EQUIPPING LEADERS AT TRUTH BAPTIST CHURCH IN PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA, TOWARD A BIBLICAL STEWARDSHIP OF THE BODY

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George Raymond Tynes

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EQUIPPING LEADERS AT TRUTH BAPTIST CHURCH IN PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA, TOWARD A BIBLICAL STEWARDSHIP OF THE BODY

George Raymond Tynes

Read and Approved by:

Faculty Supervisor: John D. Wilsey

Second Reader: Matthew D. Haste

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PREFACE

This dissertation is a prophetic call to believers in Jesus Christ to honor God by taking care of their bodies. The mission of the church is often hindered and halted because of sickness, disease, and death. The Truth Baptist Church of Philadelphia knows this to be the true through our own experiences with members who were sick and died prematurely. The culprit was a lack of understanding about what the Bible says about maintaining our physical temple. The aim of this research is to shed some scriptural light about health and wellness. My desire is that the reader may prosper and be in good health, even as your soul prospers. (3 John 2)

George Tynes

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
December 2025

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Many churches are struggling to provide ministry for their community. The primary reason for this struggle is often misunderstood. It not for a lack of desire nor is it due to misplaced priorities. The cause of the issue is often simple. Many people in the church suffer from being overweight and having poor health. These situations consume peoples time, physical ability, emotional will and resources. Congregants are physically present yet unable to fully engage due to fatigue, disease, and discomfort. These are issues that are keeping committed members from supporting the church financially as well as keeping them unable to find time for ministry.

Ministry Context

Truth Baptist Church (TBC) is a member of the Southern Baptist Convention. As such, the church holds to the tenets of The Baptist Faith and Message, which defines the core beliefs of Southern Baptists. TBC believes that the Scriptures are the inerrant Word of God, are authoritative, and are to be obeyed.[1] The church also believes in human responsibility. Christians are to be good stewards of the things that God has entrusted to them.[2]

The leadership team and the members of TBC all affirm sections I and XIII of *The Baptist Faith and Message*.[3] However, the medical conditions that plague the membership paint a different picture. Diet and fitness-related conditions consume the congregation, burdening the advancement of the ministry at TBC. Either the members understand their biblical responsibility

[1] Southern Baptist Convention, *The Baptist Faith and Message* (Nashville: LifeWay, 2000), sec. I.

[2] Southern Baptist Convention, *The Baptist Faith and Message*, sec. XIII.

[3] Section I affirms the authority of Scripture; Section XIII affirms the responsibility of Christians to be good stewards over everything that God gives them.

to be good stewards over their bodies and refuse to comply, or they cannot comply because they do not know their biblical responsibility. It is also possible to know the biblical responsibility and desire to comply but lack the power to comply. Possibly TBC's leadership team will be better stewards of their bodies if they are taught the biblical principles of stewardship of the body.

The congregants of TBC range in age from 1-97 years young. The average socioeconomics of the congregation would be considered middle class. Rev. George R Tynes is the founder and pastor of Truth Baptist Church. TBC was planted in the city of Philadelphia Pennsylvania in December of 1990. The church worshipped in a variety of places before purchasing the property at 4718 Old York Rd. This building was originally a community laundromat, which was converted into our church home. After spending over a decade, Truth purchased our current church building at 4666-68 N. 15th St. Philadelphia Pennsylvania.

Previously, Pastor Tynes had founded the Fisher of Men Ministry. He held the position of Interim pastor of 2nd Nazareth Baptist Church located in South Philadelphia area. Pastor George R. Tynes was called to pastor the Open-Door Baptist Church in North Philadelphia in 1989. After serving the Open-Door Baptist Church for a year, Pastor Tynes was led by the Lord to plant The Truth Baptist Church of Philadelphia.

Rationale

In the entire thirty-five-year history of TBC, I have never preached a sermon series on the biblical stewardship of the body. My failure to preach the whole council of God, which should have included being a good steward over the body, may have been a contributing factor in the premature deaths of many of our members. Several key leaders have died due to poor dietary habits and fitness-related conditions. The words of Hosea 4:6 address this issue: "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge."[4] The role of the pastor-teacher is to preach the whole counsel

[4] Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations are from the KJV version.

of God (Acts 20:27), which includes teaching on how to honor God with one's body (1 Cor 6:19–20).

My current understanding of the personal health and fitness conditions of the TBC leadership team reveals that it is paramount for me to teach about the subject of biblical stewardship of the body. Failing to address this topic would render me derelict in my duty and dim the brightness of TBC's future. A pastoral lack of leadership in educating the church about health and wellness leaves the church vulnerable to sickness, disease, and eventually death.

Equipping the leaders with biblical stewardship teaching would not only strengthen the church family spiritually, but it would also contribute to longevity and better health. A healthy church is a credible witness to the power of the resurrected Lord. Being a disciple of Jesus Christ requires discipline, which is vital to good health and fitness. A leadership team that is disciplined sets the tone for the entire congregation. It sends the message that God is concerned about the whole person. It will produce the righteous fruit of a people who are fit and ready to carry out the Great Commission.

Purpose

The purpose of this project was to equip members at Truth Baptist Church in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, toward an understanding of biblical stewardship of the body.

Goals

The project was guided by five goals that determined its success.

1. The first goal was to assess the current level of knowledge about biblical concepts of stewardship of the body among Truth Baptist Church's leadership team.
2. The second goal was to determine the current health and fitness level of Truth Baptist Church's leadership team.
3. The third goal was to develop a five-lesson course that is aligned with biblical principles and medically proven good health and fitness practices to be verified by three doctoral level graduates of a SBC seminary, and a certified fitness instructor.
4. The fourth goal was to increase the knowledge of Truth Baptist Church's leadership team by teaching the five-course biblical curriculum in three sessions.

5. The fifth goal was to obtain a signed plan of action pledge card from each TBC leadership participant.

Research Methodology

The research methodology for this project included the use of the following instrumentation: a Biblical Fundamentals of Health and Fitness (BFHFS),[5] a pre- and post-course survey, an instructor evaluation, and an evaluation rubric.

The first goal was to assess the current level of knowledge about the biblical concepts of stewardship of the body among Truth Baptist Church's leadership team.
There was an evaluation of the leader's understanding of some of the main issues the Bible taught that affected good health and fitness. The goal was measured by administering the Biblical Fundamentals of Health and Fitness Survey (BFHFS) to TBC leaders.[6] This survey includes questions concerning members' understanding of the Bible's teaching regarding good health and fitness.

The second goal was to determine the current health and fitness level of Truth Baptist Church's leadership team. This goal would be considered successfully met when the leadership team completes the health and fitness survey, calculate their body mass index, and the survey and BMI results have been analyzed, yielding a clearer picture of the current health and fitness level of the leadership team of TBC.

The third goal was to develop a five-lesson course to be taught in three sessions, that aligns with biblical principles and medically proven good health and fitness practices to be verified by qualified pastors and a certified fitness instructor. This goal was evaluated by three

[5] See appendix 1. All of the research instruments used in this project were performed in compliance with and approved by The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary Research Ethics Committee prior to use in the ministry project.

[6] See appendix 1.

pastors with doctoral-level education from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, who utilized a rubric to evaluate the biblical faithfulness, teaching methodology, scope, and how closely the course aligns with medically proven good health and fitness practices.[7] The curriculum was also evaluated by a certified health and fitness specialist who used a second rubric to evaluate the curriculum's applicability.[8] The goal would be considered successfully met when a minimum of 90 percent of the evaluation criterion in both course evaluations meet or exceed the sufficient level.

The fourth goal was to increase the knowledge of Truth Baptist Church's leadership team by teaching the five-course biblical curriculum to be taught in three sessions. This goal would be considered successfully met when a *t*-test for dependent samples demonstrates a positive statistically significant difference in the pre- and post-survey scores.

The fifth goal was to obtain a signed plan of action pledge card from each TBC leadership participant. The plan of action pledge card is a promise to be a better steward of the body by following the biblical and medically proven good health and fitness practices.[9] This goal would be successfully met when all participants sign a plan of action pledge card.

Definitions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Technical terms are used throughout this project; they are defined in this section to aid in the reader's understanding of the subject.

Biblical stewardship. Trent Butler writes, "The biblical concept of stewardship, beginning with Adam and Eve and developed more fully in the NT, is that God is owner and provider of all that any of us possess. Since all belongs to him it is incumbent that all be used for

[7] See appendix 3.

[8] See appendix 4.

[9] See appendix 5.

His purpose and glory."[10]

Medically proven. Bryan Garner and Henry Black explain that to medically prove is "to establish or make certain; to establish the truth of (a fact or hypothesis) by satisfactory evidence."[11]

Body Mass Index. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention writes,

> Body Mass Index is a number calculated from a person's weight and height. BMI is a fairly reliable indicator of body fatness for most people. BMI does not measure body fat directly, but research has shown that BMI correlates to direct measure of body fat, such as underwater weighting and dual energy x-ray absorptiometry (DXA). BMI can be considered an alternative for direct measures of body fat. Additionally, BMI is an inexpensive and easy to perform method of screening for weight categories that may lead to health problems.[12]

The first limitation of this project was time. The project took place over the course of ten weeks. Although much information was gleaned regarding the concepts of biblical stewardship of the body, additional time would be necessary after the project's completion to reaffirm the principles taught.

The second limitation was the development of personal health and fitness plans for each member of the leadership team. Although the basic principles would be learned, additional time and instruction would be necessary to fully develop a personal health and fitness plan for each team member.

The first delimitation of this project related to the number of topics covered regarding the biblical stewardship of the body. For the purposes of the teaching, I limited the topics covered to five facets of biblical stewardship, though others could have been included.

The second delimitation of this project was based on its specific focus. The biblical

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[10] Trent C. Butler, *Holman Bible Dictionary* (Nashville: Holman Bible, 2003), 1534.

[11] Bryan A. Garner and Henry Campbell Black, *Black's Law Dictionary* (St. Paul, MN: West Group, 1999), 1240.

[12] "Healthy Weight: Assessing Your Weight: Body Mass Index (BMI),"Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, accessed January 14, 2015, http://www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/assessing/bmi/.

course was taught only to the leadership team of TBC where the greater need exists for this training.

Conclusion

This chapter has laid out the goals, expectations, limitations and delimitations of this project. The next chapter will show biblical support for health and wellness.

CHAPTER 2

A BIBLICAL RATIONALE FOR HEALTH CARE

Four biblical reasons support Christians promoting good health care: the believer's body belongs to the Lord; a disciplined life is evidence of the filling of the Holy Spirit; the law of love demands healthy living; and a healthy body can best serve the demands of the Great Commission. Scriptural evidence for each point would be ample, but to move believers in Jesus Christ to be better stewards of their bodies, the biblical rationale presented in this chapter is compelling.

The Believer's Body Belongs to the Lord

Life is a precious gift, wrapped in a physical body, and given by God. Each person functions in a body, which the Bible says does not belong to them. The body was made by God, for God, and given to each person to live in for a season.

Romans 12:1–2

The apostle Paul in Romans 12:1–2 merges together an explanation of the mercy of God revealed in the gospel of Jesus Christ with its intended application. A noticeable shift takes place in this text. Paul was no longer teaching to inform his listeners but was exercising the mantle of his apostolic charge and authority. The instruction given here to follow is neither passive nor optional. The full weight of his office was discharged with this call to action and obedience. Cranfield and Sanday argue that the word translated "*beseech*" denotes the authoritative summons to obedience issued in the name of the gospel.[1] Douglas Moo agrees with

[1] C. E. B. Cranfield and W. Sanday, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1975), 579.

Cranfield and Sanday, saying that Paul shifts his focus from instruction to exhortation and from indicative to imperative.[2]

The premise of Paul's call to self-sacrifice is the mercy of God displayed at Calvary. Jesus Christ gave his life as a ransom for sinners (Mark 10:45). Obedience to Jesus Christ is not by coercion but is a conscious decision of the heart motivated by love. Thomas Schreiner observes, "We have already observed that the appeal to God's mercy grounds the following exhortations in the indicative of God's grace, which is charted out for us in Romans 1:16–36."[3]

While the imagery of a sacrifice is employed in the text, its usefulness and observance ended at the cross. Moo affirms, "Paul's use of sacrificial imagery here fits a pattern found throughout the NT. Christians no longer offer literal sacrifices; for Christ has fulfilled and thus brought to an end the OT sacrificial system."[4] While there is no need for literal sacrifices, there are commands in the New Testament for spiritual sacrifices. Believers are exhorted to give their bodies as living sacrifices. The greatest sacrifice that could ever be given would be oneself. Colin Kruse points out the difference between martyrdom and living a life that is pleasing to the Lord.[5] A martyr is a sacrifice that dies, while a living sacrifice continues to live. To this comparison, Cranfield and Sanday write, "All animal victims were alive when they were sacrificed."[6] God desires a sacrifice that lives. James Dunn refers to the conscious decision of self-denial as the Christian's "spiritual worship" or "reasonable religion."[7]

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[2] Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 1996), 744.

[3] Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 643.

[4] Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 750.

[5] Colin G. Kruse, *Paul's Letter to the Romans*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 2012), 462.

[6] Cranfield and Sanday, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 600.

[7] James D. G. Dunn, *Romans. 9–16*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 38B (Dallas: Word, 1988), 711.

