HAVE TO INVEST IN YOUR HEALTH TODAY. Sickness and accidents are a part of life, and sometimes you don't have much control over what you come in contact with or what happens to you. On the other hand, how your body reacts initially to these things and how quickly it recovers or heals is something that you do have some control over, because your body's resistance and resilience are in great part the result of choices you make every day in caring for your health—what you eat, how you exercise, how you manage stress, your sleep and recreation habits, and other lifestyle choices.

There are many practical points that can be beneficial when trying to determine how to stay in good health or get back to good health if you're not, but the best advice you will ever get will come from God. No one understands your body and its needs as He does, so the smartest thing you can do is ask Him to show you what changes you need to make in order to be in peak health.¹

God can even use health problems to better your quality of life in the long run, believe it or not. No one enjoys being sick, but if you will make an extra effort to keep Him as your ever-close consultant and companion during such times, your relationship with Him will deepen. And if you ask Him to teach you something or bring about some other good through those physical problems, He will. You will also find that you have greater faith, peace of mind, and the comfort of knowing that He is in control—all of which will make those times of difficulty easier, and the wisdom gained will stick with you once you're better.

The next time you're faced with a storm of health problems, remember that every dark cloud has a silver lining and that sunshine will break through in God's time, transforming even the blackest skies. The beauties of spirit that come through such trying times are grander than the rainbow after the storm and more valuable than any "pot of gold" at the rainbow's end. It doesn't matter what health problem you experience, how minor or how debilitating. Whatever it is, God can use it in your life for good.

Do what you can to live a healthy lifestyle. Give your body the good things it needs, and avoid toxins, stress, and other things that weaken it. Also do what you can to strengthen your spirit by living close to God, reading and absorbing God's Word, and avoiding things that disturb, weaken, and drain you spiritually. Do what you can, and be assured that God will do what you can't do. You're His forever, and He loves you more than words can say!

1. Proverbs 3:5–6; Jeremiah 33:3

Life

Natural laws vs. miracles

While God operates in the realm of the miraculous and can do whatever He deems necessary to fulfill His will, we also need to accept the fact that most of the time God chooses to work within the natural order that He has set up. That means that you are responsible to do what you can to care for your body by following God's laws for healthy living—eating properly, exercising appropriately and consistently, getting enough sleep, minimizing stress, being attentive to hygiene, taking precautions to prevent accidents, etc.—and when you do get sick or have an accident, taking practical steps to help your body heal. God will rarely override His natural laws to do something for you that you could have done for yourself. When it comes to health, doing your part includes taking good care of your body and spirit through a healthy diet and appropriate exercise, sufficient physical and spiritual rest, and getting medical help when necessary.

Mental and emotional well-being

The ways in which our body's physiology interacts with our mental and emotional behavior is a vast subject. There are many causes of mental illness, ranging from past experiences and hurts that one has not come to grips

with, to physical imbalances that affect one's reasoning and emotions, to feelings of extreme fear or guilt or negativity or depression, or addictions, or intense physical pain, or stress, or even simply a lack of sleep over a period of time. How an individual is affected by those causes and for how long also vary greatly, depending on how that person deals with them and whether or not the cause can be eliminated.

More and more medical professionals are recognizing the benefit of faith in overcoming mental and emotional problems, especially those brought on by trauma. Patients who turn to God for comfort and help tend to recover more quickly.

Stress

Stress undermines health, in part by weakening your nervous system and in part by undermining whatever steps you are taking to improve your health. Reducing stress often involves reassessing your priorities and lifestyle choices. What do you need to start doing differently in order to bring your life into better balance? What will it cost you? What is your health worth?

Healing takes time

Be leery of products, methods, and treatments that claim to give instant results. Most systems in the body take time to regulate.



While a certain pharmaceutical product, dietary supplement, or exercise gadget might relieve one symptom or help you overcome one problem, it may have side effects that could cause worse damage. Others are simply a waste of time and money.

As you consider the options for healing and health, it's good to remember that healing of all kinds—physical, mental, spiritual, emotional—usually takes time. That's the way God designed it. While He might sometimes choose to restore us to full health miraculously and speedily, for the most part it takes time for our bodies and spirits to be renewed or repaired. This is the way He's made our bodies and how they function. It's also one of the ways in which He deepens our spirit and perspective on life, and helps us to learn lessons and gain valuable experience and maturity.

