

### The Benefits of Spiritual Health

*“Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well for you, even as your soul is getting along well. It gave me great joy to have some brothers come and tell me about your faithfulness to the truth and how you continue to walk in the truth. I have no greater joy than to hear how my children are walking in the truth.”*

3 John 2-4

Third John is a letter written by “the elder” to a man named Gaius. The letter is personal but expresses thoughts that John wants to be shared with the other believers of the community that Gaius serves in. The thing that really got me as I read the beginning of the letter was how John seemed to weave good health, that things would go well and a healthy soul to Gaius’ faithfulness to the truth. John mentions his commitment to truth three times and even goes on to highlight some of the ways the Gaius has upheld the truth. Could it be that walking in the truth that comes from heaven can make us healthy?

I believe it does.

Spiritual health determines how healthy our soul (mind, will and emotions) is and even how healthy our body is. A healthy soul is focused on the things of God. As Paul said to the Philippian church, “Think on these things (whatever is lovely, noble, praiseworthy, etc) and whatever you have learned or received or heard from me-put into practice, and the God of peace will be with you (Philippians 4:8-9).” Our spiritual state determines our mental state and our mental state commands our physical condition. Do you believe it?

Paul said this, “I beat my body and make it my slave... (I Cor. 9:27).” Sounds kind of ruthless doesn’t it? But Paul realized, like I do, that after he has preached the Word of God, he also needed to live it or he would be disqualified from “the prize.” That prize is to please the Lord; the reward is a healthy body and soul. Paul’s desire to discipline his body came from his desire to walk in the truth that he preached.

Let’s look at this from another perspective. I read this question months ago and it stuck with me, “What is the best diet?” The answer? “The one you stick to.” Good isn’t it? There are so many diet plans out there. Which one should you pick? Well, the truth is that almost all of them will work if you do just one thing, beat your body! The ability to discipline yourself is determined by your mental condition. Why can’t you lose weight? You give in to your desire to “munge.” I know, I do it. Recently someone sent me an article that said that part of developing a healthy attitude was getting enough exercise. I won’t get into the article but the Lord has been bringing the exercise thing up to me a lot. There is just one problem, fitting it in to my schedule. Well, the truth is that I can fit anything into my schedule that I know is necessary for me. I have to beat my body and not let my unbelievable ability to procrastinate win out. I’m seeing that when it comes to exercise and dieting, my mental condition will determine my physical one and my spiritual condition determines my mental state. Does this make sense?

John, as an elder to the church, commends Gaius for his faithfulness to walk in the truth and gives the benefits. Let’s take heed and build our spiritual health by reading his Word and putting it into practice. Let’s put some of the teachings we have been listening to into practice. Let’s watch the lives of mature Christians and follow their example. And lastly, as we pray for God to heal us, let’s take the steps of discipline and be stewards of our souls and our bodies.