Central to this text is the body, which was the required offering to God for this sacrifice. The body becomes the focus of the subject. While Cranfield and Sanday broadly define the word "body" as the totality of a person, they also include skin and bones in their definition.[8] Schreiner explains, "One cannot consign dedication to God to the spirit and neglect the body. Genuine commitment to God embraces every area of life and includes the body in all of its particularity and concreteness."[9] The body, therefore, belongs to God by virtue of its nature and purpose. If the body is to be offered to God on the altar of sacrifice, then it belongs to him because of its very function. Schreiner calls the refusal to make such a sacrifice "the height of folly and irrationality."[10] It is completely irrational to believe that your body is your own. Your body is a gift from God. He can ask for its return at any moment. The Lord gives and the Lord can take away (Job 1:21). It is also foolish to deny God what belongs to Him. One can assume that God, the creator, has an inherent right to complete obedience from his created order. The Bible starts with God giving humanity rules to follow. Just like an employee is expected to follow the instructions of their employer, humanity is expected to adhere to God's commands. Yet what God expects from his children is often left undone. Instead of living lives that are transformational, many believers live lives of conformity to this world.

Conformity to the world is a way of thinking that influences ungodly actions and reveals unholy allegiance. What a person does with his body is a result of his view of the body. Paul uses the imagery of a sacrifice to explain the purpose of the body. A sacrifice belongs to God and is to be without spot or blemish (Lev 22:19–20). A mind that has been transformed and renewed understands spiritual reality. Spiritual worship involves the surrender of everything to God. Everything belongs to God. Job reminded humanity that, at birth, babies come into this

[8] Cranfield and Sanday, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 598.

[9] Schreiner, *Romans*, 644.

[10] Schreiner, *Romans*, 645.

world with nothing and at death everyone leaves with nothing (1:21). Everything that worshippers offer to God is His. Adam was made from the dust of the ground and shaped with God's hands (Gen 2:7). God's breath gave humanity life. Each part of humanity's makeup is sacred and belongs on the altar of sacrifice. This is what the apostle Paul was teaching in Romans 12:1–2. Jesus taught his disciples that they should love the Lord their God with all their heart, soul, and mind (Matt 22:27). This Old Testament teaching, known as the *shema*, speaks to the totality of personhood. Humans are comprised of body, soul, and spirit.

First Corinthians 6:19–20

First Corinthians 6:19–20 is Paul's closing theological position for fleeing fornication. A pagan society exerts great pressure on Christians to adopt and adapt their culture. Corinth was a city with many pagan practices that were attractive to the sin nature. For many in Corinth at that time, an act of worship involved sexual intercourse with temple prostitutes. This is the context for Paul's prohibition against such practices and his development of a biblical anthropology.

In the preceding verses, Paul asserts that the body is a part of Christ's body and is therefore one spirit with him (1 Cor 6:12–16). For a Christian, this would make sexual intercourse with temple prostitutes improper. Gordon Fee writes, "To have sexual intercourse with a prostitute involves an illicit sexual joining of one's body to that of another literally."[11] An illicit act is forbidden by a law. The inferred law that is broken is spiritual adultery. The believer's body has been joined to Jesus Christ. To have sexual intercourse with a prostitute is a violation of a union covenant. Fee states, "Paul's point is that the physical union of a believer with a prostitute is not possible because the believer's body already belongs to the Lord, through whose resurrection one's body has become a 'member' of Christ by his Spirit."[12]

[11] Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, New International Commentary on the New Testament Series (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 1987), 259.

[12] Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 260.

Sexual intercourse apart from marriage is like no other sin; it is characterized as a sin against one's own body. Paul asserts that all other sins are apart from the body. Fee explains the difficulty inherent with this passage: "Paul's urgency, however, is not with 'other sins': rather, he is arguing that 'every other sin is apart from the body' in the sense that no other sin directed specifically toward one's own body in the way that sexual immorality is."[13] What does it mean to sin against one's body? What are the consequences of sinning against one's body? Although these questions are not answered directly in the text, one can rightly conclude that God will punish all who are sexually immoral. Those who are joined to Jesus Christ will abstain from fornication because they understand that their bodies belong to God. Believers are the body of Christ. Jesus Christ cannot be joined with temple prostitutes (1 Cor 6:16).

Th3e final two propositions given to support the argument that the believer's bodies belong to God are Paul's use of the words "temple" and "purchase." Fee writes, "With the use of two images (temple and purchase of slaves corresponding to the Spirit and the cross), he reasserts that the body in its present existence belongs to God. Thus, the body is included in the full redemptive work of Christ—crucifixion, resurrection, and the present work of the Spirit."[14] Jewish history revolved around temple life. The temple was at the center of religious and secular life. For the Jew, there was no spiritual and secular divide. God lived in the temple, and it belonged to Him. In addressing the body as the temple of God, Paul was teaching two important truths. First, he was elevating the function of the body. Fee explains, "They thought the presence of the Spirit meant a negation of the body; Paul argues the exact opposite. The presence of the Spirit in their present bodily existence is God's affirmation of the body."[15] Second, salvation was bought with a price (1 Cor 6:20). This issue of who owns a believer's body is forever settled.

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[13] Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 262.

[14] Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 263.

[15] Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 264.

Whatever is purchased belongs to the one who purchased it. All Christians were bought by the precious blood of Jesus Christ, and their bodies belong to God. Fee states, "Christ purchased us for God. His point here is that even the body is included in that purchase."[16] This text reveals the importance of the physical body. Jesus's death redeemed the body, soul, and spirit.

A Disciplined Life Is Evidence of the Filling of the Holy Spirit

The body belongs to the Lord; however, it may not be under his management. The Holy Spirit, the third person of the Godhead, only dwells in a believer in Jesus Christ. When Christians follow the leading of the Holy Spirit, they are under the Holy Spirit's control, guided to do what is right.

Galatians 5:22–23 and Philippians 3:19

The apostle Paul in Galatians 5:22–23 and Philippians 3:19 contrasts Old Testament and New Testament obedience. In the Old Testament, humanity was left alone to struggle with its vices. Keeping the law of God was difficult and, often, God's people failed to obey Him. The sin nature passed down from Adam left all humanity inherently sinners, and therefore powerless to work God's righteousness. The promise of salvation through Jesus Christ and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit gave humanity hope for the future. Prior to that, there was a continuous cycle of disobedience, judgment, repentance, and restoration. Following the law of God was frustrating and futile because the flesh, or the sin nature, was not subject to the law of God. Paul, in Galatians 5:19–21, calls the sinful nature's expressed behavior the works of the flesh. Timothy George notes,

> The listing of the sinful acts in the catalog of evil was disorderly, chaotic, and incomplete, corresponding to the random and compulsive character of sin itself. In stark contrast now, the character traits contained in the catalog of grace appear in beautiful harmony, balanced

[16] Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 265.

> and symmetrical, corresponding to the purposeful design and equilibrium of a life filled with the Spirit and lived out in the beauty of holiness.[17]

While the works of the flesh lead to disobedience and death, the fruit of the Holy Spirit leads to obedience and life. Paul observes nine features of the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:19–21. John Stott categorizes them into three groups. "The primary direction of 'love, joy, peace' is *Godward*, of 'patience, kindness, goodness' *manward*, and of 'faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control' *selfward*. And all these are 'the fruit of the Spirit,' the natural produce that appears in the lives of Spirit-led Christians."[18]

According to George, self-control is the ability to master one's desires and passions.[19] He argues that its placement as the last fruit of the Spirit may speak to its relevance and importance: "Antinomians veering out of control desperately needing the discipline of self-control reinforced by a new respect for God's moral law."[20] Self-control, as a fruit of the Holy Spirit, is different from neglecting the passions of the body through asceticism. F. F. Bruce differentiates between self-control as a fruit of the Holy Spirit and self-control gained through monasticism:

> In the second century AD we meet a Christian sect called the Encratites (their best-known member being Tatian, the complier of the Diatessaron); they were so called because of their insistence on self-control which, however, they interpreted as asceticism, including abstention from flesh, wine and marriage (Iren. Haer. 1.28; Euseb. HE 4.28f.). How far this lifestyle departed from the NT standard of self-control may be seen from 1 Timothy 4:1–5.[21]

Self-control is not self-produced. One's connection to Jesus, who is the vine, positions one to produce the fruit of the Holy Spirit (John 15:1–8) Following the leading of the Holy Spirit

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[17] Timothy George, *Galatians*, New American Commentary, vol. 30 (Nashville: B & H, 1994), 399.

[18] John R. W. Stott, *The Message of Galatians*, The Bible Speaks Today (London: InterVarsity, 1968), 148–49, emphasis original.

[19] George, *Galatians*, 404.

[20] George, *Galatians*, 404.

[21] F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, The New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 1982), 355.

and not grieving the Holy Spirit are interrelated (Rom 8:14; Eph 4:20). Following the leading of the Holy Spirit will always result in freedom from the works of the flesh.

The life of the believer in Jesus Christ is one of freedom from sin and bondage. Jesus came to set the captive free (Luke 4:18–19). The process by which he brings liberty is by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and a saint's willingness to follow the Holy Spirit. Self-control is proof of a life surrendered to the Holy Spirit. Stott affirms this truth: "True Christian liberty expresses itself in self-control, loving service of our neighbor, and obedience to the law of God."[22] Following the lead of the Holy Spirit is New Testament obedience that fulfills the righteous requirement of the law.

Philippians 3:19

This verse is a profile of those who are enemies of the cross (Phil 3:18). Paul uses three descriptive phrases to identify the enemies of the cross. An enemy of the cross's purpose for living is to satisfy their natural appetite. According to Fee, "the word 'stomach' may be a metonymy for the craving after sumptuous fare perhaps for surfeiting or broadly speaking the word 'stomach' could represent bodily desires or appetites that have become a 'god' to them."[23] The word "stomach" denotes a life of lavish living devoid of suffering. G. Walter Hansen attributes self-deception and ignorance to this kind of mindset: "Those who think that they have already arrived at the goal and avoid participation in the sufferings of Christ are actually traveling toward the goal of destruction."[24] Every journey has a destination where it ends. For those who are enemies of the cross, their journey will end in destruction. Jesus was clear in the parable of the rich fool (Luke 12:16–21) that life was not about eating, drinking, and being

[22] Stott, *The Message of Galatians*, 145.

[23] Gordon D. Fee, *Paul's Letter to the Philippians*, New International Commentary on the New Testament Series (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 1995), 372.

[24] G. Walter Hansen, *The Letter to the Philippians*, Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans; Nottingham, England: Apollos, 2009), 265.

merry. Living in the lap of luxury can beguile one into thinking that pleasing one's "stomach" is what life is about. Denying God his rightful place of honor and glory will ultimately lead to eternal damnation.

The phrase "whose glory is in their shame" refers to actions that are contrary to the Christian life and example set by Paul. G. Walter Hansen employs a definition that uses the term "stomach" to represent "unbridled sensuality, whether gluttony or sexual licentiousness.[25] A blatant disregard for limitations and ordinances reveals an unregenerated heart. Being proud of such behaviors is an act of open defiance and rebellion against God. Fee concludes that those who are self-indulgent are not Christians at all:

> Paul is referring to some who have appeared as believers, but whose "end" demonstrates that something was wrong with their "faith." They probably consider themselves to be within the household of faith, and most likely are, or were, but whom Paul now assigns to a place outside Christ, precisely because they have abandoned Christ by adopting a lifestyle that is totally opposed to the redemptive work of the cross.[26]

Finally, "who mind earthly things" (Phil 3:19) depicts a person who is not heaven-bound. The Christian hope is in what lies ahead. Those who have a preoccupation with the present are not bound to Jesus Christ. The believers' eschatological hope involves receiving a glorified body, exposing the impropriety associated with shameful living, and is the reason for a transformation of human bodies into glorified bodies. The physical body will be redeemed. Until then, believers are to live out the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ in their human bodies through the power of the Holy Spirit. While faith in Jesus Christ separates the believer from a life of self-indulgence, self-indulgence is the very thing that separates an unbeliever from God eternally. Hansen concludes, "In their deliberate refusal to suffer with Christ, they have separated themselves from salvation in Christ."[27]

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[25] Hansen, *The Letter to the Philippians*, 266.

[26] Fee, *Paul's Letter to the Philippians*, 371.

[27] Hansen, *The Letter to the Philippians*, 265.

The Law of Love Demands Healthy Living

Love is the root cause of healthy living. Love is the debt owed to God for the life he has given to believers through Jesus Christ. Jesus calls those who follow him to love him and others. Jesus is the incarnation of love. Christians are called to be imitators of Christ in marriage and family relationships.

Ephesians 5:28–33

There are many benefits and responsibilities inherent in the institution of marriage. Marriage was created to fill a need that Adam had. Adam needed a companion because he was alone and lonely (Gen 2:18). Eve was created and given to Adam as a helpmate. This holy relationship between Adam and Eve was meant to be perpetual, for death was not a part of humanity's reality. However, with the Fall, sin and death entered the world, bringing about division and separation in humanity and between God and people.

Humanity's loneliness was magnified by sin, but the institution of marriage, the bedrock of society and family, remained intact. God instituted marriage, and its benefits can be experienced even in a fallen world. The giving and receiving of unconditional love are at the root of marriage. Married couples who love one another unconditionally never have to experience the pain of loneliness. Marriage is an example of Jesus's love for the church, serving as a living icon of selfless love.

In Ephesians 5:28–33, Paul describes the love that a man has for his own body. This is a natural love. Taking care of one's body demonstrates that one possesses what would be considered natural love. Peter O'Brien calls natural love a biblical assumption: "Both Leviticus and Ephesians assume that a person will look after his or her own interest and welfare. Similarly, in the 'golden rule' Jesus urged his hearers to treat others as they themselves like to be treated (Matt 7:12)."[28]

[28] Peter Thomas O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 1999), 472.

