

Surprising Facts Series 1

13. Do our Health Habits Matter to God?

You wouldn't pour water into the gas tank of a lovely, expensive automobile. That would be ridiculous, crazy. But what about that priceless machine called the human body? It will take only so much punishment, you know. Scientists have been sounding ominous warnings about cholesterol levels, the use of tobacco, nervous tension, obesity, etc. Why press your luck? The hospitals and mental institutions are already packed with people who have ignored the rules of the human body. Why insist upon joining them? Somebody cares how you treat your body machine (Somebody bigger than you and I), and this time you'd better listen. More may be involved here than you have dared to imagine.

1. Are health principles really a part of true Bible religion?

"Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth." 3 John 2.

Answer: Yes. In fact, the Bible rates health right near the top of the list in importance. Man's mind, spiritual nature, and body are all interrelated and interdependent. What affects one affects the other. If our bodies are misused, our minds and spiritual natures cannot become what God intended they should.

2. Why did God give health rules to His people?

"And the Lord commanded us to do all these statutes ... for our good always, that he might preserve us alive." Deuteronomy 6:24. "And ye shall serve the Lord your God, and he shall bless thy bread, and thy water; and I will take sickness away from the midst of thee." Exodus 23:25.

Answer: God gave health rules because He knows what is best for the human body. Automobile manufacturers place an "operations manual" in the glove compartment of each new car because they know what is best for their product. God, who made our bodies, also has an "operations manual." It is called the Holy Bible. Ignoring God's "operations manual" results in disease, twisted thinking, and burned-out lives, just as abusing a car (against the manufacturer's counsel) results in serious car trouble. Following God's rules results in "saving health" (Psalm 67:2) and more abundant life (John 10:10). These great health laws are like a wall or fence to keep out the diseases of Satan. God tells us what these rules are so we can avoid the devil's traps.

3. Do God's health rules have anything to do with eating and drinking?

"Eat ye that which is good." Isaiah 55:2. "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." 1 Corinthians 10:31

Answer: Yes, a Christian will even eat and drink differently, all to the glory of God, using only "that which is good." If God says a thing is not fit to eat, He must have a good reason. He is not a harsh dictator, but a loving Father. All His counsel is for our good always. The Bible promises:

"No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly." Psalm 84:11. So if God withholds a thing from us, it is because it is not good for us.

God's health rules have much to say about what we eat and drink. Note: No person can eat his way into heaven. Eating even the food of angels will not entitle people to paradise. Only acceptance of Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour can do that. Ignoring God's health laws, however, may cause a person to be lost, because it will ruin his judgment and cause him to sin.

4. What did God give people to eat when He created them and provided a perfect diet?

"And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed ... and every tree ... yielding seed." "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat" Genesis 1:29; 2:16.

Answer: The diet God gave people in the beginning was fruit, grains, and nuts. Vegetables were added a bit later."thou shalt eat the herb of the field;" Genesis 3:18. God prescribed a vegetarian diet for Adam and Eve.

5. What items are specifically mentioned by God as being unclean and forbidden?

Answer: In Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14, God very clearly points out the following groups as being unclean. Read both chapters in full.

A. All animals which do not have a split hoof and chew the cud (Deuteronomy 14:6). Pigs are unclean.

B. All fish and water creatures that do not have both fins and scales. Nearly all fish are clean (Deuteronomy 14:9). Shellfish and catfish are unclean

C. All birds of prey, carrion eaters, and fish eaters (Leviticus 11:13-20). Birds of prey are unclean.

D. Most "creeping things" (or invertebrates) are also unclean (Leviticus 11:21-47). The ones which live all or part-time in water and do not have both fins and scales are unclean.

Note: These chapters make it clear that most animals, birds, and water creatures people ordinarily eat are clean. There are, however, some very notable exceptions. According to God's rules, the following animals are unclean and are not to be eaten: hogs, squirrels, rabbits, catfish, eels, lobsters, clams, crabs, shrimp, oysters, frogs, and many others.

6. But I like pork. Will God destroy me if I eat it?

"For, behold, the Lord will come with fire ... and by his sword will the Lord plead with all flesh: and the slain of the Lord shall be many. They that sanctify themselves, and purify themselves ... eating swine's flesh, and the abomination, and the mouse shall be consumed together, saith the Lord." Isaiah 66:15-17.