Healing just takes time. It's a process. If something is out of balance in your body, work on getting it back in balance through healthy living choices, through steady improvement, through incremental changes. Give your body time to heal from the inside out, to be strengthened, and to repair itself. And during that time, let Jesus work in your spirit and bring about beautiful and worthwhile changes and results that will stick with you for a lifetime. "Let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing."² ■

2. James 1:4

3. Hebrews 13:5



A PRAYER FOR THE DAY

Jesus, when I think about Your promise to never leave or forsake me,³ a warm feeling wells up within me. Nothing can compare to this promise. You are the only one who can make such a guarantee. I could lose everything else that is dear to me—my health, wealth, and loved ones—but I will never lose You. You remain faithful. You stick closer than skin, nearer than my shadow. You are the great constant in life. Thank You for that!

Healthy eating

The Power of Two

BY LEANNA SILVER

I WOKE UP FEELING EXHAUSTED, EVEN THOUGH I'D JUST SLEPT FOR OVER AN HOUR IN THE MIDDLE OF THE DAY—SOMETHING I RARELY DO.

What's wrong with me? I wondered. *Am I getting sick?* I checked my temperature. That wasn't it.

I had work to do, but couldn't focus. Then it came to me, "Do a diet recall."

It was easy to remember what I'd eaten that day—half a piece of toast and a cup of tea in the morning. I glanced at my watch. It was 4 PM.

I had been busy, I told myself. How was I supposed to fit in eating on top of everything else I had to do?

I'm one of those "lucky" people with a fast metabolism. It's always been harder for me to gain weight than to lose it. I needed to eat frequently to keep up my energy and weight, but rarely ate very much at one time. And if a meal didn't suit my taste buds or I was going through an emotional ordeal, I would skip it altogether. My "normal" small meals and snacks gradually tapered off until I was eating almost nothing.

As a result, my energy level was always low, I got sick frequently, and had a hard time recovering. I was

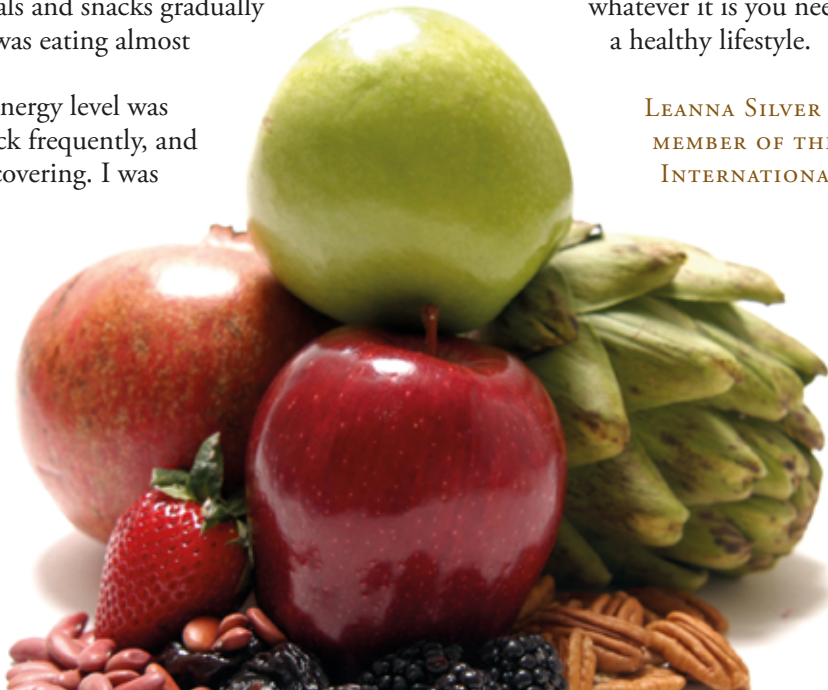
finding it harder and harder to exercise, or even to get up in the morning. I had a problem, and it was getting worse.

The solution was obvious—I needed to eat better—but I was bound by bad habits. I prayed about the situation, and God showed me to ask for help from a friend.