An objective viewer with a discerning eye can easily identify a person who loves self. However, the motivation for loving one's body must supersede the natural rationale of self-love. The love that a husband has for his wife must be selfless. A husband is not thinking about himself and the benefits of marriage by loving his bride. The focus is on what benefits her. Natural love for oneself turns inward. Bruce describes natural love this way: "That it is natural to love oneself is evident from the way in which most people care for themselves, and especially for their bodies. They feed their bodies, clothe their bodies, and do what they can for their comfort."[29] To elevate this love for oneself into supernatural love, there needs to be a change of focus. The wife becomes the object of her husband's love. Bruce elaborates on this change of view: "Just as a man provides for his own comfort and well-being, so he should provide for his wife's. Again, Christ is invoked as the perfect exemplar: he makes every provision for the church."[30]

In the Old Testament, marriage was a mystery, but in the New Testament, the mystery is unveiled in Jesus Christ. Bruce describes this enigma:

> In the light of his saving work, the hidden meaning of Gen. 2:24 now begins to appear: his people constitute his bride, united to him in "one body." The formation of Eve to be Adam's companion is seen to prefigure the creation of the church to be the bride of Christ. This seems to be the deep "mystery" contained in the text, which remains a mystery no longer to those who have received its interpretation."[31]

Marriage was an institution that provided the opportunity to set aside self-interest and meet the needs of another. A husband who loves his wife will take care of his body to fulfill his responsibilities as a husband. His roles as spiritual leader, lover, and provider are of primary importance to a healthy marriage. The foundation for such an enduring and healthy marriage is a natural love for one's body. A person who does not take care of his own body is unsuitable for marriage.

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[29] F. F. Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, Eerdmans Classic Biblical Commentaries (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 1984), 391.

[30] Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 391.

[31] Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 395.

Colossians 2:21–23

The opposite of selfless love is selfish love. A cloak of religious fervor often disguises selfish love. Individuals will fast for long periods of time when it is counterproductive to the health of the human body. Under the pretense of doing work for the kingdom of God, they will overextend themselves to the point of exhaustion. Selfish love denies the body what it needs to function at its optimum. This extremism or ascetism has the appearance of righteousness, but at its core is fake godliness. David Garland notes, "Self-imposed worship, humility, and harsh treatment of the body built up the importance of the flesh rather than putting it off. They became disciplines for their own sake and only lead to puffing up the mind of the flesh, which first concocted them."[32]

A husband who fasts for long periods of time only denies his natural necessities to appear godly. Being physically weak, he will lack the strength to work. He will also be unable to meet the demands of his children. He will be incapable of giving to his wife what is rightfully hers (1 Cor 7:3–5).

First Timothy 5:8

Work is how one is to provide for his family. Adam was given a work assignment before the fall of humanity. Work is not a part of the curse, but a purpose culminating in wages and the fruit of one's labor. A man who refuses to work should not eat (2 Thess 3:10). He should be allowed to starve to death. The reasons a husband should work are both ethical and spiritual. Working is ethical because it is the right thing to do. Being a husband comes with responsibility. A spouse depends on her husband to meet the financial needs of the household. Finding meaningful work to fulfill this responsibility is essential for the success of the marriage. Working is a spiritual issue because God demonstrates for humanity what it means to be spiritual. Being

[32] David E. Garland, *Colossians and Philemon*, Jeremiah Bible Study Series (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998), 185.

spiritual means to work (John 5:17). Those who have a relationship with God through Jesus Christ will work because it is right, and it is what spiritual beings do. To refuse to work brings shame to the name of one's profession of faith. George Knight affirms, "Here Paul expresses the terrible implications of not caring for one's own: It amounts to a denial of Christianity and an action and attitude worse than that of an unbeliever."[33] Even non-believing husbands provide for the welfare of their families. The Christian must be held to a higher standard of behavior.

There is little excuse for poor health in today's day and age. There is accessible health care, healthy food choices, fitness plans, and gymnasiums, and still, many husbands are dying from mere neglect of their bodies. This self-neglect defies the very rule of love. A husband who loves his wife will exercise, get yearly physicals, and a healthy body will allow him to go to work. Work allows the husband to meet the family's financial needs. Work is how a husband expresses his love for his wife and family. Unhealthy diets and sedentary lifestyles are some of the leading causes of sickness, disease, and death. The text argues that unbelievers understand their responsibility to their families. Knight agrees, "Thus for a professed believer who has God's law ('honor your father and your mother') to fail to do what even many unbelievers instinctively do, warrants the verdict that he is 'worse than an unbeliever.'"[34] William Mounce includes the nuclear family in the application of the text when he says, "One's familial responsibility includes the extended family, but especially the immediate family, those living under the same roof."[35]

Christian character speaks louder than empty words. Love in action is true love. A husband demonstrates his love for his wife by providing for her. To take care of his family, the

[33] George W. Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles*, The New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans; Carlisle, England: Paternoster, 1992), 220.

[34] Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 220.

[35] William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 46 (Nashville, Tenn: Thomas Nelson, 2000), 286.

husband must be healthy. By taking care of his health, the husband is demonstrating love for his wife and family, which serves as a witness to the world of the power of love. Love affects a person's attitude and actions. Love in action is the measuring rod of true Christian love.

Titus 2:4–7

Right doctrine is the foundation on which right living is applied. There was a need for sound doctrine to be taught in Crete. Philip Towner highlights the importance of Titus' mission: "On the other hand, the implication in this instruction and in the use of the term 'sound doctrine' is that Titus is to do what the Cretan teachers have failed to do—namely, inculcate an ethic that emerges logically from the truth of the health-giving gospel and is distinguishable from Cretan cultural elements."[36]

Right doctrine will naturally bear the fruit of right living. If sound doctrine is absent, then there will be an absence of right living. The instructions given to wives and young men centered on the topic of self-control. Self-control is a fruit of the Holy Spirit (Gal 5:22–23). Faith in the Word of God is needed to activate or bear this fruit. To avoid the snares of the Cretan community, a believer will need to have self-control. Towner writes, "Third, 'self-controlled' (*sophron*; 1:8; 2:5,12) or 'sensible' ('prudent'; NRSV) depicts a measured restraint in all things—the opposite of behavior that might be regarded as foolish or 'Cretan This quality is explicitly identified with the new life made possible by the Christ-event (2:12)."[37]

While what goes into a person's mouth will not defile them, it can cause great damage to the body (Matt 15:11). Mosaic dietary laws were imposed so that the nation of Israel would not suffer the diseases and health problems prevalent among heathen nations. The inclusion of dietary restrictions in the Bible serves to warn present-day Christians to make healthy food choices, as there are consequences for making poor food choices (Prov 23:20–21).

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[36] Philip H. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2006), 720.

[37] Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 720.

A Healthy Body Can Best Serve the Demands of the Great Commission

The Christian life is a life lived to fulfill the Great Commission of Jesus Christ. Following Christ is about dying to selfish interest and living to do whatever he calls us to do. Believers in Jesus Christ are called to make disciples of every nation. The mission of making disciples can best be accomplished by those who are healthy. A healthy Christian can better serve the Great Commission of the Lord than one who is unhealthy.

Matthew 28:19–20

The Great Commission is the call of duty for the church. John Broadus affirms, "Christianity is essentially a missionary religion, analogous to the great conquering nations, the Romans, English, Russians."[38] The scope of the mission was global, and there would be intense opposition to the message proclaimed. Jesus promised that answering the call to follow him would put one in harm's way. Making disciples of all nations required healthy disciples.

Before a person can join the military, he has to pass a physical examination. This prerequisite is required before a candidate is permitted to enlist. After a person is accepted into the military, they must go to boot camp. There, they are tested and challenged both physically and mentally to see if they are fit to serve—the success of the military hinges on the sound fitness and conditioning of its soldiers. An army plagued by sickness and disease will be at a disadvantage in fulfilling its mission. The call of Jesus to serve requires people who are healthy. The local church needs people who are healthy to fulfill its mission. Those who will serve on the mission field need to be healthy to accomplish their assignment. Jesus sends the church to all the nations of the world. Traveling to distant lands in Jesus's day was challenging and physically demanding. For most people, walking was their only means of transportation. One had to be in relatively good shape to "go" into all the world. All who follow Jesus are given the call to go.

[38] John Albert Broadus, *Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew* (Valley Forge, PA: American Baptist Publication Society, 1886), 593.

Broadus defines those who are called to go: "When Jesus said, 'Go, make disciples of all nations,' he announced in the simplest and least ostentatious way the most original, the broadest, the sublimes enterprise that every human being have been called upon to accomplish."[39]

While some ailments are hereditary, like birth defects, juvenile diabetes, and down syndrome, many other ailments result from physical neglect. How can one go if they are sick, weak, diseased, crippled, blind, or obese? Fitness affects the church's ability to evangelize the lost. A believer who has good health can make more time for the mission of the church, while a believer with poor health will spend a good portion of their time in doctors' offices and in recovery.

Second Corinthians 11:28–33

The apostle Paul reveals the price he had to pay to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. Paul was imprisoned many times, beaten many times, almost to the point of death, five times received thirty-nine lashes from Jews, beaten by rods by the Romans, stoned, three times shipwrecked, and spent a night and a day in the open sea. How did the apostle Paul endure such hardship? Paul loved the Lord Jesus, loved the saints, and loved the lost. D. A. Carson writes, "The immensity of the pressures and sufferings already enumerated therefore serve as a measure of the intensity of his care for fellow believers."[40] He was the greatest missionary in Christian history; however, to endure what Paul went through required a strong, healthy body. A person of inferior health with underlying conditions would not have lasted through the beatings, let alone the countless other things he went through during his four missionary journeys. Making disciples of all nations is physically demanding. History records the harsh reality of the cruel treatment of those who sought to follow the Great Commission. Paul concludes 2 Corinthians 11:28–33 by

[39] Broadus, *Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*, 592.

[40] D. A. Carson, *From Triumphalism to Maturity: An Exposition of 2 Corinthians 10–13* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984), 123.

saying that he barely escaped being imprisoned in Damascus. The governor wanted to arrest Paul, but he escaped by being let down in a basket through a window in the wall.

Would an autopsy of Paul's body reveal a servant willing to suffer for Jesus Christ? The inhumane treatment he received was the cost of discipleship. Jesus said that to follow him required taking up a cross (Luke 9:23). Paul was willing to pay the price. An autopsy would reveal that faith in Jesus Christ cannot be broken by torture and fear of death. His testimony attested to a mindset that was unmoved by pain. Paul described the list of the things he endured as "light affliction" (2 Cor 4:17). His main focus, according to Carson, was his care for the church of Jesus Christ: "'Besides everything else,' Paul writes (the expression could mean 'besides all the other things left unmentioned,' or 'besides all I've mentioned and more of the same,' or, less likely, 'besides external trials'), 'I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches'"[41] (2 Cor 11:28).

To carry out the assignment given to him, the apostle Paul had to be spiritually, mentally, and physically strong. Answering the call of the Great Commission requires a strong body, soul, and spirit. Faith and fitness work together as allies and not foes. Understanding this truth allows for a greater outpouring of service to the mission. For many, "The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Matt 26:41). The physical cost of making disciples is greater than what many are able to pay. The apostle Paul was willing and able to carry out the Great Commission because he was healthy. His health and the grace of God allowed him to do great works.

Ephesians 2:8–9

The grace given for salvation is a gift and is not merited. Salvation is by grace through faith cultivated by hearing the Word of God (Rom 10:17). The depth of God's love for humanity is seen at the cross of Jesus Christ. Redemption was purchased and given away for free. The precious blood of the Lamb paid the debt of sin, and salvation was given without cost to whoever

[41] Carson, *From Triumphalism to Maturity*, 123.

believed (John 3:16).

In this passage, Paul eternally tied together grace and works. The grace that comes through faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ at Calvary is expressed through a life of faithful service to God. Genuine conversion always bears fruit (Matt 7:16). O'Brien writes, "The New Testament generally and the apostle in particular consistently urge those who have experienced God's gracious redemption to lead holy and godly lives."[42] A holy and godly life cannot be separated from good stewardship of the body. Grace is as good as its goal, which is a life full of good works. Good works bring glory to God by drawing others to Jesus Christ (Matt 5:16).

God's intention before creation was to pour out his grace on flesh, with the resulting fruit being good works. The incarnation was God in Christ bringing the world to himself (2 Cor 5:19). Flesh and blood would become the object of grace. Imperfection becomes the perfect test for the power of grace. Can grace overcome sin? The simple truth is that grace transforms people (Rom 5:20).

There is a need for the church of Jesus Christ to believe what the Bible teaches about the body. The body was redeemed and is waiting to be redeemed (Rom 8:23). Both truths are realities in those who have been saved. On this side of eternity, the Christian belief in redemption causes believers to take care of their bodies. This is a believer's response to the grace of God at work in them. On the other side of eternity, God will exchange the believers' earthly bodies for glorified bodies. God will finish what was his eternal plan from the beginning (Phil 3:21). O'Brien writes, "But the future dimension is not omitted; here the divine intention in this new creation, which will be consummated on the final day with the summing up of all things in Christ (1:9–10), is that we should perform the good works God has prepared for us to walk in."[43]

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[42] O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 180.

[43] O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 179.

Conclusion

For Christians, taking care of their bodies is one of the greatest things they can do as believers in Jesus Christ. The exceeding riches of God's grace is evident by good works. Those good works are incarnational and are carried out in the flesh. Sickness and disease hinder the good works God has for his church to do. The grace given by Jesus Christ helps believers to be good stewards of their bodies so that they will not be hindered in their mission for Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER 3

A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR GOOD HEALTH CARE

Three theoretical and practical issues support Christians promoting good health care: a believer must practice good nutritional habits, a believer must practice a good exercise and fitness plan, and the mind must be changed by forming new habits. Health and fitness experts provide a practical guide to maintaining basic health care, and their influence in this chapter is unquestionable.