Answer: This maybe shocking, but it is true and must be told. The Bible positively states that all who eat "swine's flesh, the mouse," and other unclean things that are an "abomination" will be destroyed with fire at the coming of the Lord. When God says to leave something alone and not eat it, we should by all means obey Him. After all, the mere eating of a piece of forbidden fruit by Adam and Eve, a sinless couple, brought sin and death to this world in the first place. Can anyone say it doesn't matter, when God so clearly shows it does? God says men will be

destroyed because they **"chose that in which I delighted not."** Isaiah 66:4.

7. But didn't this law of clean and unclean animals originate at Sinai? Wasn't it for the Jews only, and didn't it end at the cross?

"And the lord said unto Noah, ... Of every clean beast thou shalt take to thee by sevens ... and of beasts that are not clean by two." Genesis 7:1, 2.

Answer: No, indeed! The Bible has ample evidence that there were clean and unclean animals from the very dawn of Creation. Noah lived long before any Jews existed, but he knew of the clean and unclean, because he took into the ark the clean animals by "sevens" and the unclean by "twos." Revelation 18:2 refers to some birds as being unclean just before the second coming of Christ. The death of Christ had no altering effect whatever on these health laws, since the Bible says that all who break them will be destroyed when Jesus returns (Isaiah 66:15-17). The Jew's stomach and digestive system in no way differs from that of a Gentile. These health laws are for all people for all time. Noah's sacrifice of a clean animal (Genesis 8:20) shows that he understood the difference between clean and unclean.

8. Does the Bible forbid the use of alcoholic beverages?

"Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise." Proverbs 20:1 **"Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder."** Proverbs 23:31, 32. **"Neither fornicators ... nor drunkards ... shall inherit the kingdom of God."** 1 Corinthians 6:9,10.

Answer: Yes, the Bible clearly forbids the use of alcoholic beverages. The use of alcoholic beverages is clearly condemned by Scripture.

9. Does the Bible condemn the use of tobacco?

Answer Yes, the Bible gives six reasons why the use of tobacco is displeasing to God:

A. The use of tobacco injures health and defiles the body. **"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shal God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are."** 1 Corinthians 3:16, 17.

B. Nicotine is a narcotic that enslaves people. Romans 6:16 says that we become servants to whomever (or whatever) we yield ourselves. Tobacco users are servants of nicotine. Jesus says, **"Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."** Matthew 4:10.

C. The tobacco habit is unclean. **"Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you."** 2 Corinthians 6:17. It is really preposterous to think of Christ using tobacco in any form, isn't it?

D. The use of tobacco wastes money: **"Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread?"** Isaiah 55:2. **We are God's stewards of the money given us, and "it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful."** 1 Corinthians 4:2.

E. The use of tobacco never draws anyone closer to Christ. **"Abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul."** 1 Peter 2:11. Tobacco use is a fleshly lust.

F. The use of tobacco shortens life. Recent scientific findings confirm the fact that the use of tobacco often shortens the life span by as much as one third. This breaks God's command against killing (Exodus 20:13). Even though it is slow murder, it is still murder. One of the best ways to postpone your funeral is to quit using tobacco. The use of tobacco in any form is displeasing to God.

10. What are some of the simple, yet very important, health laws found in the Bible? Here are 11 Bible health rules:

A. Eat your meals at regular intervals, and do not use animal fat or blood. **"Eat in due season." Ecclesiastes 10:17. "It shall be a perpetual statute ... that ye eat neither fat nor blood." Leviticus 3:17.** Eating meals at regular hours is very important.

Note: Recent scientific studies have confirmed the fact that most heart attacks result from a high cholesterol level in the blood, and that the use of "fats" is largely responsible for this high level. It looks like the Lord knows what He is talking about after all, doesn't it?

B. Don't overeat. **"Put a knife to thy throat, if thou be a man given to appetite." Proverbs 23:2.** In Luke 21:34, Christ specifically warns against "surfeiting" (overeating) in the last days. Overeating is responsible for many degenerative diseases. Christ specifically warns His followers not to overeat.

C. Don't harbor envy or hold grudges. These evils disrupt body processes. The Bible says that envy brings "rotteness of the bones." Proverbs 14:30. Christ even commands us to clear up grudges that others may hold against us (Matthew 5:23, 24).

