



Women Devoted to God

Lesson 12

Health & Fitness

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*Or do you not know that your body is a temple
of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God,
and that you are not your own? For you have been bought
with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.*

I Corinthians 6:19-20

**Can we be good stewards of our bodies
and at the same time maintain our Biblical priorities?**

1. What is a healthy Christian woman?

- Integrative view – each aspect of a woman’s life impacts every other area.
 - Physical health
 - Mental state and emotional health
 - Spiritual state
- Our end goal – we must remember that concern over our bodies is not our end goal. We know that the chief end of man is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever.

2. *Does God care about your health?*

- We Christian women have special reasons to care about our health
 - God made us – spirit, soul, and body
 - He redeemed us – spirit, soul, and body
 - He has made us His temple (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)
 - His purpose for us – sanctification
I Thessalonians 5:23 that our *spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

God cares about our health!



3. What are some Biblical principles that should guide your thinking about food?¹

- Food is God's provision (Genesis 1:29, Psalm 104:14)
- Food is good; it is not the enemy (Ecclesiastes 9:7, Matthew 15:11)

*"God didn't make food
to fill emotional holes in our hearts
or to keep us busy when we're bored."*

Jessie Minassian²

- Food is not intended to be a source of worry (Matthew 6:25-27)
- God has called us to self-control (Galatians 5:22-23)
- Attention to physical health should never take priority over spiritual health (1 Timothy 4:8)

¹ Some points taken from <http://www.liesyoungwomenbelieve.com/bible-say-food/>

² (<http://www.liesyoungwomenbelieve.com/10-tips-eating-right/>)

4. *What are some tips for maintaining healthy eating habits?*

- Have a general idea of how many calories you should eat per day in order to maintain a healthy weight. www.tdecalculator.net
- Check labels and know what to stay away from (trans fat, sodium, added sugars, etc.)
<https://www.onemedical.com/blog/eat-well/learn-to-read-labels/>
- Suggested eating plan (find a plan that works for you!):
 - High protein, low carb
 - Eat 3 substantial meals (at least 1 containing meats and veggies) with 100 calorie “fuelings” in between. Some examples:
 - String cheese
 - Small handful of nuts
 - Apple or banana
 - 1 cup of berries
 - Yogurt
 - Celery or peppers with hummus
 - Protein bar
 - Try not to go more than 4 hours without eating some small fueling. This helps regulate blood sugar and keeps your body “fueled”/energized.
- Identify internal feelings or external circumstances that initiate unhealthy choices

Unhealthy Eating Choice	Trigger
Eating candy at desk	Stressful co-workers
Eating entire bag of chips	Bored on Saturday afternoon
Eating ice cream every night	Watching favorite TV show

- Drink water!!
 - Try to aim for half your body weight in ounces of water (e.g., 70 oz. for 140 lb. woman)
 - Benefits of drinking water:
 - Cheapest, safest appetite suppressant
 - Clearer skin
 - Increases energy
 - Boosts metabolism
 - Hydrates your body

5. What are some practical tips for a busy, low-income household?

- Plan your meals in advance
- Cook a whole chicken in crockpot on the weekend and freeze in smaller portions
- Don't grocery shop while you're hungry!
- Find good quality, lower-priced vegetables (Lidl / Aldi)
- Use coupons and money-saving apps (SavingStar, Checkout 51, ibotta, Walmart Savings Catcher, etc.)
- Don't fill your cupboards with things you know will not be good for you
- Make wise choices even when eating out
 - Drink water
 - Order grilled instead of fried
- Have fuelings "stashed" for emergencies so you don't splurge unnecessarily!
 - Nuts in car
 - Protein bar in work bag

6. *Where should you begin?*

- Make 1 healthy change to your eating habits
 - Make it challenging but attainable
 - Bad examples:
 - No chocolate for a year
 - Eat only salad for lunch
 - Skip meals to save up calories for later
 - Good examples:
 - Add 20 oz of water to daily fluid intake
 - Eat breakfast every day
 - Limit dessert to once a week
 - Limit soft drinks to special occasions
 - Eat more whole grain breads and cereals
 - Eat 3 servings of vegetables a day

7. *How should you think about fitness biblically? Practical advice?*

- Priorities
 - Your body is a temple for the Holy Spirit! (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)
 - You are to *present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.* (Roman 12:1)
 - Self-control is a fruit of the Spirit!
 - Your physical health and spiritual health affect one another greatly.