Practice Good Nutritional Habits

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) developed the food guide pyramid in 1992. It provided a general overview of food that would promote health and wellness. However, it adversely affected Americans in their decline of health and increase in obesity. The food pyramid was a tool and not a cure. Graham Faiella writes, "The pyramid is just a guide to good nutrition. It can make recommendations, but it cannot force people to follow them. How you use the nutrition information provided by the food pyramid is up to you."[1]

What is nutrition, and how does nutrition influence health? Faiella explains, "The term 'nutrition' refers to all the processes related to the eating and digesting of food and the breaking down of food and its nutrients into energy."[2] Gregg R. Allison in his book entitled "Embodied" adds, "We seem to equate "good nutrition" with dieting, But such isn't the case, and dieting can be both a failure and dangerous. Briefly, nutrition is the act or process of providing or obtaining food and drink for the energy necessary for metabolism, health, growth, and repair."

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[1] Graham Faiella, *The Food Pyramid and Basic Nutrition: Assembling the Building Blocks of a Healthy Diet* (New York: Rosen, 2005), 5.

[2] Faiella, *The Food Pyramid and Basic Nutrition*, 7.

3 Gregg R. Allison, Living *a Whole People in a Fractured World Embodied* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2021), 159.

Malnutrition is a problem that is common in both poor and rich countries. In poor countries, malnutrition is the lack of food; in richer countries, it is the absence of nutritious food. Bloated stomachs and exposed skeletal frames are the visual picture of malnutrition in poor countries, while obesity is the picture of malnutrition in rich nations.

The body is in constant motion, even when inactive or sleeping. Without interruption, the heart is beating, blood flows through veins, and lungs supply oxygen to the body. Cells are dying, and new cells are replacing them in bones, muscles, and skin. The energy bill to sustain such a vigorous and continuous cycle is paid for by the food that is eaten. Food provides the power the body needs to function. Faiella states, "The amount of energy contained in food and the amount of energy your body burns is measured in calories."[3] Labels on foods and liquids give the number of calories per serving. However, what *calories* means is often misunderstood. The number given as calories per serving is the amount of energy that food will provide. An activity like swimming for an hour is said to burn a certain number of calories. This means that it would take a certain amount of energy to complete that task. The average person requires 2,000 calories daily to function.[4] The number of calories a person needs is also determined by gender, age, and lifestyle. Generally, males need more calories than females, children and teenagers need more calories than senior citizens, and active people need more calories than inactive people.

While there are thousands of possible food choices, food can be categorized into three main groups: carbohydrates, proteins, and fats. Each group plays an important role in maintaining good health. Carbohydrates are broken down by the digestion process into sugars, starches, and fiber. While Faiella breaks nutrition into three groups, Allison breaks nutrition into six classes: "carbohydrates, proteins, fats, vitamins, minerals, and water". There are two types of carbs: simple and complex. Simple carbohydrates supply the body with quick energy, but the

[3] Faiella, *The Food Pyramid and Basic Nutrition*, 9.

[4] Faiella, *The Food Pyramid and Basic Nutrition*, 9.

person feels tired and has less energy than before eating. Fruit juice, fruits, pasta, and candy fall into this category. Complex carbohydrates take longer to supply the body with energy, but the energy lasts longer. Fresh vegetables, brown rice, and bran are examples of complex carbs. Because complex carbs are less processed than simple carbohydrates, they contain more essential vitamins and minerals that benefit the body.

Proteins are typically considered chicken, beef, pork, legumes, fish, and soy products. Faiella writes, "Proteins are made of amino acids, sometimes called the building blocks of life."[5] Every cell contains proteins. The body employs twenty different amino acids, eleven of which it produces. However, the remaining amino acids must be gained through food. Proteins are found in animal and plant foods. By consuming animal and plant foods, a person gives the body what it requires for maximum efficiency. Fat, which is found in animal protein, offers added benefits not found in most fruits and vegetables.

Fats provide a greater energy supply than carbohydrates and proteins. Fats also allow for the greater absorption of vitamins into the body. There are three types of fats: saturated, unsaturated, and trans fats. All three types of fats influence how cholesterol is utilized in the body. Saturated fats contain both good and bad cholesterol; unsaturated fats contain good cholesterol; and trans fats contain bad cholesterol. Unsaturated fats, such as those found in olive, soybean, and sunflower oil, make for a healthy heart. The other two fats clog the arteries, leading to chronic heart disease.

Vitamins and minerals are found in plants and animals. They play a critical role in the body functioning properly. The body does not naturally produce either vitamins or minerals. They come from the foods eaten. While vitamins and minerals do not provide energy, they help to regulate the body's processes.[6] Vitamin C protects the body against infections and promotes

[5] Faiella, *The Food Pyramid and Basic Nutrition*, 12.

[6] Faiella, *The Food Pyramid and Basic Nutrition*, 16.

strong bones and teeth. A great source of vitamin C is fresh fruits and vegetables. Vitamin A impacts vision and the immune system. Carrots and broccoli are good sources of vitamin A. Vitamin D found in milk and dairy makes for strong bones.

Many nutrients are integral to the body's health, such as minerals and vitamins. Some are not found in abundance in food sources. Minerals are necessary for the body to perform various functions. The minerals crucial to the body are calcium, phosphorus, sodium, potassium, zinc, iron, chlorine, and magnesium. Other minerals, such as copper, are found in small quantities in the body. Each vitamin and mineral makes its own contribution to the body's overall health condition. Some more than others, but all are necessary. A lack of iron will result in the production of less oxygen in the blood and will affect energy levels. Eating foods like chicken and green leafy vegetables will supply the iron necessary to fuel energy and aid digestion. Faiella states, "Digestion is the conversion of food into the nutrients and energy that your body needs to stay alive."[7] The process of digestion starts with chewing food. Food broken down in the mouth is carried into the stomach and intestines. From the intestines, food enters the bloodstream, where it is carried throughout the body. Leftover energy will be stored as fat. Undigested food or waste is stored in the large intestines until eliminated.

Food is a necessity. It provides the energy that allows the body to carry out its daily duties. How much food is needed daily to function? The amount of energy taken in should equal the amount of energy burned.[8] When the body takes in more energy than it uses, the body takes on fat. When the body uses more energy than it has taken in, the body will lose weight by burning excess fat.

Body mass index (BMI) is a tool to calculate what a person should weigh. A healthy weight is a BMI number from nineteen to twenty-five. Any weight under nineteen is considered

[7] Faiella, *The Food Pyramid and Basic Nutrition*, 19.

[8] Faiella, *The Food Pyramid and Basic Nutrition*, 19.

underweight, and a BMI over twenty-five is overweight. Any BMI over thirty is considered obese. This number is calculated by dividing weight in pounds by height in inches, dividing that answer by height in inches, and multiplying that answer by 703.[9] The resulting number will serve as a baseline for evaluating the physical condition. One can adjust eating habits considering BMI score, whether a healthy weight or overweight.

There has never been a time when the public has had so many choices. The American people are bombarded daily with millions of food options. Not a single day goes by that they are not hit with advertisements to purchase food products. Lori A. Smolin and Mary B. Grosvenor write, "A healthy choice can be any choice that is part of an overall healthy diet."[10] Facebook, TikTok, television commercials, billboards, and grocery store fliers pressure the average consumer to buy advertised food products because they taste delicious or are advertised as healthy. Making a healthy choice takes nutritional information, understanding, and self-discipline.

The question is, "How reliable is the information?" The validity of a nutritional claim must be proven through the scientific method. The scientific method starts with an observation. Next is an explanation, called a hypothesis, based on the questions arising from the observation that must be tested. The outcome of the tested hypothesis is called a theory. A theory is a logical reason for an observation. Smolin and Grosvenor explain, "Some nutrition information comes from individual contact with physicians and dietitians; some is printed on food labels and in educational pamphlets, but much of it reaches us through television, radio, newspapers, and magazines. Americans today get most of their food and nutrition information from the mass media."[11] Theories can be proven wrong when a better explanation supports the observation.

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[9] Faiella, *The Food Pyramid and Basic Nutrition*, 23.

[10] Lori A. Smolin and Mary B. Grosvenor, *Nutrition Science and Applications* (Jefferson City, MO: Infobase, 2009), 8.

[11] Smolin and Grosvenor, *Nutrition Science and Applications*, 10.

Judging nutritional information requires answering four questions: Does the information make sense? Where did the information come from? Was the study well-designed and accurately interpreted? Who stands to benefit?[12] The average person trusts others to answer these questions. However, it is important to vet those entrusted to do due diligence. The health of Americans is in the hands of scientists, nutritionists, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and other governmental agencies that act as watchdogs for consumers.

A critical source of information about food is found in the ingredients label. All food inspected by the FDA must have an ingredients label that identifies the additives in that food. Those additives are generally safe for most people. However, they are on the label for those sensitive to them.[13]

Asking the right questions about nutrition is paramount to good health. Good health is rooted in nutritious food that aids the body in functioning properly. "You are what you eat." Schools no longer offer dietary and nutrition classes to students. The results can be seen in children making bad food choices that lead to obesity, which has many health challenges that could have been averted if the children understood basic nutrition information. While eating is a daily activity, many people do not know what to eat nor to know how much to eat.

The FDA created a tool known as the food pyramid to teach people what they should eat from various food groups. The categories are listed as grains, vegetables, fruits, proteins, and dairy. Daily physical exercise is also toted by the FDA as a vital component to good health.[14] Along with the food pyramid, the idea is taught to eat foods low in trans fats, low in sugars, and low in oils. Having a good basic understanding of food will promote health and wellness.

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[12] Smolin and Grosvenor, *Nutrition Science and Applications*, 18–20.

[13] Smolin and Grosvenor, *Nutrition Science and Applications*, 506–7.

[14] Smolin and Grosvenor, *Nutrition Science and Applications*, 361.

15 John W. Kleinig, *Wonder-fully Made* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2021) 24.

Both examples are tied to food. God instructed Adam that he could eat freely from all the trees in the garden except one. As John W. Kleinig states, "…the complete order has been designed to support all life on earth, whether it be the life of plants, fish, birds, animals, or humanity." God declared that eating the correct things results in blessings, while consuming the forbidden fruit—the unhealthy choices, the sweet to the taste and pleasing to the eye—could lead to the day when you shall surely die. There are consequences for eating from the wrong tree. Good dietary choices must be made if a person wants to be healthy and live a full life.

Practice Good Exercise and Fitness

It is important to understand the fitness cycle of work and rest. Laurette Willis writes, "Your mind and body need rest to perform at their peak levels, so seven to nine hours of sleep each night is also important. Continually forcing your body to work on inadequate sleep is hard on the immune system and can lead to stress, mental fatigue, and illness."[15] One must rest to work, and work must be followed by rest. The body needs both work and rest. This symbiotic relationship is necessary. Removing either one will result in dire consequences. Rest is the starting place of a good exercise and fitness plan. Rest is the skeleton system of sound fitness. It will determine the quality and quantity of the body's response to a workout regimen. Rest is essential and must be a part of an individual's fitness plan.

A fitness plan is a set of individualized goals designed to assist a person in attaining strength, health, and strong well-being. Willis explains that fitness is "the ability of your heart, blood vessels, lungs, and muscles to carry out daily tasks and occasional, unexpected physical challenges with a minimum of fatigue and discomfort."[16] This, combined with proper food choices, creates a fitness plan. A diet and fitness program is for life. It can be modified and

16 Laurette Willis, *BASIC Steps to Godly Fitness: Strengthening Your Body and Soul in Christ* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 2005), 25.

[16] American College of Sports Medicine, *ACSM Fitness Book*, 3rd ed. (Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics, 2003), 9.

adjusted, but it must be incorporated into a daily routine. The American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) calls fitness "a lifetime pursuit."[17]

There are four components to fitness: aerobic fitness, muscular fitness, flexibility, and body composition. Walking, swimming, and bicycling are examples of aerobic exercises that utilize large muscle groups. An aerobic exercise will measure how well the body turns oxygen into energy. Muscular fitness tests the strength and stamina of muscles. Flexibility is the ability to bend joints and muscles through a range of motion. Body composition measures the amount of fat tissues compared to other tissues.

One should begin a fitness program with an assessment. The assessment will measure aerobic fitness, muscular fitness, flexibility, and the amount of fat tissues versus other tissues. The test results will determine the starting point of one's exercise program. Fitness programs are not one size fits all. Each program is tailor-made. The exercises chosen to develop each component vary from person to person. Age, disabilities, and weight must be considered when customizing a fitness program. The most important thing to remember is that fitness is not a competition with others. One should not compare his program with others. It is a competition with past progress. The objective is to stay focused and be consistent. The value of a fitness program is that it holds one accountable and responsible to the program. The exercises and routines may be adjusted, but the commitment to follow the program remains.

ACSM provides some important guidelines to follow when exercising for health and fitness.

> Wear loose, comfortable clothing and sturdy athletic shoes (a good investment).
>
> Exercise at an intensity high enough that you feel invigorated but not exhausted. When your exercise intensity is appropriate, your breathing rate increases, but you are still able to carry on a conversation.
>
> Take special care when exercising in hot and humid weather.
>
> Slow down your walk or other activity.
>
> Exercise early in the morning or later in the evening, or in air conditioning.

[17] American College of Sports Medicine, *ACSM Fitness Book*, 9.

Drink plenty of water before, during, and after exercise.

Cool down for a longer period of time.

Because exercise is only a benefit if you are feeling well, do not try to exercise when you have a cold, the flu, or another illness. Wait until you are feeling better to resume your program.

If you miss your exercise sessions for more than a week, make sure to start out again slowly. Resume your program by repeating the exercises you did a few days before your last workout, then progress normally from that new point. Following this advice will reduce your chances of injury.[18]

ACSM Fitness Book offers a word of caution when preparing a fitness program.[19] ACSM makes several suggestions, such as avoiding any products that promise immediate results. ACSM asserts that getting in shape is a process, and all processes require a commitment of time. It suggests not to expect overnight success, be prepared mentally to make fitness and health a lifetime agenda. People should not be so quick to believe any product that promises results with little or no effort. Fitness requires an investment of sweat equity and personal commitment. However, ACSM promises a well-prepared program can guarantee that effort will produce results[20]

These are more warnings from the American College of Sports Medicine: Any product that targets specific fat deposits is not to be trusted. Exercise uses energy that is stored throughout the body. With time, fat and cellulite in certain areas of the body will be reduced. Products that promise to remove unwanted inches from the waist or other body areas are fictional. It will seem that inches have been lost, but it is only lost water by sweating. Those inches will reappear once the person is hydrated. There is no easy way to become fit. The expression "No pain, no gain," applies to health and wellness. They also caution that individuals need to be prepared to be sore and hurting when beginning the journey to wholeness. Avoid any promise of a fitness plan that does not require a fight. Willis writes, "You have the opportunity to

[18] American College of Sports Medicine, *ACSM Fitness Book*, 90–91.