At first, I was irritated by the "intrusive" phone calls and text messages from the friend that I had taken into my confidence. I had to keep telling myself that she was only concerned and that I needed her to check on me. I grew to appreciate hearing from her frequently, inquiring what I'd eaten that day.

Whether or not you have a friend or family member to help you, there is someone who is always there, who knows your body better than you do, and who will give you ideas and tips that will help. Whether it's a matter of losing weight, gaining weight, exercising more, or simply eating better, God will help you find and do whatever it is you need to do to live a healthy lifestyle.

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WORN OUT?

7 Ways to Increase Energy

BY JESSIE RICHARDS

1. Eat breakfast.

Studies show that people who eat breakfast are more likely to report being in a good mood and having plenty of energy throughout the day than those who don't.

Researchers at Cardiff University also found that eating a bowl of nutrition-rich breakfast cereal every morning leads to lower levels of the stress hormone cortisol.

As always, avoid health-zapping, highly processed food, which includes most boxed cereals.

2. Drink water.

Sometimes even slight dehydration can leave you feeling tired and lethargic. Blood and other bodily fluids are mostly water. Even mild dehydration can cause blood to thicken, forcing the heart to pump harder to carry blood to cells and organs, resulting in fatigue.

The solution is simple: a tall glass of water. In addition to drinking more water, consume foods that are high in water content, such as carrots, watermelons, and oranges, and other juicy fruits and vegetables.



3. Walk around the block.

It may seem that physical activity when you feel tired is likely to make you even more tired, but the opposite is true. Moderate physical activity such as walking increases energy.

In experiments conducted at California State University, not only did a brisk 10-minute walk increase energy, but the effects lasted up to two hours. And when daily 10-minute walks continued for three weeks, the walkers reported increased overall energy level and improved mood.

4. Eat a power snack.

A treat that combines protein, a little fat, and some fiber—like peanut butter on a whole-wheat cracker, or some unsweetened yogurt with a handful of nuts—does the trick. The carbohydrates offer a quick pick-me-up, the protein keeps your energy up, and the fat makes the energy last.

Try to eat every three to four hours. Having three smallish meals and two snacks can keep your blood sugar and energy levels stable all day long. Note the word “smallish.” Supersized meals demand more energy to digest, which can leave you feeling lethargic.

Sweet foods cause a spike in blood sugar, which gives you an initial burst of energy. But that high is followed by a rapid drop in blood sugar, which can leave you feeling wiped out. Fiber has a time-release effect on carbohydrates, so the glucose released by high-fiber foods enters

your bloodstream at a slow and steady pace—energy with staying power.

Some suggestions of fiber-filled options are a bowl of bran cereal, black beans and cheese wrapped in a multigrain tortilla, air-popped popcorn or an apple.

5. Make it a latte.

If you drink coffee, try pairing that quick caffeine boost with the sustaining power of protein by making it a latte. All that milk turns your java into a protein drink, which gives you extra energy. Also, the extra calcium is good for your bones, provided you don't negate that benefit with lots of sugar. Combine it with an ounce of almonds, and the healthy fat will really tide you over, while making you feel like you're spoiling yourself!

6. Reduce stress.

One of the biggest energy zappers is stress. Chronic stress, even at low levels, will erode your energy level. Over time you will find yourself doing less and feeling it more.

Whatever is relaxing to you will reduce tension, and that will help increase energy.

Take belly breaths. When you breathe in, your belly should round and fill like a balloon; when you exhale, your belly should deflate. Of course, remembering to practice deep breathing isn't the first thing on your mind when you're under the gun, so as a reminder, try posting a tranquil picture with the word “breathe” next to your computer

or wherever you tend to get stressed.

Let go of grudges. Nursing a grudge prompts your mind and body to react as if they're under chronic stress, resulting in an impaired immune system and exhaustion over time. On the other hand, practicing empathy and forgiveness keeps the body's stress responses in check.

7. Energize your spirit.

Life happens. Emotionally difficult situations are inevitable, but if you react wisely—prayer and positiveness help—then your brain and body will rebound, along with your vim and vigor.

Splash some water on your face or take a shower. Studies report that a little H₂O refresher can increase energy and take the edge off when you're feeling overwhelmed.

