

When Adam and Eve were created in the Garden of Eden, they were made in perfect health. Likewise, it is God's plan for you to be in good physical health. The Bible says, "I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you even as your soul is getting along well" 3 John 2. However, when most people think about "getting in shape," they often think about the image of the person at the gym posing in front of the mirror, but there is more to being healthy than that. This week, Pastor Andy, along with guest speaker Samuel Meade, gave some pointers on getting healthy in the message "All Your Strength," which is part 5 of the 5-part series "Essentials for Personal Growth."

First, you should develop a healthy attitude toward your body. Proverbs 23:7 says, "As a man thinks in his heart, so is he..." You should not reject or neglect your body, but you shouldn't try to perfect it either. The iconic image of the body builder or the model may not be a realistic, achievable goal for you. Instead, you should respect and protect your body and maintain it in a manner that works for you. You don't have to attempt to fit into any of the extremes, just maintain the body that God gave to you.

You should also motivate yourself to change. Physically, there are countless studies to support that you will live a better and longer life if you are healthy. In addition, there are five key spiritual reasons to change. First, God made your body and you should treat it with respect. Second, poor health is expensive with medical bills and lost work time. The Bible says, "Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows" Galatians 6:7. The familiar saying of "pay now or pay later" applies. Third, the Holy Spirit lives in you, making your body a temple. Fourth, a physically fit body can be a method of sharing your testimony. Lastly, the choices you make now will be passed on to future generations as part of your legacy.

You can become healthier by following God's law of health found in His word, or, the "owner's manual" for your body. You should try to maintain your ideal weight range and commit to a regular exercise program. The Bible puts it clearly when it says, "Exercise is good for your body..." 1 Timothy 4:8. Ensure you get enough sleep and rest as well. In our modern era, late night TV is an enemy of proper sleep, but the Bible says, "God wants His loved ones to get their rest" Psalm 127:2. Finally, ensure you live your life in harmony with God.

Samuel illustrated the choice to maintain a healthy lifestyle by citing a visit he once made to the Grand Canyon. During his visit he noticed that people had thrown trash into the canyon and thereby mistreated such a wonderful creation. You can choose to maintain a healthy lifestyle and treat your body well, and Jesus is your perfect example. He did not come to Earth so that He could know what it is like for you, because he already knows. Rather, Jesus came to Earth so that you could know that He knows what it is like for you! Are you ready to optimize "all your strength" and maintain a healthy body for God?