[19] American College of Sports Medicine, *ACSM Fitness Book*, 164–65.

[20] American College of Sports Medicine, *ACSM Fitness Book*, 164–65.

change the quality of the rest of your life by investing a few minutes a day in exercise."[21]

The price paid for health and wellness is cheaper when exercising daily. There are many benefits gained by making exercise a lifestyle. Willis identifies a few benefits:

Lowers risks for cancer, heart disease, and stroke
Lowers tension and reduces stress
Increases endurance, stamina, and flexibility
Promotes better sleep
Lowers blood pressure and cholesterol levels
Leads to healthier pregnancies
Improves mood and lowers risk of depression or anxiety
Decreases risk of osteoporosis
Lowers health care bills and lessens dependence on prescribed medications
Improves mental alertness and ability to concentrate
Improves sexual relations
Helps us look and feel younger and improves the complexion
Lowers risk of developing diabetes
Lowers insulin, allowing fat to leave the fat cells to be burned as fuel
Strengthens the immune system
Strengthens bones and joints, tones muscle, and increases lean body mass
Decreases appetite, raises metabolism, and increases calories burned[22]

Practice New Thinking Habits

Healthy habits are formed out of healthy thinking. David J. Frähm and Anne E. Frähm give an illustration of a person whose car engine failed because he did not get an oil change.[23] A simple oil change could have prevented the car engine from failing. Likewise, maintenance for the body is proper food, exercise, and rest. A popular proverb says, "An ounce of prevention is

[21] Willis, *BASIC Steps to Godly Fitness*, 74.

[22] Willis, *BASIC Steps to Godly Fitness*, 72–73.

[23] David J. Frähm and Anne E. Frähm, *Healthy Habits: 20 Simple Ways to Improve Your Health* (New York: Piñon, 1993), 12.

worth a pound of cure." Maintenance is the ancient secret to health and wellness; it is the fountain of youth. However, it is the most overlooked antidote to being healthy.

Medicine is a business, and businesses operate to make a profit. The medical industry is a business that treats the symptoms instead of the root cause of many diseases. Greater profits are generated by treating pain with costly medications and not addressing the underlying problem. The real issue is faulty thinking about health and wellness. Instead of looking only to primary care doctors for the solution to health challenges, one should seek out alternative remedies and disciplines, such as dietitians, nutritionists, Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine or homeopathic doctors.[24]

A dietitian is skilled in giving insight into how eating habits profoundly affect the quality and length of our mortality. Bad habits can be linked to physical illness and obesity due to poor food choices and a lack of exercise. This leads to many becoming the victim of one's own choices. Dietitians attempt to sway patients toward success in wellness and better food choices. Dietitians and nutritionist are similar—they both focus on nutrition. However, a nutritionist might offer a more generalized advice compared to the therapy offered by a dietitian. Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine are often trained in both western and eastern medicine. They work with pharmaceuticals as well as chiropractic, acupuncture, and cupping. Often, they are looking for root causes, the why, and the how can an issue be cured rather than calming and covering the illness with medications that potentially have detrimental life altering side effects.

The three biggest killers in America are heart attacks, cancers, and strokes. Statistics reveal that 33 to 50 percent of people in the United States will die because of heart attacks, cancers, and strokes, and all three can be prevented or mitigated through dietary changes.[25] There

[24] Frähm and Frähm, *Healthy Habits*. *20 Simple Ways to Improve Your Health* (New York: Piñon, 1993), 14 – 15.

[25] Frähm and Frähm, *Healthy Habits*, 12.

is an urgent need to reprogram how society thinks about health. People should not depend solely on doctors to keep them healthy. An individual's health is exactly that, their health. Frähm and Frähm render a challenge to readers to take charge of their own health. Should anyone trust a medical doctor alone with their health and wellness when Western doctors have little training in preventative medicine?

The average medical school provides less than three hours of training in nutrition during four years of medical school, and less than 3 percent of the licensing exam questions are concerned with nutrition.[26] Taking charge of and controlling health is a personal and powerful matter. It requires being proactive. Being proactive requires one to do his own research, which may include seeking out a dietitian to help develop a plan of action for good health. It is imperative that each person, realizing these statistics, should seek alternative medical advice. Understanding the personal role and individual stake in health is powerful because it holds people accountable and responsible for what they eat.[27]

The adage, "You are what you eat!" reminds that the most important issue in the game of life is health. The priority and focus should be on one's own health. Patients carry the responsibility and the beneficial outcome if they play the game as if their life depends on it—because it does. The good news is that many health-related diseases can be reversed with good nutritional habits. Regaining good health requires strict dietary changes, exercise, and a stress-management program.[28]

Food is more than a necessity. It is a costly ideology that consumes a person's time and defines social status and interaction. Frahm and Frahm write, "Food is so key to our culture

[26] Frähm and Frähm, *Healthy Habits*, 14.

[27] Frähm and Frähm, *Healthy Habits*, 16.

[28] Frähm and Frähm, *Healthy Habits*, 15.

that even our individual identity is built around the kinds of food we prefer to consume."[29] Before taking control of dietary choices, one must admit they are powerless over their palate. To counter this, Frahm and Frahm suggest building "Feast Meals" into the dietary plan. With "Feast Meals," it is allowed have one meal a week out of twenty-one to eat whatever is desired. The rationale behind this indulgence is simply this. "If you begin to feel deprived of certain foods, you will quite likely lose the emotional motivation you need to keep going toward long-term health-promoting changes."[30] Feeling deprived leads to binge eating, and bingeing leads to weight gain. Allowing a feasting time supports emotional motivation to continue the health trajectory. Time spent with less restricted food choices helps keep the fitness program goals in focus. The feast meal mindset shift is accommodating and the perfect partner for a successful nutritional change. Frahm and Frahm explain, "Besides, those who study nutrition tell us that it's not what we eat 5 percent of the time that'll kill us, but the stuff we feed our bodies the other 95 percent of the time."[31]

Mentioned previously are two of the twenty habits outlined by Frahm and Frahm. It is imperative to take charge and plan feast meals in a fitness program. Frahm and Frahm discuss eighteen other habits. These concepts are often disregarded as wives tales or modern myths when in reality they are extremely relevant to longevity and good health.

Drink Pure Water

"Drink pure water" is foundational and straightforward; however, many people are consistently dehydrated. To determine how much water one should drink daily, divide the individual's total body weight by half, then divide that by eight. The resulting number is how

[29] Frähm and Frähm, *Healthy Habits*, 17.

[30] Frähm and Frähm, *Healthy Habits*, 19.

[31] Frähm and Frähm, *Healthy Habits*, 19.

many eight-ounce glasses of water that should be consumed daily. Being hydrated is essential to a healthy body, and the quality of drinking water matters. Pollution, chlorine, fluoride, lead, radon, and parasites threaten drinking water quality. The issue of contaminated water in Flint, Michigan, and its negative effect on the health and well-being of many are well documented. Frahm and Frahm's admonition of "drink pure water" directs society toward the kind of water that should be consumed drink. The direct warning reminds everyone that they must drink enough water to sustain a healthy body.

Cut Back on Refined Sugars

"Cut back on refined sugars" is a simple prohibition that should be taken seriously. Frahm and Frahm warn,

> Many doctors, nutritionists, and researchers consider refined sugar a major nemesis of American health. Nevertheless, sugar is, hands down, America's number one food additive. Would you believe that we consume ten times more of it than we do all the other 2,600 or so food additives put together? The one exception is salt, but even it runs a very distant second.[32]

Sugar is in most food; it is unavoidable. Frahm and Frahm write, "Even if you don't eat sweets, the amount of refined sugar you may be consuming would no doubt shock you. Over two-thirds of the refined sugar in this country is added to manufactured food products. In other words, it's hidden in many of the things we buy at the supermarket."[33] The consequences of ingesting 600 pounds of sugar yearly are severe. Tooth decay, obesity, hypoglycemia, diabetes, raw nerves, osteoporosis, and arthritis are some potential results.

Frähm and Frähm give strict instructions to help with the battle against sugar consumption: "Don't Buy Sweets, Rid Your Kitchen Of Refined Sugar, Eat Complex Carbohydrates, and Examine The Stressors In Your Life."[34]

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[32] Frähm and Frähm, *Healthy Habits*, 82.

[33] Frähm and Frähm, *Healthy Habits*, 82.

[34] Frähm and Frähm, *Healthy Habits*, 91–92

Cut Back on Salt

"Cut back on salt" is an absolute. While salt is a necessary part of everyone's diet, the average diet has excessive salt content. The average American consumes three to five teaspoons of salt daily, while the body only requires one-tenth of a teaspoon.[35] This overload of salt causes hypertension (high blood pressure) and hypersensitivity to stress. It is the number one reason doctors write prescriptions and the leading cause of doctor visits.

Frähm and Frähm suggest decreasing salt intake and increasing consumption of vegetables and fruit. This habit will reduce craving for salt. Replacing salt with other spices and seasonings allows the body to enjoy the natural flavors of food without risking poor health. Stop eating canned and processed foods. Canned foods are often high in salt. Carbonated drinks and sodas should also be eliminated because they contain sodium bicarbonate, which is salt in disguise.[36]

Changing Mindset

Thoughts affect habits. A person's mindset, how one thinks, is critical to changing the negative possible outcomes of obesity J. Ron Eaker spends many pages explaining that people learn consciously or unconsciously how to shop for food, exercise (or not), handle stress, and eat. Thoughts imprint at an early age and become actions, actions become habits, habits become character, and character determines legacy.[37] Looking into the mirror is quite a simple way to put a face to these statistics. Eaker notes, "80% of Type 2 diabetes is related to obesity."[38] It is hard to find anyone who is not aware of the notion that many people suffer from obesity. A shift in one's mindset can be the impetus to change one's health condition. Body shaming is not a good

[35] Frähm and Frähm, *Healthy Habits*, 95.

[36] Frähm and Frähm, *Healthy Habits*, 99.

[37] J. Ron Eaker, *Fat-Proof Your Family: God's Way to Forming Healthy Habits for Life* (Bloomington, MN: Fat Proof Your Family, 2007), 18–19.

[38] Eaker, *Fat-Proof Your Family*, 19.

motivational method to change anyone's eating habits; explaining the positive benefits of losing weight is a better option. Acknowledging culpability in the resulting affects, facing up to the fact that this situation is self-imposed, allows individuals to accept responsibility for their physical condition. This runs counter to a person denying their part in their condition. Eaker writes,

> The most egregious example of this mindset was the failed lawsuit against a fast-food chain a few years ago, accusing them of making a child obese. I suspect it would have had merit if Ronald McDonald had kidnapped the young tyke and held him hostage in the basement of the local Ronald McDonald House and force-fed him Big Macs for a year.[39]

Making excuses and blaming industry or society for obesity cannot help a person needing a change in their own mindset. Owning and accepting the present condition is the beginning of making positive and lasting changes in health. While many symptoms are rooted in diseases, how one thinks about health is paramount to improving choices and becoming healthy. It starts with accepting one's current condition and being willing to adopt new habits. Eaker says, "Weight control is a head game."[40] Eaker quotes John Sklare, author of *The Inner Diet*: "You can't change your weight until you change your mind."[41] Because food is connected to the part of the brain that senses pleasure, it is impossible to override the system. The course of action that works is to feed this part of the brain sporadically by giving it junk food. Andrew Weil writes, "I think it is fair to say that food is an important source of pleasure for most of us, and a primary source of it for some of us. For that reason, any recommendations for healthy eating that diminish or eliminate the pleasure of the experience of eating are sure to fail."[42]

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[39] Eaker, *Fat-Proof Your Family*, 27.

[40] Eaker, *Fat-Proof Your Family*, 33.

[41] John Sklare, quoted in Eaker, *Fat-Proof Your Family*, 34.

[42] Andrew Weil, *Eating Well for Optimum Health*, quoted in Eaker, *Fat-Proof Your Family*, .

Conclusion

Health and fitness are important to longevity and require a certain mind set. It requires simple changes in lifestyle and diet. This mindset gradually improves the quantity and quality of life. Society has trained its members to ignore what is actually good in favor of what tastes good and feels good. Bad dietary habits and the lack of physical exercise are formed from these choices and are difficult to break. The restaurant and fast-food industry along with the pharmaceutical industry, medical industry, and beverage corporations appear to work in concert to undermine the wellbeing and health of the country. These industrial giants appeal to what looks good and feels good to society. The most advertised options perpetuate a cyclical pattern of poor choices, which lead to obesity, which lead to disease and bad health. Easily accessible, salt ridden, fast food chains offer extra-large, high calorie, sugary beverages to assist in digesting overly fatty, carbohydrate loaded meals.

Discipline is necessary to take control of one's life. Most people are born with a healthy body, a blank slate. Then they learn, grow, and make choices, good and bad. Restoration from poor choices and regaining a healthy body requires much work but it also must be accompanied by some enjoyment. It cannot be all drudgery and suffering. Eaker explains that people can accomplish health goals if there are rewards and pleasure along the way.[43]

Finally, there is a need to develop a team of specialists to inform better health choices. The team could consist of a primary doctor, a nutritionist, a fitness trainer, a chiropractor, a homeopathy doctor, and massage therapist. Any or all these professionals could be of great assistance to anyone on the road to good health and wellness.

