
It Pays to Read the Owner's Manual



YOU'VE JUST BOUGHT a new car. It cost a lot of money, so now you want to save money. You decide that one way to economize is to ignore the owner's manual and take care of the car the way you see fit. You remember that orange juice is slippery, so when it's time to change the oil, you use orange juice. Gasoline is expensive too, so each time you refill your gas tank, you put in a little water. The idea is that over time you'll be able to train the car to run on water instead of gas.

How long would it be before you started having major problems with the car? We would never treat a car this way because it wouldn't function. We actually treat our cars far better than we treat our bodies.

Thoughts to Remember:

- ♦ Leading causes of death today include heart disease, stroke, cancer, lung diseases, and diabetes. Most of these are controllable or preventable through lifestyle. It couldn't be more obvious that we're ignoring our owner's manual, God's Word.
- ♦ "Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health" (3 John 2). "...I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10).
- ♦ "And I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven...saying with a loud voice, 'Fear God and give glory to him: for the hour of his judgment is come'" (Revelation 14:6, 7). We live in the last days, and God's message to us is to worship the Creator. How do we give glory to Him? "So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31). We glorify God with our lifestyle. "Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Corinthians 6:19, 20).
- ♦ Satan's counterfeit message is that your body is a fun house. Do whatever feels good! Be guided by thrills, sensations, sex! Through this lifestyle we become jaded, morally twisted, and spiritually dwarfed—Satan's exact plan. But God says your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit.
- ♦ For everything God has created, Satan has developed a counterfeit. [For pure air, Satan instead urges cigarettes.](#) Today we know that smoking contributes to heart disease, strokes, many forms of cancer, emphysema, premature births, poor circulation, and even AIDS. Need to quit? "I can do all things [even quit] through Christ who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13).

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♦ For pure water, Satan's counterfeit is alcohol. He invented a drink that deadens brain cells so the Holy Spirit can't communicate with us. "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is a brawler; whoever is led astray by it is not wise" (Proverbs 20:1). "Strong drink" in the Bible refers to fermented drinks that are intoxicating. Alcohol is addictive, destroys brain cells, and dramatically affects our ability to reason. "Look not thou upon the wine when it is red [alcoholic, fermented, an intoxicant], when it giveth his color in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. At the last it biteh like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder. Thine eyes shall behold strange women [a reference to the confusion of intoxication], and thine heart shall utter perverse things" (Proverbs 23:31-33).

♦ The Bible uses the word *wine* to refer to fermented and unfermented grape juice. It is clear the Bible passages about wine mean we are to drink grape juice when it's fresh, not fermented. ♦ What about the addictive power of tobacco and alcohol? "No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make a way of escape, that you may be able to bear it" (1 Corinthians 10:13).

♦ Has Satan given us a counterfeit of good diet? Yes, he clearly has. "And God said, See, I have given you every herb that yields seed, which is on the face of all the earth, and every tree, whose fruit yields seed; to you it shall be for food" (Genesis 1:29). This was the original pure diet of Eden before sin entered the world: Fruit, nuts, grains, and vegetables.

♦ But after sin came, and the Flood temporarily swept the earth clean of vegetation, people began to eat meat. God specified clean meats in Leviticus 11:2, 3, 9, 10. Today, however, even clean meats are a risk because of extensive pollution. And because the earth is no longer swept bare of vegetation, meat is no longer necessary to our diet. So there are three diets: Unacceptable (meat of scavengers), Acceptable (clean meats given to Noah and his family after the flood), and Ideal (diet given to Adam and Eve in Eden).

♦ The laws of health were not nailed to the cross; if a food was unhealthy before Christ died, it's still unhealthy. Peter's vision of Christ saying "Call no food unclean" (Acts 10:17) was a reference to Peter's Jewish prejudice against Gentiles, not to eating anything he wanted!

♦ Didn't Jesus say it's what comes out of someone that defiles him, not what goes in? Jesus said this of prejudiced Pharisees unwilling to eat food if it was even *touch*ed by Gentiles. Jesus showed that we're not defiled by what goes into us (eating food touched by Gentiles), but by what comes out (the pride and greed of the Pharisees came out in their prejudiced behavior).

♦ The counterfeit to genuine love, of course, is sex *by itself*. Sex without love, without commitment, outside of marriage, the Scriptures show to be Satan's plan to defile our bodies and divide us from each other and from God.

The "take-home" message for you . . .

♦ Our bodies are God's temple. He wants to dwell there, to be a companion and a help to us. We can have this wonderful privilege and joyful experience by living a pure life. We can make sure our bodies and minds are open to Christ by being physically healthy, clear-minded, and sexually moral. We can do this because Christ gives us the victory over our sins.

Just between you . . . and God:

♦ Today is the day to give God your whole heart and life. Perhaps you don't even want to give up this particular sin; tell Him. He will set you free, free to give Him your heart and to spend eternity in heaven with Him. Today is the day!

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