D. Maintain a cheerful, happy disposition. **"A merry heart doeth good like a medicine." Proverbs 17:22. "As he thinketh in his heart, so is he." Proverbs 23:7.** Many diseases from which people suffer are a result of mental depression. A cheerful, happy disposition imparts health and prolongs life.

E. Put full trust in the Lord. **"The fear of the Lord tendeth to life: and he that hath it shall abide satisfied." Proverbs 19:23.** Trust in the Lord strengthens health and life. **"My son, attend to my words.... For they are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh." Proverbs 4:20-22.** So health comes from obedience to God's commands and from putting full trust in Him.

F. Balance work and exercise with sleep and rest. **"Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work." Exodus 20:9, 10. "The sleep of a labouring man is sweet." Ecclesiastes 5:12. "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread." Genesis 3:19. "It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late." Psalm 127:2. "For what hath man of all his labour, and of the vexation of his heart, wherein he hath laboured under the sun? ... his heart taketh not rest in the night. This is also vanity." Ecclesiastes 2:22, 23.** Ample sleep is essential to good health.

G. Keep your body clean. **"Be ye clean." Isaiah 52:11.** Cleanliness, is crucial for health.

H. Be temperate in all things. **"Every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things." 1 Corinthians 9:25. "Let your moderation be known unto all men." Philipians 4:5.**

A Christian will completely avoid all things that are harmful and will be moderate in the use of things that are good. Habits that injure health break the command "Thou shalt not kill." They kill by degrees. They are suicide on the installment plan.

I. Avoid all harmful stimulants. Caffeine harms the body. Here is a surprise for some. Medical science has confirmed the fact that tea, coffee, and soft drinks that contain the addictive drug caffeine and other harmful ingredients are all positively damaging to the human body. None of these contain food value except through the sugar or cream added, and most of us already use too much sugar. Stimulants give a dangerous, artificial boost to the body and are like trying to carry a ton in a wheelbarrow. The popularity of these drinks is due not to flavor or advertising, but to the dose of caffeine they contain. Many Americans are sickly because of their addiction to coffee, tea, and caffeinated soft drinks. But the real tragedy is that men and women seeking peace and strength are using tea and coffee as cheap substitutes for prayer and Bible Study. This delights the devil and wrecks human lives.

J. Make mealtime a happy time. **"Every man should eat and drink, and enjoy the good of all his labour, it is the gift of God." Ecclesiastes 3:13.** Unhappy scenes at mealtime hinder digestion and divide families. Avoid them.

K. Help those who are in need. **"Loose the hands of wickedness, ... undo the heavy burdens, ... deal thy bread to the hungry, and ... bring the poor that are cast out to thy house ... when thou seest the naked, ... cover him... and thine health shall spring forth speedily." Isaiah 58:6-8.** This is too plain to misunderstand: when we help the poor and needy, we improve our own health. Helping people in need enhances your health.

11. What solemn reminder is given to those who ignore God's rules?

"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Galatians 6:7.

Answer: The answer is too plain to miss. Those who break God's rules regarding the care of the body machine will reap broken bodies and burned-out lives, just as one who abuses his automobile will have serious car trouble. And those who continue to break God's laws of health will ultimately be destroyed by the Lord (1 Corinthians 3:16, 17).

God's health laws are not arbitrary. They are natural, established laws of the universe, like the law of gravity. Ignoring these laws always brings certain disastrous results. The Bible says, **"The curse causeless shall not come." Proverbs 26:2.** Trouble comes when we ignore the laws of health. God, in mercy, tells us what these laws are so we may avoid the tragedies that result from breaking them.

12. What fearful, shocking truth about health involves our children and grandchildren?

"Thou shalt not eat it; that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee." Deuteronomy 12:25. "I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me." Exodus 20:5.

Answer: God makes it very plain that children and grandchildren (to the fourth generation) pay for the folly of parents who ignore God's health rules. The children and grandchildren inherit weakened, sickly bodies when mother and father defy God's rules for their lives. Is this what

you want for your dear children and grandchildren? Drug-using parents often transmit weaknesses to their children. A person may suffer because of his parents' or grandparents' bad health habits. [Especially if they copy their example.] Exercise in the great outdoors will help us prepare for heaven.

