

Health is Either Derived or Hindered from Conflict



Ms. Smallback

Beloved, I pray that in all respects you may prosper and be in good health, just as your soul prospers. –3 John 2 [NASU]

I was standing in my kitchen lamenting a failing friendship, pondering how it got to the point it was and what should be done at this point. I was tired of broken relationships, and my life up until that point had a series of bitter disappointments in relationships. As I considered options in this situation, I heard the Spirit say, “But is it healthy?”

As I considered the question, I was able to begin a habit that would serve me well and still does. Whatever it is... a thought, a habit, a relationship, an attitude, etc... Is it healthy?

Health comes from the Hebrew word “methom” which means “wholesome, complete” [and comes from the Hebrew word “tamam” which means “to complete”]. When we consider the fullness of the word health that indicates being whole or complete, it takes on new and more focused meaning. What does it mean to be whole or complete? And what does it take to get there?

The simplest application is our physical well-being or wholeness. Disease is called such because the ease of health has been interrupted. When our bodies are functioning optimally, we are comfortable and we are able to function as

we were designed to. When injury or disease visits, however, our ease and comfort are interrupted and our wholeness is substituted for fragmented being. We must pause to accommodate the needs of the injury, pain or disease, and we are no longer whole, or well.

This concept carries into every other area of our lives. We are either in health, maintaining our health, working on bettering our health, or in varying degrees of unhealthiness. Because we are not merely physical beings, our mental health, emotional health, spiritual health and relationship health are all daily factors as well.

Simply put, our health is challenged when things invade it. Physically that can be bacteria, fungus, external pressures (sun, extreme weather, etc.), germs, drugs (illegal and legal), or anything really that does not belong in the environment of our physical bodies. It can also be from the absence of good things, the vitamins and minerals we need, water, sunlight, motion (exercise), etc. It can be from external attack like injury, malicious attacks from animals and humans, weapons, etc. And it can even be in the air we breathe. There is no shortage of pathways to compromise or destroy our physical health in this world.

We restore our health and/or maintain it by reversing the negative impacts and doing what we know brings wholeness. We remove foods from our diet that are toxic, foods that are damaging (processed, GMO, etc.), drugs and chemicals that alter our makeup, and unclean or unsanitary water sources. We exercise muscles to increase oxygen flow and strengthen both muscles and organs. We shield our bodies from external threats.

The process of walking in health physically is the same for walking in health in all the areas of our lives. We have to evaluate the threats to our wholeness. We have to identify threats, compromising factors, and saboteurs. We have to

create, manage and maintain an environment that fosters our well-being and minimizes that which would diminish our wholeness.

Our mental and emotional health is addressed the same way. Because our mental health is more abstract, we tend to pay less attention to it. But we have external forces that work against our mental and emotional health just as dangerous and damaging as those that come against our bodies.

When John prayed that the believers would prosper and be in good health, he said "as our soul prospers". Our soul is comprised of our mind, will and emotions. It would appear that our mind, will and emotions play a vital role in our body's health as well. As much attention ought to be paid to our faculties of our mind, will and emotions as our bodies.



This means external threats to our mind, will and emotions must be identified and defended against. What are some threats that attack us in those areas? Thoughts. Beliefs. Ideas. All of these things are either healthy or unhealthy. When Paul exhorts us in 2 Corinthians 10:5 to take our thoughts captive to the obedience of Christ, he is quite plain on what those attacks are from: speculations and every lofty thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God.

We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ... [NASU]

This tells us there are speculations; the King James says imaginations. The original language is, wait for it... "logimos" (from where we get "logic") but is defined as "computations, reasoning." Hmm, must be that there ARE thoughts, computations, reasoning that exalt themselves

against God.

If that be the case, then not everything we think is healthy. Not everything we compute or reason out lends to our mental well-being, our emotional completeness.

Sometimes when I'm trying to understand Scripture, I will read the verses in reverse order because my mind is used to thinking in particular patterns, and when I can rearrange the pattern sometimes I can glean better understanding. So the verse before taking our thoughts captive says this:

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. -2 Cor. 10:3-4 NASU

This is addressing the same concept here! While we're physical beings, we have non-physical battles. Those fortresses he is addressing are the strongholds of the mind he goes on to tell us to destroy. We're admonished to destroy factors that threaten soundness. The context of this is in the spiritual dimension, even though there's an application in the physical as well.

Look at what Oswald Chambers says about these concepts:

"To him that overcomes..." Revelation 2:7

Life without war is impossible either in nature or in grace. The basis of physical, mental, moral and spiritual life is antagonism. This is the open fact of life.

