



Secrets of the Abundant Life

Information Booklet I

Supplement to Lesson 25

“My son, attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my sayings. Let them not depart from thine eyes; keep them in the midst of thine heart. For they are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh.” Proverbs 4:20-22.

Introduction

Three fourths of all deaths in the United States are caused by cardiovascular diseases and cancer. But these are diseases which are unknown in many other parts of the world. Studies have confirmed that the major degenerative diseases in the United States and other western nations are caused by our lifestyle. Heart disease, cancer, strokes, diabetes, obesity, osteoporosis and senility are brought on, not by fate, but by our own choices. In most cases these diseases are not only preventable, but also reversible through simple lifestyle changes.

Let's take a look at cardiovascular diseases (heart and blood vessel diseases) which are responsible for every second death in the United States. Extensive research during the last fifty years has identified a number of risk factors for determining your chances of heart disease. The top three are high blood cholesterol, smoking, and high blood pressure. Other significant indicators include high triglycerides, diabetes, obesity, lack of exercise, and stress. These are all lifestyle related. The way we eat and live determines both the length and quality of our lives.

Smokers are 10 times more likely to die by age 60 than nonsmokers. Men only 20 percent overweight are five times more likely to die of cardiovascular disease by age 60 than are men of desirable weight.

Most of the risk factors have to do with our eating habits, primarily our intake of fat and cholesterol. The average fat intake in America amounts to around 40 percent of total calories consumed! The fat intake in China, however, averages less than 15 percent of calories. Not surprisingly, only 4 out of every 100,000 men in China die of heart disease each year.

A blood cholesterol of 200 mg% may be considered normal in the United States, but normal does not mean safe. Autopsies of young American soldiers (average age: 22!) who died in the Korean war showed that three out of four of them already had significantly narrowed coronary arteries. No wonder 200,000 coronary bypass operations are performed every year in the United States.

The American people are now spending nearly a trillion dollars every year on sick care. The real tragedy is that most of those illnesses could have been prevented if people would simply follow God's health plan.

Health Secrets of the Bible

The Bible is the “owner's manual” for our bodies, supplied by our Designer. Careful attention to its guidelines will ensure optimum performance. Let's begin with some basic specifications.

1 – Eat No Unclean Meat

Unclean meat is defined in Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14. These animals are scavengers, carnivorous, or have filthy ways. Their diseases are easily transmitted to humans.

2 – Eat No Meat With Blood In It

“Ye shall not eat any thing with the blood.” Leviticus 19:26.

The blood is the transportation system for chemicals, waste products, and disease.

Closely related to HIV, the human AIDS virus, is BIV (bovine immunodeficiency virus) which is widely distributed among cattle in the United States. The USDA National Animal Disease Center has been able to transfer the infection among goats, sheep, and rabbits by blood transfer. No testing has been done to determine if the virus is transferrable to humans. Certainly the safest course is to follow God’s instructions.

3 – Eat No Animal Fat

“Ye shall eat no manner of fat, of ox, or of sheep, or of goat. And the fat of the beast that dieth of itself, and the fat of that which is torn with beasts, may be used in any other use: but ye shall in no wise eat of it.” Leviticus 7:23-24.

It is now well known that dietary fat is the most common culprit in heart disease, cancer, high blood pressure, diabetes, and atherosclerosis. The latest U. S. government recommendations call for Americans to eat more foods high in complex carbohydrates and fiber.

4 – Eat Only At Mealtime

“Blessed art thou, O land, when...thy princes eat in due season.” Ecclesiastes 10:17.

Digestive functions are accurately timed and do the most efficient work when kept on a regular schedule. Meals should be eaten at the same time every day. After a meal, the stomach normally empties itself in 2 ½ to 4 hours. When the stomach and small bowel are completely empty, an interdigestive cleansing phase follows, which rejuvenates the entire bowel. If anything is eaten before this interdigestive phase is permitted to do its cleansing work, the contents of the stomach and intestine become stagnated, contributing to cancers, ulcers, and other gastrointestinal problems.

Studies have shown the detrimental effects of eating between meals. A person was given a regular breakfast at 8:00 in the morning. Twice during the morning and twice during the afternoon a bit of chocolate candy was given. At 9:30 that night, 13 ½ hours after breakfast, x-rays showed that more than half of the morning meal was still in the stomach. It has been found that even a little peanut nibbling delays digestion to the extent that eleven hours after breakfast there is still a large residue in the stomach.

5 – Do Not Overeat

“Blessed art thou, O land, when...thy princes eat...for strength, and not for drunkenness!” Ecclesiastes 10:17.

Any abuse to our system will bring weakness and disease.