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[43] Eaker, *Fat-Proof Your Family*, 36

CHAPTER 4

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

Derived from chapters two and three were five lessons that form the curriculum that will be taught to the TBC participants. The first four lessons of the curriculum will be examined by three pastors, who have completed their Doctor of Ministry degree through a Southern Baptist seminary. They will evaluate lessons one through four for its' adherence to sound doctrine and biblical practices. The fifth lesson will be validated by a certified fitness instructor who will validate whether it is in line with standard health and fitness practices. All five lessons are to be taught to the TBC leadership team who have volunteered to be a part of this study. All the lessons will be taught over a period of four weeks via zoom due to scheduling conflicts. All the participants were available if the zoom platform was utilized. The date and time of each session will be determined by the availability of the participants. Each week one session will be taught. Each session will last approximately two hours. Weeks one through three will cover lessons one through four. Week four will cover lesson five. Prior to the initiation of the five lessons, each participant will be given a health and fitness survey, a BMI evaluation, and a pre-test questionnaire that they will fill out. The pre-test will measure their biblical and practical knowledge of why health and fitness are important prior to them attending the five lessons. A post-test will be administered at the completion of the five lessons. The pre-test and post-test are identical. At the conclusion of the lessons the participants will be challenged to make a pledge that they will better steward their bodies. They will affirm their commitment by signing a pledge card.

Managing What Belongs To God

The created order has a role to play in this life. This role is carried out, in and through our bodies. God is the maker of everyone and everything. God through Jesus Christ reminds us

that Christians are stewards of what belongs to Him. Believers are therefore responsible to take care of what God has made.

Lesson Implementation

The summation of history is the final judgment of humanity. The conclusion of which is the accounting of resources that were given to each person. Paul wrote to the church in Corinth when he said each person must give an account for the deeds done in their body (2 Cor 5:10). This is the very definition of stewardship. These lessons will give followers of Jesus Christ biblical and practical reasons to be better stewards of their bodies.

Lesson 1: A Biblical Rationale for Health Care – Part 1: Ownership

Five important ideas form the framework for lesson 1. The first idea that merits attention is the word "belong" (Rom 12:1–2; 1 Cor 6:20). The main idea presented in the text is that of ownership. Salvation offered by Jesus Christ is free, but a transaction took place at the moment of salvation. What formally belonged to believers was transferred to Jesus Christ. Our body, soul, and spirit belong to Jesus (I Thes 5:23). This truth should be acknowledged with our daily affirmations (Gal 2:20; Rom 6:3-11). Jesus gave his life as a sacrifice for sin (Rom 3:25). The price was paid, and we were brought with it (I Cor 6:20). Believers in Jesus are instructed to present their bodies as a living sacrifice. The reality is that what is being sacrificed to the Lord already belongs to Christ (Ps 24:1). Since the sacrifice is to the Lord, it must be pure and without blemish (Lev 22:20-25; Heb 9:14). The implication is an admonishment to take good care of what is being sacrificed and offered to God.

Life takes on new meaning when there is a clear understanding of our purpose and our roll as steward over what God owns (1 Cor 6:12–16). Taking care of what belongs to Christ becomes our calling and mission. The Holy Spirit's indwelling is a constant reminder of how unique a relationship we have with God. It is one of owner and tenant. Our fleshly bodies belong to him and Jesus lives in and through our bodies (1 Cor 6:20).

A foundational truth of discipleship is that the body belongs to the Lord. The sinful deeds of the body must be put to death daily. (2 Cor 4:11) We demonstrate our love for Jesus Christ by identifying with his death, burial, and resurrection. (Rom 6:4) The indwell of the Holy Spirit is the proof that we belong to God through Christ Jesus.

The lesson included the following key ideas:

1. Our bodies belong to the Lord Jesus
2. Our bodies are the living sacrifice of the New Testament Scripture.
3. The love of God includes the body, soul, and spirit
4. The believer's body is joined to Jesus Christ
5. The Holy Spirit living in us is proof that we belong to God.

Lesson 2: A Biblical Rationale for Health Care – Part 2: Self Control

Health care is a matter of self-discipline. We become what we eat. It is evident by the many health challenges that people are experiencing that self-discipline is not easy as it seems. It would seem that self-discipline or self-control would be easy for those in whom the Holy Spirit dwell, however there is a difference between the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and the filling of the Holy Spirit (Gal 5:22–23; Phil 3:19). The indwelling of the Holy Spirit identifies the owner of the property; the filling of the Holy Spirit identifies who is in control. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit brings a conviction of sin. A Holy Spirit-filled person lives a disciplined life. Self-control is a fruit of the Holy Spirit. While the concept suggests that self-control comes from self or the flesh, it is not. Self-control is a fruit grown by its connection to the vine Jesus Christ (Jn 15). Self-discipline is a matter of dependence on the Lord. Making good food choices and exercising daily requires dependence on Jesus Christ for the help and strength. This connection to Jesus bears the fruit of self-control.

In the Old Testament obedience was connected to keeping Mosaic laws that were impossible to obey through human effort, God in the New Testament gives the simple instruction

to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit (John 15:1–8; Rom 8:14; Eph 4:20). This is the freedom Jesus proclaimed (Luke 4:18–19). Jesus set the captives free. Following Jesus free us from the bondages that ruin our health. The prisoners are no longer in bondage to the rules and regulations of the law but are free to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit leads to life and peace, while enemies of the cross are led by self-indulgence and the fulfillment of fleshly appetites. There is never any satisfaction in carrying out the desires of the flesh (Luke 12:16–21). Only in Christ can one be truly fulfilled, because he is the purpose of life and our reason for living.

Allowing the Holy Spirit to lead and guide one's life is the solution to the overcoming the appetites of the flesh. Disciplined living in the New Testament is a result of being filled with the Holy Spirit. Being Holy Spirit-controlled is the opposite of having self-control or exercising our will power. The Apostle Paul admitted that he was powerless to demands of the flesh. He discovered a law that when he would do good that evil was present (Rom 7:21-25) The answer to living a discipline life is yielding oneself to the leading of the Holy Spirit. Following the guidance of the Holy Spirit gives one the presence of mind and power to take care of one's health.

The lesson included the following key ideas:

1. A disciplined life is evidence of the filling of the Holy Spirit.
2. New Testament obedience is connected to following the leading of the Holy Spirit.
3. Self-control is not possible in the flesh.
4. Jesus gave freedom from the rules and regulations of the law.
5. Living a life of dependence on Jesus is a work of the Holy Spirit

Lesson 3: A Biblical Rationale for Health Care Part 3: The Law of Love

The law of love is the prevailing theme of the scriptures. God defines Himself as love (1 Jn 4:8). His love was demonstrated by His incarnation and His death on the cross for our

redemption (Rom 5:8). Jesus sacrificed his body for our sins because he was bond by love towards us (I Jn 4:10). Marriage is also a bind held together by a covenant and love. Many would readily conclude that the covenant and love are only between a man and woman. What is most often overlooked and misunderstood is that God is the creator and sustainer of the institution of marriage. The agreement is not only horizontal but vertical. That means that there are three persons involved in the marriage contract. A man, woman, and God are connected in the marriage covenant.

Biblical love is a selfless act grounded in obedience to the covenant. Love can be recognized by what it does. Real love is identified by a series of selfless actions (Col 2:21–23). This love is not self-centered, self-seeking, self-serving, or selfish. It understands that working to provide for one's family is love in action. To provide for one's family, a person must be healthy or physically fit (1 Tim 5:8; John 5:17). Taking care of oneself in a biblical manner becomes a high priority. It is at the top of the list of selfless love actions that take place between a man and woman in holy matrimony (Eph 5:28–33).

Orthopraxis, which mean right practice or behavior, is rooted in orthodoxy, which consists of right belief (Titus 2:4–7; Matt 15:11). Having a proper understanding of the relationship between love, marriage, and work is necessary to be in the center of God's will. To fulfill God's commandment to love his wife, a man must take care of his health.

Healthy living is not optional for a person who loves the Lord Jesus. Taking care of one's family comes with a price that love demands. This love, which is from above, is selfless and willing to work to provide for one's family. It provides a healthy parent, a healthy example, a healthy lifestyle, and healthy options to develop healthy habits. Working and eating are reciprocal. One works to eat, and one must eat to work. The contract of marriage and love requires married people to take care of themselves so that they can work. Poor health due to unhealthy choices is not selfless love.

The lesson included the following key ideas:

1. The law of love demands healthy living.
2. Selfless love is different than selfish love.
3. Work is an expression of love.
4. Right doctrine produces right living.

Lesson 4: A Biblical Rationale for Health Care – Part 4: Gospel Service

Jesus chose healthy disciples. When considering the "Great Commission" given by Jesus Christ, the need for good health is often overlooked. It is hard to be a good witness for Jesus Christ and suffer from self-imposed poor health (Eph 5:28–33). How can Christ's great commandment and commission be honored without strength and energy? How can a person teach and preach without stamina? How can converts be baptized if one is frail or weak. Even if an individual's bad health condition is no fault of their own, serving Jesus in the mission field requires being healthy. Paul was, the greatest missionary who ever lived, yet he faced many hardships on his journey. Fulfilling his mission meant he had a good portion of health and strength (2 Cor 11:24–33). There was, and still is, a high a price to pay for being on the mission field. Paul could pay that price because he was reasonably fit to do so.

Proper stewardship is the responsibility of everyone who names Jesus as Lord and Savior. A steward manages the affairs of another. Our bodies do not belong to us, but to the Lord. Taking care of one's body is commanded and one day will be commended by the Lord for doing so (Eph 2:8–9; Matt 7:16). Reconciling man to God the Father was Christ's ministry. It is why he came in the flesh (Rom 5:20; 2 Cor 5:19; Phil 3:21). This word of reconciliation has been given to believers in Jesus Christ. Working in the mission field for the advancement of the gospel takes a toil on the natural bodies. Great care must be given to the upkeep and care of the body. While a glorified body, is in the believers in Jesus Christ future, we presently have earthly bodies that require rest, quality food and exercise. Good health care is not an option but a necessity for accomplishing the assignment Christ has given to the church.

Proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ is the highest command and calling of the church. Preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ is physically demanding. Exercising good stewardship over the body is required to be effective and consistent. Poor health can easily derail missionary work. Good stewardship of the body is a light and witness to those who are without Christ. Jesus was manifested in the flesh (I Tim 3:16; 1 Jn 4:2). Jesus's body was important to his mission (1 Pet 2:24; I Jn 3:8; Isa 53). The body is important now and will play an important role in the plans of God. In its' present form the body requires proper care and nurture for it to function at its' best to fulfill the great commission.

The lesson included the following key ideas:

1. Jesus chose healthy disciples.
2. Mission work is physically demanding.
3. Good stewardship of the body is a witness to the world.
4. Jesus' healthy body was important to his mission.

Lesson 5: A Practical Guide for Good Health Care

There is a saying, "Some people are so heavenly minded that they are no earthly good". Being heavenly minded doesn't mean lacking common sense. It is natural and practical for one to take care of themselves (Eph 5:29). Each person has the responsibility to honor their body through good health care practices. This lesson will give each leader useful tools, and information that can serve as a guide to anyone interested in having or maintaining good health (Prov 1:20,21).

Body Mass Index:

Pursuing good health and fitness is a simple process and requires a minimum amount of weekly time to acquire and maintain. Taking a Body Mass Index (BMI) test is a starting point for many on their journey to good health. A BMI number measures body fat and is used to assess

whether someone is underweight, of a healthy weight, overweight, or obese.[1] While the BMI formula is a helpful tool, other factors can make the number inaccurate, such as muscle mass and bone density. Using this formula as an assessment point can be useful and beneficial in a health analysis.

*Food Pyramid***:**

The United States Department of Agriculture introduced the food pyramid in 1992. It is a visual guide for eating. The dietary choices at the base of the food pyramid represent items that are important for consumption and good health. Going from the base of the pyramid upward, there are foods that should be eaten sparingly. The rule of thumb is that everyone should eat from the different pyramid tiers.

Calories:

The impact of calories consumed daily determines the energy one has to function. Calories that are not used are stored and eventually turn into fat. It is important to understand the calories and food labels mandated by the FDA. One needs to know where these labels are on the package and what they mean. Four questions must be asked when reading a food label. Does the information make sense? Where did the information come from? Was the study well-designed and accurately understood? Who stands to gain from the information listed on the label?

*Three Categories Of Foo*d**:**

There are three categories of food: carbohydrates, proteins, and fats. Carbohydrates are either simple or complex. Simple carbohydrates give a quick burst of energy but leave a person tired and less energetic than before eating. Fruits, pasta, and candy are examples of simple carbohydrates. Complex carbohydrates, such as vegetables and brown rice, take longer to release energy into the body, and that energy lasts longer. Proteins come primarily from eating animal products and plant foods. Every cell of the body contains proteins. More than half of the

[1] See appendix 2.

necessary proteins are already produced by one's body. The other half of the proteins that are needed come from food. Fats are the greatest source of energy for the body. There are saturated fats, trans fats, and unsaturated fats. Saturated and trans fats are bad for the body; they clog the heart. Unsaturated fats are necessary for health. Olive oil, soybean oil, and sunflower oil are a few examples of unsaturated fats that help to keep the heart healthy.

Digestion:

Digestion, the breakdown of food into nutrients and energy, is the process used by the body to stay alive. The process of digestion starts with chewing. Food is then carried into the stomach and intestines. From the intestines, food enters the bloodstream, where it is carried throughout the body. Leftover energy is stored as fat, and undigested food is discarded as waste. Proper digestion includes taking periods of rest. While work burns off the calories consumed, rest is necessary for the body to perform at peak efficiency. Lack of rest stresses the body, and prolonged fatigue weakens the immune system. To refuel, the body requires seven to nine hours of sleep daily.