13. What more fearful, sobering fact does God's Word reveal?

"There shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth." Revelation 21:27. "But as for them whose heart walketh after the heart of their detestable things and their abominations, I will recompense their way upon their own heads, saith the Lord God." Ezekiel 11:21.

Answer: Nothing defiling or unclean will be permitted in God's kingdom. All filthy habits defile a person. Use of improper food defiles a person (Daniel 1:8). It is sobering, but true. Choosing their "own ways" and that in which God "delighted not" will cost people their eternal salvation (Isaiah 66:3, 4, 15-17)

15. But I'm worried because some of my evil habits have bound me so tightly. What can I do?

"As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God." John 1:12. "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Philippians 4:13.

Answer: Take all of these habits to Christ and lay them at His feet. He will joyfully give you a new heart and the power you need to break any evil habit and become a son or daughter of God (Ezekiel 11:18, 19). How thrilling and heartwarming it is to know that **"with God all things are possible." Mark 10:27.** And Jesus says, **"Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." John 6:37.** Jesus is ready to break the shackles that bind us. He longs to set us free, and will, if only we will permit it. Our worries, evil habits, nervous tensions, and fears will be gone when we do His bidding. He says, **"These things have I spoken unto you ... that your joy might be full." John 15:11.** The devil argues that freedom is found in disobedience, but this is a falsehood (John 8:44). Evil habits that bind us can be quickly broken by Jesus.

14. What should every sincere Christian endeavor to do at once?

"Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit." 2 Corinthians 7:1. "Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he [Christ] is pure." 1 John 3:3. "If ye love me, keep my commandments." John 14:15.

Answer: Sincere Christians will bring their lives into harmony with God's rules at once, because they love Him. They know that His rules greatly add to their happiness and protect them from the devil's diseases (Acts 10:38). God's counsel and rules are always for our good, just as good parents' rules and counsel are best for their children. And once we know better, God holds us accountable. **"To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." James 4:17.** Sincere, loving Christians will want to bring their lives into harmony with God's health rules.

16. What thrilling promises are given about God's new kingdom?

"And the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick." Isaiah 33:24. "And there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain." Revelation 21:4. "They shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint." Isaiah 40:31.

Answer: The citizens of God's new kingdom will obey His health laws, and there will be no sickness or disease. They will be blessed with eternal vigor and youth and will live with God in supreme joy and happiness throughout all eternity. Heaven will be free from disease and sickness. All of its inhabitants will follow God's laws of life.

17. Since healthful living truly is a part of Bible religion are you willing to follow God's health rules? Your Answer: _____

Your Thought Questions Answered:

1. 1 Timothy 4:4 says, "Every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused." Can you explain this?

ANSWER: This Scripture passage (verse 3) refers to meats "which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving" by His people. These meats, as we have already discovered, are the clean meats listed in Leviticus chapter 11 and Deuteronomy chapter 14. Verse 4 makes it clear that all creatures of God are good and not to be refused, provided they are among those created to "be received with thanksgiving" (the clean animals). Verse 5 tells why these animals (or foods) are acceptable: they are "sanctified" by God's Word, which says they are clean, and by a "prayer" of blessing, which is offered before the meal. Please note, however, that God will destroy people who try to "sanctify themselves" while eating unclean foods (Isaiah 66:17).

2: Matthew 15:11 says, "Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out" How do you explain this?

ANSWER: The subject in Matthew 15:1-20 is eating without first washing the hands (verse 2). The focus is not eating, but washing. The scribes taught that eating any food without a special ceremonial washing defiled the eater. Jesus said the ceremonial washings were meaningless. In verse 19, He listed certain evils; murders, adulteries, thefts, etc. Then He concluded, "These are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man." Verse 20.

3: But didn't Jesus cleanse all animals in Peter's vision, as recorded in Acts 10?

ANSWER: No! In fact, the subject of this vision is not animals, but people. God gave Peter this vision to show him that the Gentiles were not unclean, as the Jews believed. God had instructed Cornelius, a Gentile, to send men to visit Peter. But Peter would have refused to see them if God had not given him this vision, because Jewish law forbade entertaining Gentiles (verse 28). But when the men finally did arrive, Peter welcomed them, explaining that ordinarily he would not have done so, but **"God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean."** Verse 28. In the next chapter (Acts 11), the church members criticized Peter for speaking with these Gentiles. So Peter told them the whole story of his vision and its meaning. Acts 11:18 says, **"When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life."**

4: What did God make the hog for, if not to eat?