6 – Keep Away From Alcohol

“Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.” Proverbs 20:1.

In addition to damaging the liver, brain, and other organs, alcohol also affects the heart tissue, is associated with many cancers, and diminishes immunity to disease (see Sixth Special Report to Congress on Alcohol and Health, released by the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services). According to The Washington Monthly, thirty-five percent of all hospital beds in America are occupied by people who are there because of alcohol-related problems.

The Best Diet

God designed the human body to operate most efficiently on a diet of plant foods: fruits, vegetables, grains, and nuts. The diet God gave to Adam and Eve is the best diet for us today.

Dr. T. Colin Campbell, a Cornell University scientist, has worked with the National Academy of Sciences in a study of the relationship between nutrition and cancer. Their research revealed that replacing animal products with fresh fruit, vegetables, and whole-grain products is the best way to guard against cancer. They found that regardless of the number of cell mutations caused by environmental factors, those who have a low-protein, low-fat diet have significantly lower cancer rates. In fact, a natural, whole-food diet has even been shown to reverse the growth of cancer cells that have already formed malignant tumors.

Whether you are concerned with cancer, atherosclerosis, obesity, diabetes, osteoporosis or hypertension, the only diet which can prevent or reverse the problem is the diet God gave to man at his creation. According to data supplied by the National Cancer Institute, countries with the most bowel cancer deaths and the most heart disease deaths are the countries with the highest per capita of meat consumption.

Strokes and heart attacks occur when important arteries become clogged, a condition known as atherosclerosis. Cholesterol, the primary factor in atherosclerosis, is found only in animal products. Plants do not produce it. Before western culture and eating habits were introduced to the Japanese, atherosclerosis was so unheard of in Japan that Japanese medical schools had to import plaque-filled coronary arteries from the United States to demonstrate to their medical students the disease that was causing half of all deaths in America.

Antonio Gotto, M.D., president of the American Heart Association, stated in a U.S. Senate hearing that "In societies where the blood cholesterol is under 160 mg% there is virtually no coronary artery disease or atherosclerosis." His conclusion?-- "If we lower the cholesterol count of everyone in the United States to below 150 mg%, we would probably wipe out heart disease."

One of the most respected authorities on diabetes, Dr. James Anderson, after working with low-fat, low-protein, high-fiber, unrefined starchy food diets for fifteen years, stated, "Ninety-five percent of adult onset diabetics on oral drugs could be off such drugs in less than eight weeks, and 50 to 75 percent could normalize their blood sugar and get off all insulin within weeks."

A few years ago, people thought a high-protein diet was best. But it was found that the highest rates of heart disease, cancer, diabetes, and osteoporosis are found among those who consume the most protein. The average adult probably needs less than 30 grams of protein per day, which is easily obtained from fruits, vegetables, grains, and nuts. Most Americans consume 100 grams of protein or more per day. This overconsumption of protein increases urinary excretion of calcium and other minerals, weakens the bones, and places stress on the kidneys.

Athletes know that complex carbohydrates are the best fuel for our bodies, providing the most energy and endurance. Unrefined plant foods also provide the natural fiber necessary for health.

Animal products contain no fiber, but are loaded with cholesterol and excessive amounts of protein. Typically, meats provide no carbohydrates, and are the single largest source of fat in the American diet.

It sounds too easy, but it's true: A simple switch to a broad vegetarian diet would lower our fat and cholesterol, provide all the starches and fiber we need, guard against overconcentration of protein, lower our blood pressure, our weight, and our chances of early death.

The Bible has much to say about the benefits of vegetarianism. Adam lived nearly a thousand years on a pure vegetarian diet. After the introduction of "clean" meats at the time of the flood, man's lifespan was immediately cut by a third. After just a few generations of meat eating, people were dying at age 200. And just a few generations later Moses wrote, "The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off." Psalm 90:10.

When the Israelites were in the wilderness, God provided manna for them – bread from heaven – and water from a rock. But many of them “fell a lusting” and said, “Who shall give us flesh to eat?” God had hoped to bring His people back to the original diet of Eden. Their craving for flesh meats greatly disappointed Him. So He gave them the flesh they wanted, but “while the flesh was yet between their teeth, ere it was chewed, the wrath of the Lord was kindled against the people, and the Lord smote the people with a very great plague. And...there they buried the people that lusted.” Numbers 11:33-34.

This experience was so significant to God’s people that it was recounted in its entirety in Psalm 78:18-31, and referred to again in Psalm 106:15, “He gave them their request, but sent leanness into their soul.” God often allows us to have what we want, but the result is a loss of vitality – both physically and spiritually.