Health is the balance between physical life and external nature, and it is maintained only by sufficient vitality on the inside against things on the outside. Everything outside my physical life is designed to put me to death. Things which keep me going when I am alive, disintegrate me when I am dead. If I have enough fighting power, I produce the balance

of health. The same is true of the mental life. If I want to maintain a vigorous mental life, I have to fight, and in that way the mental balance called thought is produced.

Morally it is the same. Everything that does not partake of the nature of virtue is the enemy of virtue in me, and it depends on what moral caliber I have whether I overcome and produce virtue. Immediately I fight, I am moral in that particular. No man is virtuous because he cannot help it; virtue is acquired.

And spiritually it is the same. Jesus said, 'In the world you will have tribulation,' i.e. everything that is not spiritual makes for my undoing, but – 'Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.' I have to learn to score off the things that come against me, and in that way produce the balance of holiness; then it becomes a delight to meet opposition.

Holiness is the balance between my disposition and the law of God as expressed in Jesus Christ.

The concept of antagonism is central to health, wholeness, completeness. When we want to train our bodies for health or events that require excellent health, we fight a host of adversities to overcome mediocrity or average viability for optimal performance. To increase muscle strength we must actually push our muscles past their status quo to the point they actually tear in a sense, and in the reparation of the muscle is the strength increase.

When we are fighting disease or assaults to our health, we have to isolate the cause of the adversity and attack it from that angle. If our immune system is weakened, we must take measures to strengthen it. If a foreign host is in our body, we must remove anything that feeds that host and supply the tools or weapons necessary to strengthen our blood, our organs, our immune system, our heart, our brain, etc.

There is no difference in maintaining mental and spiritual health. If a thought pattern is unhealthy, we must identify it and remove it, and the process for removal will vary with the attack or point of insertion. We must not only remove it, but replace it with healthy thoughts, thoughts that are not only true but also in alignment with the character of God.

If our speculations, our imaginations, our reasoning and calculations cause us to reach conclusions that are contradictory to the knowledge of God, they are unhealthy. They are attacks from the enemy and they are sent to weaken us, even for our destruction. They must be identified, removed, and replaced with health. We learn the best processes for this by going through the process, not avoiding it or succumbing to it. Every time we overcome the antagonism, we grow, and our growth aids our health.

When I feed my body with the nutrients it needs, and minimize or eliminate the materials that cause it strain or dysfunction, I am building and maintaining my health. It is the same with our minds and our emotions.

When the Spirit asked me if the relationship that was on the rocks was healthy, I had to surmise it was not. It had aspects of manipulation and control that inhibited liberty. It caused me to act and react in ways contrary to my personal convictions and beliefs. I was unable to freely love and be authentic. It was molding me to a person I neither was nor wanted to be. This is not healthy.

When I realize I'm in a situation that's unhealthy, whether it be physically, mentally, spiritually, morally or relationship-wise, I must ascertain if the antagonism that's challenging health is something that must be eliminated, restructured, or what strategy is necessary to overcome to be in good health.

Sometimes God sends adversity to highlight things within us that need addressed. We should be careful to not just

eliminate the adversity if it's meant to train us. The objective is health, not avoiding discomfort. Diabetes is a result of excess blood sugar, which is frequently related to diet. Medication manipulating our bodies may temporarily alleviate the symptoms of diabetes, but it will not cure a person of diabetes. If our goal is alleviating symptoms, manipulating our bodies by drugs may do that. But if the goal is health, isolating the cause (poor diet in many cases) and addressing it is the process we begin. Understanding what brings the unhealthiness and countering it with what is healthy is what restores our wholeness.

There are people in our lives that are antagonists. (Hard to believe I know.) Sometimes those people need to be removed from our lives, but sometimes we need to learn how to overcome the dysfunctions that come with those people. Often the Lord uses others' shortcomings to reveal our own. If we remove them without seeing our own dysfunctions, we will be no further along in our health.

Look at Psalm 38:3 [NASU], *"There is no soundness in my flesh because of Your indignation; there is no health in my bones because of my sin."*

We should learn to seek if the unhealthy origins in our lives are antagonists that God has sent to correct us.

Mostly we should not shirk back from the obstacles that challenge our health, whether it be physically, spiritually, mentally, morally or in relationships. If we would take an attitude of seeking health in these areas, and identifying threats to our health in these areas, we would be able to obtain healing that lends to our health. Healing enables growth, and growth brings maturity.

James 1:2-4 [NASU] explains this process beautifully:

Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces

endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

“Perfect and complete...” Complete, healthy, whole. Health and wholeness come from overcoming adversity. The obstacles, adversities and trials to our well-being are for our benefit. When we face them with joy and wisdom, seeking God for the tools to overcome, we acquire our health.

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