Listening to music is one of the most effective ways to counter a bad mood, decrease tension, and increase energy. Research suggests that music effectively distracts you from feeling fatigue. Play a CD of your favorite songs when you need a pick-me-up.

Do some good. A study published in the *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* found that acts of altruism can boost six areas that affect energy levels: life satisfaction, self-esteem, sense of control over life, physical health, mood, and overall happiness.

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THE HEALTH AND HAPPINESS CONNECTION

He who has health has hope and he who has hope has everything.
—*Arabian proverb*

It is health that is real wealth and not pieces of gold and silver.—*Mahatma Gandhi (1869–1948)*

Happiness is nothing more than good health and a bad memory.—*Albert Schweitzer (1875–1965)*

It is amazing how much crisper the general experience of life becomes when your body is given a chance to develop a little strength.—*Frank Duff (1889–1980)*

A healthy relationship with God contributes to better overall health by alleviating worry. “The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”¹—*David Brandt Berg (1919–1994)*

It is against God’s rules of health and happiness to work seven days a week.—*David Brandt Berg*

God wants you to be a well-balanced, well-rounded individual, physically, spiritually, mentally, and emotionally. That means not going to extremes. Use a little common sense. —*David Brandt Berg*

It tells us that mind and body are linked and that attitude has an impact on the final outcome, death.—*Toshihiko Maruta, lead researcher of a decades-long study by the Mayo Clinic in which optimistic people lived about 19% longer than pessimists*

1. Philippians 4:7

2. John 13:17

GOD'S HEALTH PLAN

BY DAVID BRANDT BERG

It’s better to stay healthy than to have to be healed. Remember, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. A fence at the top of the cliff is better than a hospital at the bottom. The best way to prevent illness is to obey God’s natural health laws: live right, eat right, work right, play right, rest right, love right, and maintain a right relationship with Him.

You cannot violate God’s health rules or abuse your body and expect to be healthy, because God made you with built-in mechanisms to make you wish you hadn’t if you do. It’s not that God enjoys punishing you or seeing you suffer. To the contrary, He made His health rules because He loves you and wants to protect you from harm. The rules are to help you be happier and get more out of life by making sure you do what you can to keep yourself healthy and whole. “If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.”²

God created you, and He knows what is best for you. Take care of God’s creation by following His commonsense rules, and He will bless you with good health. ■

God or medicine?

How do I find God's will?

Q: I SUFFER FROM A CHRONIC MEDICAL CONDITION. I ASKED GOD TO HEAL ME WITHOUT MEDICAL INTERVENTION, AND I BELIEVE HE CAN, BUT HE HASN'T YET. RECENTLY MY DOCTOR RECOMMENDED A COURSE OF TREATMENT, WHICH I'M CONSIDERING. HOW CAN I FIND WHAT'S BEST FOR ME IN THIS MATTER?

A: Whether you get better through natural healing processes, through medical treatment, or through divine intervention, all healing is a gift of God. When we hear the term “divine healing,” we generally think of healings that are beyond the reach of both nature and medicine. But God doesn't *only* work in mysterious ways. The body's regeneration systems were divinely designed, and the scientific discoveries that led to our present understanding of what our bodies need to heal, as well as how the healing process can be helped, were divinely inspired—whether those who made the discoveries recognize that fact or not. “[God] gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding. He reveals deep and secret things.”¹ “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above.”² The rub is that some scientific and medical research reaches conclusions that are erroneous and *not* God-inspired, and treatment plans based on flawed thinking often do more harm than good. This is why it's so important to make careful, prayerful, well-informed decisions regarding possible medical treatments. It's wise to get a second or even third opinion, and to study the risks and potentially harmful side effects of each option before making a decision.

God usually leaves such decisions to you. He stands ready to guide your research and weighing of options, but then He says, “According to your faith let it be to you.”³ Do you have more faith for God to work independently, or through medical professionals?

In the end, it comes down to finding where your faith stands in this situation. That's a process that involves prayerful deliberation and utmost honesty with yourself and God. It doesn't work to pretend to have faith in one course of action or another when in fact you don't.