ANSWER: He made it for the same purpose that He made the buzzard, as a scavenger to clean up garbage. And the hog serves this purpose admirably.

5: Romans 14:3,14, 20 says: **"Let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth."** **"There is**

nothing unclean of itself." "All things indeed are pure." Can you explain this?

ANSWER: Verses 3 through 6 are a discussion of those who eat certain things versus those who do not. The passage does not say either is right, but rather counsels that neither pass judgment on the other. Instead, let God be the judge (verses 4, 10-12). Verses 14 and 20 refer to foods that were first offered to idols (and were thus ceremonially unclean) not to the clean and unclean meats of Leviticus chapter 11. (Read 1 Corinthians 8:1, 4, 10, 13). The point of the discussion is that no food is "unclean" or "impure" just because it has first been offered to idols, because an idol is "nothing in the world." 1 Corinthians 8:4. But if a person's conscience bothers him for eating such food, he should leave it alone, even if it offends a brother, he should likewise abstain.

6: Are health laws and eating and drinking really important to me personally? If I love the Lord, isn't that enough?

They are a matter of life versus death, because these laws involve obedience. **"He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him." Hebrews 5:9. "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." Matthew 7:2 1. Love to Christ is involved here because He says, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." John 14:15.** When we truly love the Lord, we will gladly obey Him without dodging or making excuses. This is the supreme test.

Summary: Place a check by the correct answers.

1. Following God's health rules for the human body:

Is necessary for children, but not of great importance to an adult.

Is a very important part of true Bible religion.

Has nothing to do with a person's religion.

2. God's health laws were given:

By a loving God who made us in the beginning and knows what is best for our happiness.

For the Jews only and do not apply today.

To show us He is boss and can control us.

3. A true Christian will:

Eat and drink anything he desires.

Just love the Lord supremely and ignore His health laws because they were done away with at the cross.

Eat and drink only those things which will strengthen the body, mind, and character and bring honor to God.

4. Man's first diet:

Consisted of fruit, grains, and nuts.

Included alcoholic beverages and flesh foods.

Consisted of anything and everything that Adam and Eve wanted.

5. God lists these creatures as unclean:

Cow.

Pig.

Chicken.

Squirrel.

Rabbit.

Catfish.

Deer.

Trout.

Clam.

Shrimp.

Lobster.

Goat.

6. Alcoholic beverages are:

All right for a Christian if used in moderation.

Wrong for a person to use only if he thinks they are wrong.

Not to be used by a Christian.

7. The use of tobacco is:

Each person's private business and has no relationship whatever to his religion.

Sinful, and a Christian will not use it in any form.

Beneficial to the Christian.

8. Check the health laws listed below which are God's health laws:

Don't overeat.

Smoke after each meal.

Be happy and cheerful.

Drink some liquor before meals.

Keep your body clean.

Eat lots of pork.

Drink plenty of coffee and tea.

Be temperate in all things.

- Eat meals at regular intervals.
- Don't harbor grudges.
- Balance work, exercise, and sleep.
- Trust fully in the Lord.
- Not use animal fat and blood.

9. A very important truth regarding God's health laws is that:

- Children and grandchildren often have weak bodies and minds because parents ignore God's health laws.
- These laws were for the Jews only and do not apply today.
- If we really love Christ, His health laws are unimportant.

10. The best way to overcome sinful habits is to:

- "Taper off."
- Yield fully to Christ, who gives us power to do all things.
- Hope they will go away.

11. God's health laws are:

- Like the rules for operating a car: They are best for us, and we run into serious trouble when we ignore them.
- Part of Moses' law that was done away at the cross.
- A good idea, but do not affect a person's relation to God.

12. A sincere Christian will:

- Spend more time praying and ignore God's health rules.
- Immediately change any habit when he finds it conflicts with God's rules, because when we love Christ, we will gladly keep His rules and commandments.
- Feel free to use tobacco.

13. It is my plan to follow God's health rules.

- Yes. No.