Referring to the same event, Paul counsels, “We should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted.” 1 Corinthians 10:6.

Notice in these texts that eating flesh is associated with God’s displeasure:

“Be not among winebibbers; among riotous eaters of flesh.” Proverbs 23:20.

“Slaying oxen, and killing sheep, eating flesh, and drinking wine: let us eat and drink; for tomorrow we shall die.” Isaiah 22:13.

When we consecrate our lives to the service of God, our bodies become the temple of the Holy Spirit. As Christians we are called to glorify God in all our habits and practices. We will seek to do all we can to live in the most healthful way possible, to the glory of God.

“Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.” 1 Corinthians 10:31.

The book of Daniel, with its vital message, was written for us who live in “the time of the end.” How significant it is to us that the book of Daniel opens with the message of abstinence from rich and unwholesome foods, and emphasizes the benefits of a pure vegetarian diet!

Practical, Biblical Instructions on Eating

“Thou shalt eat the herb of the field; In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread.” Genesis 3:18-19.

“Eat thy bread with joy.” Ecclesiastes 9:7.

“Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith.” Proverbs 15:17.

“Better is a dry morsel, and quietness therewith, than an house full of sacrifices with strife.” Proverbs 17:1.

“My son, eat thou honey, because it is good; and the honeycomb, which is sweet to thy taste.” Proverbs 24:13.

“Hast thou found honey? eat so much as is sufficient for thee, lest thou be filled therewith, and vomit it.” Proverbs 25:16.

“It is not good to eat much honey.” Proverbs 25:27.

“When thou sittest to eat with a ruler, consider diligently what is before thee: And put a knife to thy throat, if thou be a man given to appetite. Be not desirous of his dainties: for they are deceitful meat.” Proverbs 23:1-3.

“He should have fed them also with the finest of the wheat.” Psalm 81:16.

“That which should be set on thy table should be full of fatness.” Job 36:16.

“...with the fat of kidneys of wheat.” Deuteronomy 32:14.

“Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness.” Isaiah 55:2.

“For the Lord God is a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.” Psalm 84:11.

“There is nothing better for a man, than that he should eat and drink, and that he should make his soul enjoy good in his labour. This also I say, that it was from the hand of God.” Ecclesiastes 2:24.

Abstaining from Harmful Substances

“Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.” Proverbs 20:1.

“Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkard...shall inherit the kingdom of God.” 1 Corinthians 6:9-10.

“Which eat swine’s flesh, and broth of abominable things is in their vessels.” Isaiah 65:4.

“For the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty: and drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags.” Proverbs 23:21.

“Their wine is the poison of dragons, and the cruel venom of asps.” Deuteronomy 32:33.

“Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink; that continue until night, till wine inflame them!” Isaiah 5:11.

“Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine. 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 23:29-32.

“Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey: whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?” Romans 6:16 (see also verse 13).

“And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit.” Ephesians 5:18.

“Do not drink wine nor strong drink...that ye may put difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean.” Leviticus 10:9-10.

“Drink the pure blood of the grape.” Deuteronomy 32:14.

“The new wine is found in the cluster...Destroy it not; for a blessing is in it.” Isaiah 65:8.

“Be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the Lord.” Isaiah 52:11.

“Abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul.” 1 Peter 2:11.

“If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified, and meet for the master’s use, and prepared unto every good work.” 2 Timothy 2:21.

“Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing.” 2 Corinthians 6:17.

“Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright.” Hebrews 12:16.

Notice: Man’s first sin in the garden of Eden was related to appetite. Jesus’ first temptation in the wilderness was also related to appetite. Christ conquered where Adam failed, thereby making it possible for you and I to gain the same victory over appetite.

But some try to ignore these plain dietary principles of God, and believe they have found other Scriptural passages which allow them to excuse their lack of control over dietary habits. So let us take some time to examine these so-called excusing passages.

On 1 Timothy 4:1-5

Some people have used this passage to say that Christians are really free to eat anything they want. But that is not what it says.

This passage speaks of some who depart from the faith, and command “to abstain from meats which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth.” Notice that these people are commanding to abstain from meats which God created to be received.

The vital question is, What “meat” did God create to be received? The Genesis account is clear: “Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat.” Genesis 1:29. Thus, the meats which God created for us to receive are herbs and fruits and seeds.

The word “meat” today almost always means flesh meat. But in the Bible it can simply mean “food.” When Paul’s ship was about to be wrecked, he invited the passengers to “take some meat,” adding, “for this is for your health” Acts 27:34. But notice then what meat he took. He “took bread, and gave thanks to God in the presence of them all: and...began to eat” Verse 35.