Four Dimensions Of Fitness

Fitness is not one dimensional. There is aerobic fitness, muscular fitness, flexibility, and body composition. Aerobic exercises measure how well the body turns oxygen into energy. Muscular fitness measures the strength and stamina of muscles. Flexibility demonstrates the ability of muscles to function in a range of motion. Body composition measures the amount of fat tissue compared to other tissues. A fitness assessment will examine all four components of fitness. The results will guide and inform the direction of a fitness plan. Personal factors that must be considered when formulating a fitness plan. Factors such as, but not limited to, age, disabilities, and how much one weighs. A fitness plan is valuable because it creates measurable accountability.

In addition to a personalized fitness plan, one should consider employing the expertise of a primary doctor, Eastern medicine doctors, chiropractors, and nutritionists. Many health

benefits are associated with having these professionals on one's team. While wellness and fitness professionals can offer their expert opinions, remember individuals are in control and are responsible for their own health and fitness. Finally, the most important tips are drinking pure water, reducing sugar, and reducing salt intake.

Having a cursory understanding of health and fitness benefits the quantity and quality of life. A fitness assessment, fitness plan, and calculating a BMI score are a great starting place for wellness. Understanding and using the food pyramid as a guide for good food choices will improve overall health. Building a team of health professionals will act as a guide on the journey to fitness. Health and fitness are processes that require patience. Surrender is not an option. continue in the direction planned out and revel in the garnered results.

The lesson included the following key ideas:

1. Start a health and fitness journey with an assessment.
2. Make good food choices. Use the food pyramid as a guide.
3. Four components of fitness:
    a. Aerobic fitness
    b. Muscular Fitness
    c. Flexibility
    d. Body Composition
4. Three categories of food:
    a. Carbohydrates (simple and complex)
    b. Proteins
    c. Fats (saturated, unsaturated, trans fats)
5. Four parts of digestion: Digestion turns food into energy.
    a. Chew food
    b. Food goes into the stomach and intestines
    c. From the stomach and intestines, food is carried into the bloodstream and throughout the body
    d. Leftover energy is stored as fat, and undigested food goes out of the body as waste
6. Work and rest are necessary for health.
7. Build a team of professional people from the health and wellness business
8. Take charge and be in control.

CHAPTER 5

PROJECT EVALUATION

TBC Project Volunteers

At the onset of this project the TBC leadership team were given the option to voluntarily participate in this research. The entire leadership team chose to be included and chose to fulfill all of the requirements explained at the beginning of this project. They took the pre-course survey, calculated their BMI, completed the health questionnaire, attended all five classes that were presented in three zoom sessions. The participants took a post took a post course survey and committed to a pledge card by signing it.

Project Course Evaluation

The project course was evaluated by three pastors, each one having a Doctor of Ministry degree from a Southern Baptist Seminary. The three of them judged whether the lessons were in line with sound biblical teaching by using an eight-question course evaluation rubric for pastors. The evaluation key was 1 insufficient, 2 requires attention, 3 sufficient, and 4 exemplary. Six out of a possible twenty-four answers resulted in a score of 3 sufficient. The remaining eighteen answers resulted in a 4 exemplary. Dr. Smith and Dr. Losch both found the first question, “The curriculum is hermeneutically-sound. All scripture is properly interpreted, explained, and applied” to be sufficient. The second finding was that Dr. Smith ad Dr. Williams both answered question number five.

The curriculum makes appropriate use of various learning approaches”, to be sufficient.

The fourth expert was a certified fitness trainer. His questionnaire had four questions. The evaluation key was 1 insufficient, 2 requires attention, 3 sufficient, and 4 exemplary. One of the four questions were marked sufficient, and the remaining questions were marked exemplary. The consensus of the experts allowed the project to go forward.

Project Schedule

The class schedule date and time was determined by group consensus. The first class took place after the morning worship service. The following classes took place on the Zoom social media. Each class was recorded just in case a participant was unable to attend.

- May 25 - The In-Person Pre-Test Survey, Health Survey, and BMI Assessment
    - Group BMI Results: 6 out of 8 participants were obese
    - Health and Fitness Survey Results: 5 out of 8 had some health challenges
- June 1 - The first zoom meeting class for lessons one and two
- June 4 - The second zoom meeting class for lessons three and four
- June 11 - The third zoom meeting class for lesson five

Post-Course Survey

The post-course surveys were distributed on 6/17/25. The post-course surveys were collected on 6/18/25. Each TBC volunteer completed their commitment to this project. All the data has been gathered and has been evaluated determining the differences between the pre-course survey and post-course survey answers.

Data Analysis

The data may also be delineated as simply agree and disagree. In so doing the data shows the Advisor's key there should be 18 disagree and 7 agree.

Table 1. Pre-Course Survey versus Post-Course Survey Chart

This chart compares the pre-course and post-course scores for each participant

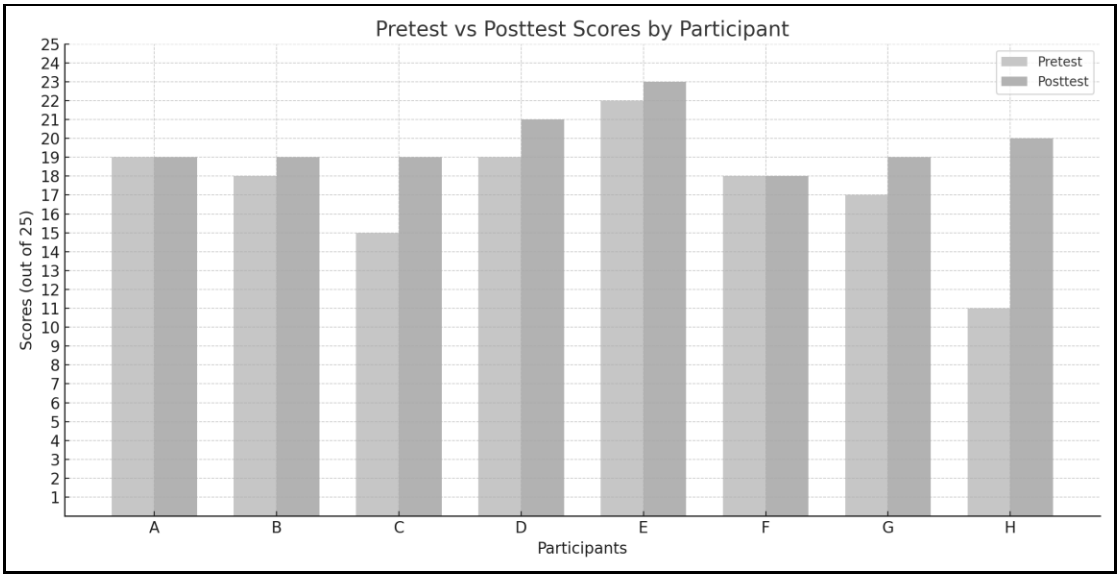


Table 2. Percentage Improvement

This report outlines the percentage improvements from pre-course to post-course for each participant. The chart below visually represents individual progress.

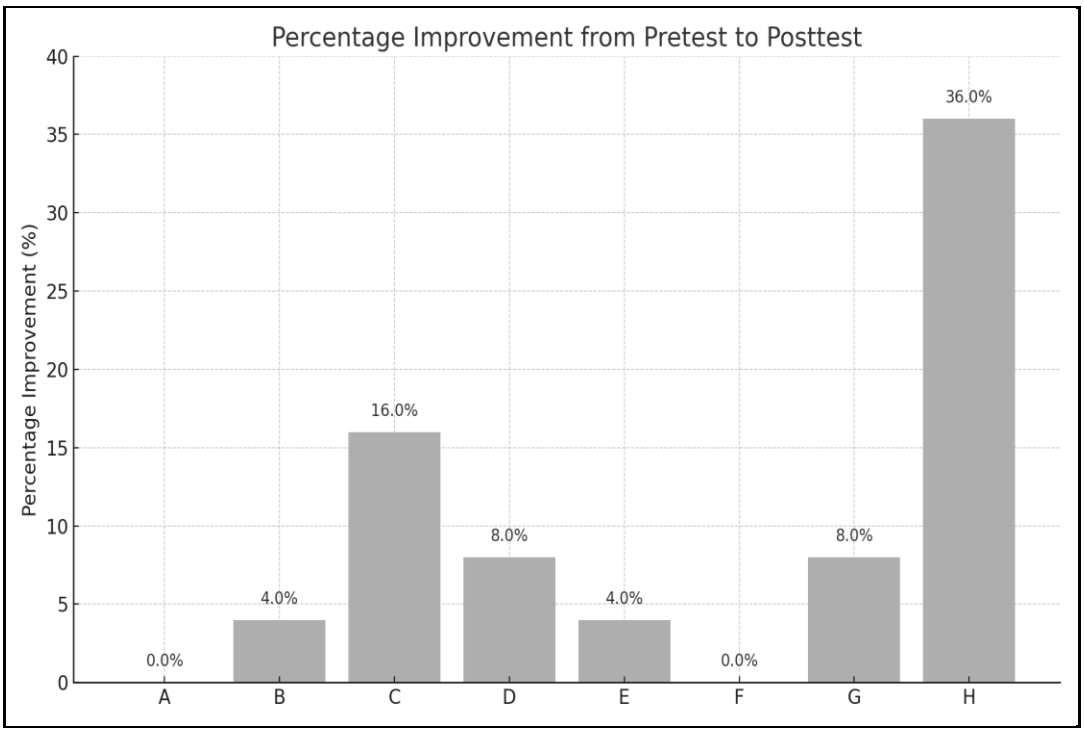
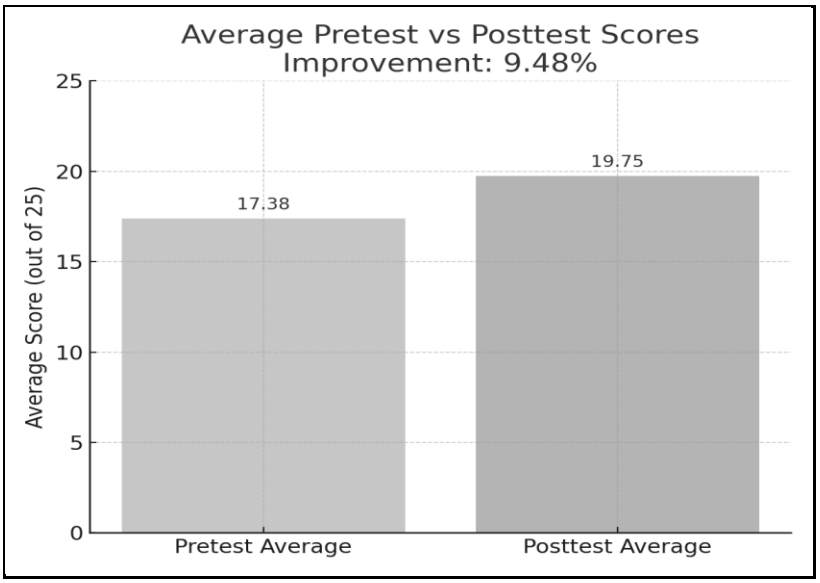


Table 3. Average Pre-Course versus Post-Course Survey Scores



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Pledge Cards

Pledge cards were distributed to all eight church participants. One hundred percent of the participants signed the pledge cards. They all committed to be better stewards of their body by following Biblical and medically proven health and fitness practices. Every leader agreed to meet with a certified fitness instructor to develop a written plan of exercise and diet within a month of taking this course.

Conclusion

Evaluation of the Project's Purpose

There was only one purpose for this project. The objective of the project was to move the leadership of TBC to take care of their bodies. This purpose was supported by five measurable goals.

1. The first goal was to assess the current level of knowledge about biblical concepts of stewardship of the body among Truth Baptist Church's leadership team.
2. The second goal was to determine the current health and fitness level of Truth Baptist Church's leadership team.
3. The third goal was to develop a five-lesson course that is aligned with biblical principles and medically proven good health and fitness practices.
4. The fourth goal was to increase the knowledge of Truth Baptist Church's leadership team by teaching the five-course biblical curriculum.
5. The fifth goal was to obtain a signed plan of action pledge card from each TBC leadership participant.

All five goals were met. The biblical principles and medically proven good health and fitness practices were affirmed according to the research methodology outlined. The project's purpose was influenced by the deaths of TBC leaders due to bad health and fitness practices. The questions and concerns raised by these circumstances centered around the subject of the biblical responsibility and stewardship of the body. What is a Christian's responsibility for the care and welfare of their physical body? Does the lack of care contribute to a pre-mature death? These questions were the driving force of this project.

Evaluation of the Project's Goals

The projects first goal was accomplished when the pre-course surveys were distributed and administered. The collected data showed an overall abundance of correct answers. Most of the volunteers have been members of Truth Baptist Church for the entire thirty-five years. Over time they have learned much of the information on the survey.

The second goal revealed the current level of fitness of the TBC's leadership team. Through the BMI and health and fitness questionnaire an overall picture of poor health of the TBC leadership team was revealed. Most of the participants were classified as obese. Many of the participants had high blood pressure, diabetes, and several had poor exercise regiment, if any at all.

The third goal of developing five lessons to be taught in three sessions, all utilizing biblical principles and proven good health and fitness practices, was completed. Part of the third goal was to have the information verified by qualified pastors and a certified fitness instructor. This goal was evaluated by three pastors with doctoral-level education from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, who utilized a rubric to evaluate the biblical faithfulness, teaching methodology, scope, and how closely the course aligns with medically proven good health and fitness practices.[2] The curriculum was also evaluated by a certified health and fitness specialist who used a second rubric to evaluate the curriculum's applicability. All credentials are listed in appendix three and appendix five.