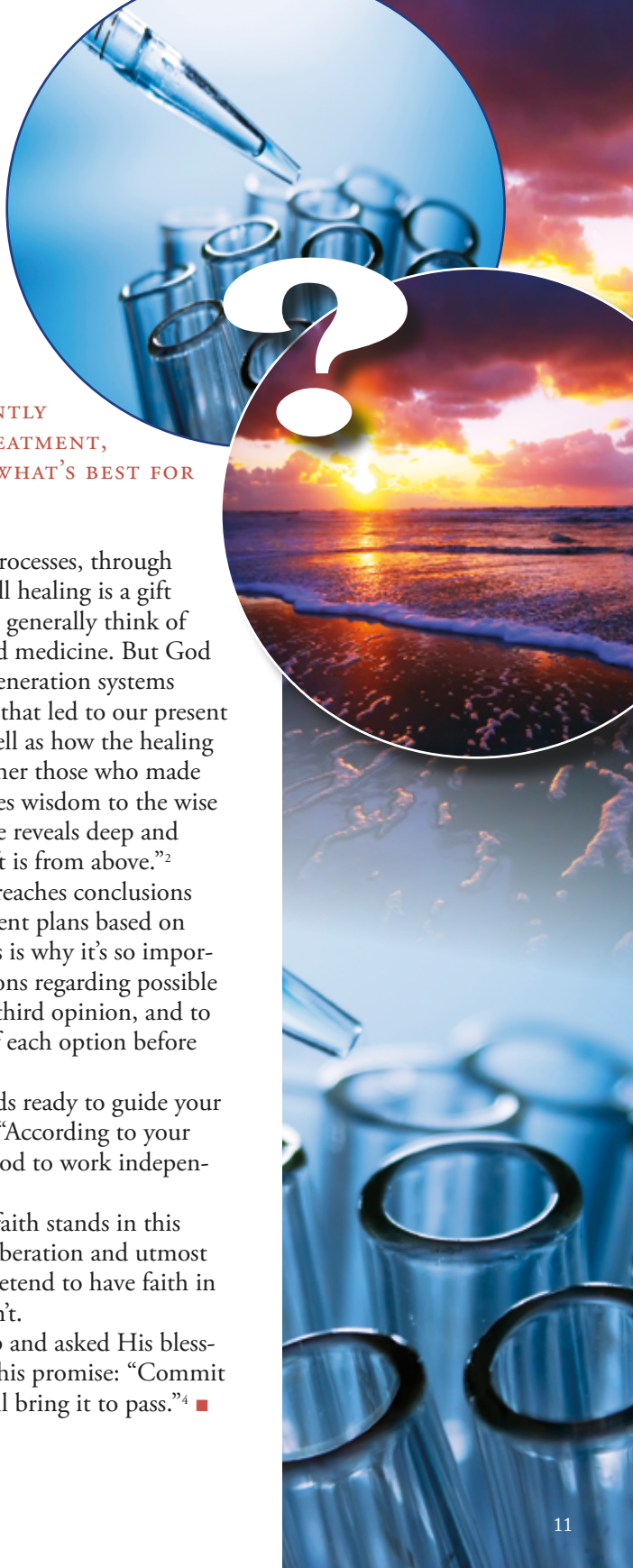
Once you have reached a decision with God's help and asked His blessing on your chosen course of action, you can claim this promise: “Commit your way to the Lord, trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass.”⁴ ■

1. Daniel 2:21–22

3. Matthew 9:29

2. James 1:17

4. Psalm 37:5





Smell the flowers

BY CURTIS PETER VAN GORDER

HAVING BEEN BORN “BI” (BEFORE INTERNET), I SEE PEOPLE FRANTICALLY TEXTING AWAY AND SOMETIMES WONDER HOW THEY WOULD HAVE SURVIVED

“BACK IN THE DAY,” when “texting” involved a 30-pound typewriter, messy correction fluid or an eraser, a trip to the post office, standing in line to buy a stamp, waiting a week or two for the letter to get to its destination, and waiting another week or two for a reply.

Why is everyone so darn busy? Today even my auto rickshaw driver was multitasking, negotiating a business deal on his mobile phone while navigating city traffic. Was he even old enough to remember

when making a phone call in public meant hunting down a phone booth, having the right change, and feeding more coins into the phone if the call went longer than three minutes?

What I want to know is where does all the time go that we save by not having to go through all that? Shouldn't we be swimming in leisure time, thanks to all of our time-saving modern marvels?