➤ Practical advice

- Exercise is proven to help in many areas:
 - Aids in maintaining healthy weight
 - Combats health conditions and disease
 - Improves mood
 - Boosts energy
 - Promotes better sleep

150 minutes moderate exercise or 75 minutes of vigorous exercise per week is the minimum recommended amount

- What do you enjoy?

- When can you schedule it?

- How can you “double” the benefit?

8. What do you do for exercise and when do you do it? What has helped you?

9. *Specifically, how does our spiritual life affect our physical lives?*

God made us with a body. The body itself is not evil.
(Genesis 1:26-27)

“A human person is an embodied spirit being made in the very image and likeness of God.” Bob Kelleman

- Sin can result in health problems.
(Proverbs 23:29-35, Psalm 32:3-5)
 - I need to evaluate my heart and see what is “spilling out.”
- Other struggles with health are the result of living on a sin-cursed earth. (Romans 8)
 - God uses health problems to grow us in Christlikeness. (Hebrews 12)
 - I need to trust God and not become morbidly introspective.
- I always have a spiritual response to my problem. I can honor God in my physical or emotional struggles by responding to Him in trust, submission, and perseverance.
 - Always run to Him.
 - Always bow to Him.
 - Always esteem Jesus as the Ultimate Good.

10. *But what about aging?*

Hebrews 12:1 *Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us. . . .*

11. *How should we think about menopause?*

The Change of Life by God's Design

Ecclesiastes 3:1 *There is an appointed time for everything.*

Psalms 31:15 *My times are in Your hand.*

➤ Perimenopause & Menopause

Perimenopause is a term used for a time in a woman's life around or near menopause. This time can actually start in the 30's when a woman's hormones start to make a slow decline. This period can last for several years before menopause starts. The chief complaint is a feeling of always being tired or sluggish. This often coincides with one of the most demanding periods of our lives. These physical symptoms can be misinterpreted as spiritual inadequacies. To properly prepare for these changes, a Christian young woman needs to be aware of these hormonal effects on her mental and physical state. Not neglecting our spiritual growth, good sleeping habits, and proper nutrition will help our bodies get through these physical changes.

➤ Menopause

Menopause is a term meaning "absence of the menstrual cycle." This generally happens between the age of 40 and 58 with the average age being 51. Because we live in a very youth obsessed culture, this period in our lives has many negative thoughts associated with it. However, the Godly woman accepts this to be God's perfect plan for her life. Staying in the Word helps her see who God is and who she is.

Many women sail through midlife with little change while others feel they are in a storm that they will not live through. Hot flashes, insomnia, mood swings, unexpected crying spells, memory lapses and headaches are all symptoms related to menopause. If these symptoms prevent normal activities, a medical doctor should be consulted. Confiding in another Christian woman can be of great encouragement, and it is scriptural to bear one another's burdens.

*Father, I know that all my life
Is portioned out for me,
And the changes that are sure to come
I do not fear to see;
I ask Thee for a present mind,
Intent on pleasing Thee.
Author unknown*



12. Can you give some advice on making wise health decisions?

- Never hesitate to seek medical advice.
- Have a yearly physical.
- Write down questions and concerns and take to your appointment.
- Take a friend or relative, especially if a serious, involved issue – you may not remember everything the doctor says.
- Take notes at the visit.
- Ask if there are other treatment options – the first may not be the best for you.
- Get a second opinion – it doesn't mean you don't trust the first. Legitimate differences in opinion exist in the medical community and having two opinions may help strengthen one or the other.

Summary

- We've learned why we should take our health seriously and some ways to help us do just that.
- We've learned we must have a balance: we can be good stewards of our bodies and at the same time maintain our Biblical priorities.

"If we devote our time and energy to staying fit, trim, glamorous, and youthful looking, we may achieve those objectives – for a while. But the day will come when we will regret having neglected to cultivate that inner beauty, character, and radiance that are pleasing to God and last forever." Nancy DeMoss Wolgemuth

No matter how old we are and the state of our physical health, we should desire to grow and to proclaim the beauty of Christ. Psalm 92 describes the righteous, who

*. . . flourish like the palm tree, he will
grow like a cedar in Lebanon. . . .
They will still yield fruit in old age;
they shall be full of sap and very green,
to declare that the Lord is upright. . . .
(Psalm 92:12, 14-15)*

Resources:

- MyFitnessPal app (find accountability partner!)
- <https://www.tasteofhome.com/recipes/publication/cooking-for-two-magazine>
- <https://www.choosemyplate.gov/>
- Elyse Fitzpatrick, *Love to Eat, Hate to Eat*

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