The fourth goal of teaching TBC's leaders the biblical and practical rationale for good health and fitness was implemented. Five lessons were taught to the leadership team over three

[2] See appendix 3.

sessions using the Zoom platform. At the end of the three sessions, the post-course survey was administered, collected, and the data was analyzed.

The fifth goal was completed by each TBC participant. Each leader completed a pledge card. The pledge card was a commitment to follow up with a fitness instructor within thirty days after signing the pledge card.

The Strength of the Project

The subject matter is the strength of the project. The Church of Jesus Christ must pay attention to the topics of health and fitness. Christians are dying prematurely. The words of the prophet Hosea are just as relevant now as when they were first spoken. “My people are destroyed for the lack of knowledge.” (Hosea 4:6)

The data supports that an informed person can increase in knowledge. The participants scored high on the pre-test. However, six of the eight participants scored even higher on their post-test. Ultimately all eight signed the pledge card demonstrating that participants realized the value of developing a personalized health and fitness plan. The objective of the project was not only a gathering of information, but a call to transformation. Little changes in diet and exercise can make a big difference in one’s overall health and wellness. This project is a call to action for the church of Jesus Christ.

Finally, the foundation of the project is scriptural. Obedience to the biblical mandates of God is the impetus for change. The Bible is filled with instructions that pertain to the maintenance and upkeep of the body. Unfortunately, many bible preachers and teachers have omitted or failed to include these texts in their sermons and lessons. (Acts 20:27)

The Weaknesses of the Project

One weakness of the project was the wording on the health assessments could have been simpler. The Likert scaled used in the surveys could have been simplified. The pre-course survey could have been worded simply to require an answer of true or false to signify a clear delineation. The survey used offered the answer choices of strongly disagree, disagree, disagree somewhat or agree somewhat, agree, and strongly agree. Participants indicated difficulty in distinguishing between the categories.

An additional weakness was that several of the questions unintentionally implied that people with health limitations were disqualified from serving God in ministry. Instead of having twenty-five questions the questionnaire could have been limited to ten questions due to redundancy.

Another weakness of the project would be the lack of visual aids such as the food pyramid, nutrition labels and exercise illustrations. The saying is, "A picture is worth a thousand words". The lessons were taught orally and not visually. Many people learn better with the aid of pictures.

The final weakness that I would like to address is the pre-post course survey itself. Questions number 8, 20, 23, and 24 were ambiguous. Question number 19 should have not been included, and question number 12 was a double blinded question where I unintentionally asked two questions in one.

What I Would Do Differently

It should be noted that the author was never trying to say or imply that individuals with birth defects or illnesses beyond their control disqualifies them from ministry. There are many people with birth defect and disabilities that are great witness for the kingdom of Christ. Their

witness has inspired many to run the race for Christ with passion and without excuses. Those who have such illness don't require our condemnation but our prayer and support. This a point I would have address more diligently in my project.

Theological Reflections

Theology gives a Christian a heavenly perspective on an earthly matter. Our theological position must be informed scripturally and lived out practically. Knowing what the scripture teaches should impact our daily living. The bible requires us to honor God by taking care of our bodies for His glory. This is the least that we can do. (Romans 12:1,2)

Personal Reflection

This project has moved me to consult a nutritionist and to develop a plan of action for my health and wellness. The fundamental things that I know I should do I am beginning to do. For example, I set a curfew to stop eating at 10 p.m. I have scheduled time to take fitness classes and time to exercise. As a result, I have loss twenty pounds. I had to start applying what I have learned to my own life. Moving the body of Christ to take action, when it comes to our personal health and fitness, was the sole purpose of this project.

Conclusion

In summation the project was worthwhile. The project left measurable value and benefits in the lives of the participants. Eating from the right tree was an issue from the beginning of humanity in the Garden of Eden. Life and death were connected to which tree Adam ate from. What we eat and how we tend to our bodies affects the quality and quantity of our lives. I encourage the reader of this project to choose what makes for a healthy life. I join John in saying, "I wish above all things that you prosper and be in health, even as your soul prospers." (3 John 2))

APPENDIX 1

BIBLICAL FUNDAMENTALS OF HEALTH AND FITNESS SURVEY

BIBLICAL FUNDAMENTALS OF HEALTH AND FITNESS SURVEY

Agreement to Participate
The research in which you are about to participate is designed to identify the current Biblical understanding stewardship and of good health and fitness practices. This research is being conducted by George Tynes for the purpose of collecting data for a ministry project. In this research, you will answer questions before the project, and you will answer the same questions at the conclusion of the project. Any information you provide will be held strictly confidential, and at no time will your name be reported or identified with your responses. Participation is strictly voluntary, and you are free to withdraw at any time. By completion of this survey, you are giving informed consent for the use of your responses in this project.

Directions: Answer the following questions: (1) Place a check by the multiple-choice questions. (2) Some questions ask you go give your opinion using the following scale: SD = strongly disagree D – disagree, DS –disagree somewhat, AS = agree somewhat, A = agree, SA = strongly agree; please circle the appropriate answer.

1. People are free morale agents and can do whatever we want with our bodies.	SD D DS AS A SA
2. While the Bible is a good book, it does not contain all of the answers to life's issues.	SD D DS AS A SA
3. All food is good to eat as long as you pray over it.	SD D DS AS A SA
4. The Bible does not talk about maintaining a healthy body.	SD D DS AS A SA
5. The root cause of obesity is the lack of a strong will power.	SD D DS AS A SA
6. Christians can be good witnesses for Jesus and not take care of our bodies.	SD D DS AS A SA
7. Over and under eating are psychological disorders.	SD D DS AS A SA
8. Sickness and disease are due to a lack of human responsibility.	SD D DS AS A SA
9. The fall of man has nothing to do with my physical condition.	SD D DS AS A SA
10. The mission of the church has nothing to do with being a good steward of the body.	SD D DS AS A SA
11. Being full of the Holy Spirit has little or nothing to do with my present health condition.	SD D DS AS A SA

12. A person's time to die is determined by God and one's health and fitness program will not change it.	SD D DS AS A SA
13. Loving your spouse is connected to good health and fitness practices.	SD D DS AS A SA
14. The focus of life should be on heaven and not keeping this physical body healthy.	SD D DS AS A SA
15. An exercise plan should be a part of the Christian life.	SD D DS AS A SA
16. The work of the church is spiritual only, and not physical.	SD D DS AS A SA
17. "You are what you eat" is not biblical.	SD D DS AS A SA
18. There is no such thing as a premature death due to poor diet and fitness.	SD D DS AS A SA
19. Getting a yearly physical is a spiritual requirement.	SD D DS AS A SA
20. Adamic sin is the only reason for poor health.	SD D DS AS A SA
21. There is no connection between my spiritual and physical condition.	SD D DS AS A SA
22. The body being the temple of the Holy Spirit has nothing to do with health and wellness.	SD D DS AS A SA
23. A husband is commanded by God to keep himself healthy for his family.	SD D DS AS A SA
24. A wife is commanded by God to keep herself healthy for her family.	SD D DS AS A SA
25. It is not a sin to maintain poor health and fitness practices.	SD D DS AS A SA

APPENDIX 2

BODY MASS INDEX FORMULA

Body Mass Index Formula is a measure of body fat based on height and weight, applicable to both men and women. It is a tool that places people in one of the following categories underweight, healthy weight, overweight, or obese.

9. You will need a pencil, paper and calculator to perform the following BMI calculation.

10. Take your height and square the number. Multiply the number of inches by the same number of inches
    - Ex: 6 Ft (12 x 6 = 72)
    - 72 x 72 = 5,184

11. Divide your weight in pounds by the second figure.
    - 160 ÷ 5,184 = 0.030641975

12. Multiply that answer by the conversion factor of 703. (If you used inches and pounds)
    - 0.030641975 x 703 = 21.69

13. BMI Chart:

< 18	**Underweight**
– 18.5	**Thin for height**
18.6 – 24.9	**Healthy weight**
25 – 29.9	**Overweight**
> 30	**Obesity**

APPENDIX 3

COURSE EVALUATION RUBRIC FOR PASTORS

This rubric was sent to three pastors who have received their Doctor of Ministry from a Southern Baptist seminary. They evaluated the course material to ensure it is biblically faithful, the course's scope and teaching methodology are appropriate, and the material is aligned with the principles of basic health and fitness.

1. Dr. Pusey Losch – Mountain View Community Church
    - 277 Mill Rd. Richfield, Pa.17086
    - D.Min from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary
2. Dr. Jamaal E. Williams – Sojourn Church Midtown in Louisville
    - 1207 S. Shelby St. Louisville, Ky. 40203
    - DEdMin from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary
3. Dr. Stephen D. Smith – Portland Memorial Baptist Church
    - 3802 W. Market St. Louisville, Ky. 40212
    - DEdMin from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

COURSE EVALUATION RUBRIC FOR PASTORS

Name of evaluator _____ Date _____

Biblical Stewardship Curriculum Evaluation					
1=insufficient 2=requires attention 3=sufficient 4=exemplary					
Criteria	1	2	3	4	Comments
Biblical Faithfulness					
The curriculum is hermeneutically-sound. All scripture is properly interpreted, explained, and applied					
The curriculum is theologically-sound.					
Scope					
The curriculum sufficiently covers each issue it is designed to address.					
The curriculum sufficiently covers the basics of biblical stewardship					
Methodology					
The curriculum makes appropriate use of various learning approaches.					
Practicality					
The curriculum covers how to properly apply scripture to various issues that affect health and fitness.					
The material sufficiently addresses the topic of basic health and fitness.					
At the completion of this course, students should be able to develop a biblically based health and fitness plan.					

APPENDIX 4

HEALTH AND FITNESS SURVEYHEALTH AND FITNESS SURVEY

Name: _____
Date: _____

Basic Health and Fitness Questions	Yes	No
1. Has your doctor ever said that you have a heart condition and that you should only perform physical activities recommended by a doctor?		
2. Do you feel pain in your chest when you perform physical activity?		
3. In the past month have you had chest pain when you are not performing any physical activity?		
4. Do you have bone or joint problem that could be made worse by a change in you physical activity?		
5. Is your doctor currently prescribing any medication for your blood pressure or for a heart condition?		
6. Do you lose your balance because of dizziness or ever lose consciousness?		
7. Are you more than 20 pounds overweight?		
8. Do you partake in any recreational activities? (golf, tennis, skiing, etc)		
9. Do you have musculoskeletal problems, spine, knees etc.?		
10. Do you have high cholesterol?		
11. Are you a diabetic or take medicine to control your sugar?		
12. Do you exercise at least sixty minutes three times a week?		

APPENDIX 5

HEALTH AND FITNESS SURVEY EVALUATOR
FOR A CERTIFIED FITNESS TRAINER

This rubric was sent to a certified fitness trainer who evaluated the course material to ensure it conforms to the standard guide used in health and fitness assessments, and that the course's scope and teaching methodology are appropriate.

Certified Fitness Trainer: Jamir Smith

- Christian Street YMCA – 1724 Christian St. Phila, Pa. 19146

HEALTH AND FITNESS SURVEY EVALUATOR
FOR A CERTIFIED FITNESS TRAINER

Name of evaluator _____ Date _____

Health And Fitness Curriculum Evaluation					
1=insufficient 2=requires attention 3=sufficient 4=exemplary					
Criteria	1	2	3	4	Comments
Scope					
The curriculum sufficiently covers each issue it is designed to address.					
Methodology					
The curriculum makes appropriate use of various learning approaches.					
Practicality					
The material sufficiently addresses the topic of basic health and fitness.					
At the completion of this course, students should be able to develop a basic health and fitness plan.					

APPENDIX 6

ACTION PLEDGE CARD

I pledge by signing this card to be a better steward of the body by following the biblical and medically proven good health and fitness practices that I have been taught. I promise to have a fitness and diet plan approved by my doctor and a certified fitness trainer within a month after taking this course. I also promise that I will share this information with my family so they may reap the benefits of what I have learned.

_____

Signature

_____

Date

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ABSTRACT

EQUIPPING LEADERS AT TRUTH BAPTIST CHURCH IN PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA, TOWARD A BIBLICAL STEWARDSHIP OF THE BODY

George Raymond Tynes, DMin
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2025
Faculty Supervisor: Dr. John D. Wilsey

Equipping leaders at Truth Baptist Church in Philadelphia towards a biblical stewardship of the body is a project designed to express the scriptural rationale for maintaining godly health and fitness habits and lifestyles. The baseline for the examination of prior biblical and practical knowledge became measurable by utilizing standard health instruments such as the body mass index coupled with health and fitness surveys. A voluntary focus group of TBC participants were willing to have their knowledge of health and fitness pre-tested through a pre-course survey. Acknowledging the TBC leadership team's current level of health, as well as their fitness awareness, was instrumental in the leadership team's enthusiasm toward learning. TBC leaders' willingness to acquire God's biblical principles along with learning medically proven beneficial health and fitness practices, prepared them mentally as well as spiritually to commit to improving their general state of heath to the glory of God. Five lessons were taught over zoom in three sessions. They also agreed to participate in a post-course survey. The two surveys created the necessary data required to achieve this project's goals. One of the goals was to become a better steward of the bodies God has lent to us. The pre-course survey and post-course survey comparisons revealed an increase in the participant's knowledge. This resulted in TBC Leadership committing with pledge cards.

VITA

George Raymond Tynes

EDUCATION

BA, Eastern College, 1981
MTS, Bakke Graduate University, 2009

PUBLICATIONS

Marriage Is a Big Deal. Bloomington, IN: Xlibris, 2014
Wanted! Spiritual Fathers. Bloomington, IN: Xlibris, 2014
Leadership Plain and Simple. Bloomington, IN: Xlibris, 2016

MINISTERIAL EMPLOYMENT

Senior Pastor, Truth Baptist Church, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1990-Present