Is it simply a matter of poor time management? Good advice abounds: Prioritize. Delegate. Do difficult tasks first. Clear your life of clutter. Learn to say no. ...

But there is more to it than that. Sometimes it's not a question of what we are doing, but of what

we are becoming. As the Indian sage Rabindranath Tagore put it, “He who is too busy doing good finds no time to be good.”

How can we slow things down a bit and enjoy life more, while still doing everything that really needs to get done?

The other day I was leaving for a meeting when my granddaughter grabbed my hand and asked excitedly, “Can I show you the new steps I learned in dance class?”

Before I could blurt out, “Sorry, I'm too busy. Show me another time,” my mind fast-forwarded five years and I heard her say as she rushed out the door, “Sorry, Gramps! I'm too busy being a teen.”

“Sure,” I said. “Show me your moves.”

Five minutes of vigorous dancing and continuous applause later, I left for my meeting feeling less stressed and more optimistic.

I had found my answer. If we take time to stop and smell the flowers, their scent will linger with us throughout the day, reminding us that there's more to life than rushing to the next thing.

CURTIS PETER VAN GORDER IS A MEMBER OF THE FAMILY INTERNATIONAL IN INDIA. ■

The Maker's Manual

NEARLY ALL NEW EQUIPMENT COMES WITH AN OWNER'S MANUAL, PROVIDED BY THE MANUFACTURER, GIVING BASIC INSTRUCTIONS ON ITS CARE AND TELLING WHAT TO DO SHOULD PROBLEMS OCCUR. Our Maker

has provided an owner's manual, the Bible, instructing us on the care of our "machine." Circumstances and conditions change, but the principles of healthy living are timeless. Follow them, and you can be assured that you will have fewer breakdowns.

Here are a few nuggets from the Bible on the basics of healthy living:

Watch your diet.

Eat a balanced diet.

God said, "I have given you every herb ... and every tree whose fruit yields seed; to you it shall be for food."—*Genesis 1:29*

Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. I have given you all things, even as the green herbs.—*Genesis 9:3*

Don't overeat.

The glutton will come to poverty, and drowsiness will clothe a man with rags.—*Proverbs 23:21*

Don't undereat.

Take nourishment, for this is for your survival.—*Acts 27:34*

Don't obsess over your diet.

Do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink. Is not life more than food? —*Matthew 6:25*

Live a balanced lifestyle.

Exercise.

Bodily exercise profits a little.—*1 Timothy 4:8*

Get enough sleep.

It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, for so He gives His beloved sleep.—*Psalms 127:2*

Find the right balance between work and rest.

Six days you shall do your work, and on the seventh day you shall rest.—*Exodus 23:12*

Look on the bright side.

A merry heart does good, like medicine, but a broken spirit dries the bones.—*Proverbs 17:22*

Don't neglect your soul.

Feed your spirit.

Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.—*Matthew 4:4*

Commune with God.

Those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.—*Isaiah 40:31*

Think and speak positively.

Pleasant words are like a honeycomb, sweetness to the soul and health to the bones.—*Proverbs 16:24*

I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers.

—3 John 2

The Exercise

Boost

BY CHERYL M. STEVENS

ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT ASPECTS OF MAINTAINING GOOD HEALTH IS EXERCISE. This can include sports, resistance training, walking, stair climbing, and anything else that gets the heart pumping, blood circulating, and muscles working. Here are a few of the benefits of an active lifestyle.

Increased energy. Feeling tired after a hard day? A brisk walk, jog, or bicycle ride around the block will get oxygen- and nutrient-rich blood flowing to all parts of your body, and you'll feel refreshed.

Weight management. Regular cardiovascular exercise is a key to healthy weight loss, but exercise is also important for healthy weight gain. Resistance training exercises such as lifting weights can help increase lean body mass.

Better health. Proper exercise strengthens your immune system, especially exercise in fresh air and sunshine, and it also helps rid your body of toxins. Both of these benefits improve overall health.

Reduced likelihood of injury. When the body gets the exercise it needs, it is less susceptible to types of injury that those with sedentary jobs and lifestyles are prone to, such as back problems, neckaches, and pulled muscles. Just be careful not to overdo when starting a new exercise regimen, as that can result in injury too.