1 Timothy 4:4 says, “For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving.” Some people claim that this means that we are to eat anything and everything. Following that line of reasoning, we should not refuse to eat rats or cockroaches. Obviously Paul’s “every creature” is to be qualified by the previous verse – foods which God hath created to be received!

Verse 5 gives additional qualifications: foods which are “sanctified by the word of God.” Sanctified means set apart and designated for a specific purpose. So far from giving license to eating anything we please, this passage is fully consistent with the rest of Scripture, permitting only those foods which are designated by the word of God.

On Acts 10 - Peter’s Vision

Peter’s vision of the sheet full of animals is sometimes cited in an attempt to sidestep the Bible’s dietary guidelines. Actually, its message does not pertain to food at all.

The vision occurs in the context of the opening of the gospel to the Gentiles. At that time all the Christians were Jews. They viewed the Gentiles as beyond the reach of the grace of God. God wanted to break down that wall of prejudice, and used this strange dream to do it.

While messengers were on their way from Cornelius to get him, Peter, on a housetop, fell into a trance. He saw a large sheet let down before him “wherein were all manner of four-footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat. But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean. And the voice spake unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common. This was done thrice: and the vessel was received up again into heaven.”

If God was indeed instructing Peter to add all those creatures to his diet, then it would be our Christian obligation to eat skunks and mice and snakes. But the purpose of the vision was not to change Peter’s dietary intake, but his outlook. It was not given him so that he could expand his selection of food at mealtime, but so that he could expand his mission.

We have learned in previous lessons that beasts in symbolic visions represent nations. Just as in Revelation 10, John in vision was asked to eat a book, here Peter in vision was asked to eat beasts. These beasts, being unclean, represented the uncircumcised nations. Peter represented the church, as did John in Revelation 10. Eating a thing symbolized receiving it. God was graphically illustrating to Peter that the church was to receive “every nation” (verse 35) into it.

The words that were spoken to Peter were, “What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common.” While Peter still wondered what God was referring to, the messengers from Cornelius reached the house where Peter was staying. Then “the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee. Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them.”

Peter then began to understand the meaning of the vision. When he arrived at Cornelius’ house he found a large group of Gentiles assembled, all waiting to hear the gospel of Jesus.

Peter said, “Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean. Therefore came I unto you without gainsaying, as soon as I was sent for.” “Of a truth,” He concluded, “I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.”

Here, Peter himself plainly explained what his own vision meant. It was not that God wanted to cast aside His own dietary laws, and now allowed His people the freedom to eat anything they wanted to. But that God wanted His followers to cast aside the Jewish wall of prejudice and allow the Gospel to go to all nations, tongues and peoples.

On 1 Timothy 5:23

What was Paul recommending when he told Timothy to “use a little wine for thy stomach’s sake”? Was he suggesting that alcohol is good for our system? The fact is that alcohol does not benefit the stomach at all.

The word “wine” in the Bible means grape juice. The same word is used for both fermented and unfermented juice. The practice of using unfermented grape juice for medicinal purposes in Paul’s day is well documented. Aristotle (384-322 B.C.), Athenaeus (200 A.D.), and Pliny (24-79 A.D.; who was a contemporary of Paul’s), each advised the use of sweet grape juice to alleviate stomach disorders.

Both Paul and Peter taught abstinence from alcohol. This is evident from their frequent use of the word “sober” (see 1 Thessalonians 5:6-8; 1 Timothy 3:2, 11; Titus 2:2; 1 Peter 1:13; 4:7; 5:8). The Greek word translated “sober” in these verses is “nepho” or “nephaios”. Nepho means “to abstain from wine” and nephaios means “abstinent in respect to wine.”

By that definition, which is also attested in the writings of Josephus and Philo, Paul admonished in 1 Timothy 3:2 that a bishop must be abstinent in respect to wine. In verse 3 he declared that a bishop must be “*me paroinon*”, which literally means “not around wine.” Having so strongly thus instructed Timothy to abstain from alcohol and not even be around it, Paul certainly would not have advised him in the same book to take some for his stomach’s sake. Obviously in Chapter 5 he was recommending unfermented grape juice.

A Recommended Health Program

The ABC’s of Health

(A Simple program for avoiding illness or restoring health)

- A** – Abstain from intemperate practices.
- B** – Breathe deeply of fresh, pure air.
- C** – Carefully expose to sunlight.
- D** – Drink pure water freely and bathe.
- E** – Eat simple, whole, plant foods.
- F** – Follow an exercise program.
- G** – Get regular, adequate rest.
- H** – Have faith in God’s power.