Youthfulness. Regular exercise can help protect against cancer, osteoporosis, diabetes, and other chronic medical conditions. Resistance training rejuvenates muscle tissue, acting as an anti-aging component.

Stress reduction. By stimulating the release of endorphins, brain chemicals that trigger a sense of well-being, exercise relieves stress and the mental and emotional fatigue that come at the end of a trying but sedentary day.

More brain power. Exercise stimulates the flow of blood and oxygen to every part of the body, including the brain. People whose work is of a creative or problem-solving nature are often more productive after vigorous physical activity.

Better sleep. Regular physical activity can help you fall asleep faster and deepen your sleep, which in turn will improve your concentration, productivity, and mood. Just don't exercise too close to bedtime, or you might have a hard time falling asleep.

Exercise doesn't have to be a chore. Attend a dance class, participate in pickup soccer or basketball games at the park, or join a hiking or biking club. If you get bored with one thing, try something else. The more you enjoy exercising, the more likely you are to make it a habit and the greater the benefits will be.

And if you aren't able to schedule time solely for exercise, remember that accumulated activity can be nearly as beneficial. Walk to the corner store. Take the stairs instead of the elevator. Play with your children instead of sitting and watching them.

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silence

A Spiritual Exercise

OUR SPIRITUAL WELL-BEING IS IMPORTANT TO OUR OVERALL WELL-BEING. When our spirits are calm and at peace, our bodies benefit.

The Bible tells us, “Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.”¹ Inspirational music, reading, and praying out loud can all help us do that, but there should also be times when we commune with the Lord in silence. He says, “Be still, and know that I am God.”²

The goal of this spiritual exercise is to bring peace to your spirit by taking 10 or 15 minutes for silent reflection.

Find a quiet place where you won't be disturbed. You may want to read a Psalm or listen to or sing a hymn or gospel song to clear your mind of other business and help you “enter into His

courts with praise.”³ Then reflect on one or more of the following thoughts.

From the world of sin and noise
And hurry I withdraw;
For the small and inward voice
I wait with humble awe:
Silent am I now and still,
Dare not in Thy presence move;
To my waiting soul reveal
The secret of Thy Love.

—Charles Wesley

Relax and let go of everything as you enter into the awareness of God's presence. You can relax and let go of everything, precisely *because* God is present. In His presence nothing really matters; all things are in His hands. Tension, anxiety, worry, frustration all melt away before him, as snow before the sun.—James Borst

Be earth, with all her scenes,
withdrawn;
Let noise and vanity be gone:
In secret silence of the mind,
My heaven, and there my God,
I find.

—Isaac Watts

There is hardly ever a complete silence in our soul. God is whispering to us well-nigh incessantly. Whenever the sounds of the world die out in the soul, or sink low, then we hear these whisperings of God. He is always whispering to us, only we do not always hear, because of the noise, hurry, and distraction which life causes as it rushes on.

—F. W. Faber

We can never be completely whole until we have a living connection with God through His Son, Jesus. You can embark on this relationship right now by praying this simple prayer:

Jesus, I believe in You and want to get to know You better. Please be with me always. Amen. ■

1. James 4:8
2. Psalm 46:10
3. Psalm 100:4



Do your part

FROM JESUS WITH LOVE



Your body is an amazingly intricate and efficient machine, but it needs proper care to run well. If you want to be free of sickness and other physical problems, you have to do your part. That takes time, thought, and effort. You have to eat properly, drink plenty of fluids, get sufficient sleep, exercise, have your teeth and eyes checked periodically, limit your exposure to things that could be harmful, and so on.

Caring for the body has never been simple or easy, but it's getting even more difficult and complicated. The world is changing, which is changing how people live, which is putting even greater demands on their bodies. Many of the health hazards that plagued previous generations have been reduced or eradicated, but new challenges have emerged due to such things as processed food, routine exposure to chemicals, smog, sedentary jobs, and the stress of 21st-century living.

It's not easy, but if you will do your best to live a healthy lifestyle, you will spare yourself a lot of health problems. You will also find it easier to ask Me to intervene when you do get sick, because it's hard to have faith for Me to fix problems that you know you brought on yourself. This is true of healing, but the principle also applies to getting My help with any problem you face. You do what you can, and I will do what you can't.