
How to Prosper in Health



ARE YOU FEELING as perfectly well and energetic as you'd like? Are you struggling with money problems? Do you feel lonely some of the time? Imagine how bad life could really be...

The doctor tells you you have a disease that, without treatment, leaves you six months to live. Your finances are in desperate shape; you owe more money than you could possibly earn for the rest of your life. You're broke and living on the street. Your friends and family have deserted you. You feel so lonely and afraid. Is there no one to help you?

Yes, there is Someone who cares for you and will never leave you.

Thoughts to Remember:

♦ Imagine that one day, in the scenario above, you sit on a park bench. A well-dressed man with a kindly face sits beside you. He strikes up a conversation, and you tell him your story. He says, "My friend, I want to help you. I have more money than I can ever spend. So let me pay your medical bills and make you a partner in my business. I'll pay you a generous salary and retire all your debts." You reply, "What's the catch?" He responds, "It will be totally voluntary on your part. If you appreciate what I've done for you, there are some things I would like. I'd like you to make some lifestyle changes to keep yourself healthy from now on. Each time I send you a paycheck, I'd like you to send a small percentage back to me as an acknowledgment of our partnership. And since you're lonely, I'd like to spend one day a week going places and doing things with you. Of course you can call me or visit me any other time too."

♦ Of course, this kind man is Jesus Christ, who loves you and gave His life for you, and who has all the wealth of the universe at His command. What an offer! Will we really forget His kindness, ruin our health, hoard our money, and refuse to meet with God?

♦ "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" (Romans 12:1). "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). People say, "I'll do what I want. It's my body." No, it belongs to God and is the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit! "Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health" (3 John 2). "So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31).

♦ Smoking contributes to heart disease, strokes, cancer, emphysema, premature births, shortness of breath, even wrinkles. Satan has created a counterfeit for every good thing from God;

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♦ Smoking contributes to heart disease, strokes, cancer, emphysema, premature births, shortness of breath, even wrinkles. Satan has created a counterfeit for every good thing from God;

and smoking is Satan's counterfeit for pure air. "Thou shalt not kill"—smoking doesn't just affect you, it affects those around you. Studies show each cigarette shortens your life by 12 minutes.

- Alcohol impairs the brain from being reached by the Holy Spirit. It is addictive, causes brain cell destruction, and dramatically affects our ability to reason. But **"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).

- The diet God gave Adam and Eve in Eden was one of fruits, nuts, grains, and vegetables. After the Flood, God classified the animals into "clean" and "unclean" so people would have food until the earth grew food again. The Bible does not teach that it's a sin to eat meat, but it tells which meats are clean and which are unclean. "Among the animals, whatever divides the hoof, having cloven hooves and chewing the cud—that you may eat. Nevertheless, of those that chew the cud or have cloven hooves, you shall not eat such as these: the camel, the hare, the rock hyrax [a large rat that lives in the rocks]...Also the swine is unclean for you" (Deuteronomy 14:7, 8). God forbids these animals for our good. "...No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly" (Psalm 84:11).

- "But," you say, "in Acts 10 God told Peter that nothing is unclean." In Peter's dream, a sheet was let down from heaven three times, filled with unclean beasts. Three times Peter was told to kill and eat, and at the end of the dream, he was told, "Don't call anything that God has blessed common or unclean." But we see from Peter's immediate action afterward that he understood this dream quite differently. Peter was not to exclude Gentiles and preach only to Jews. He changed from preaching the gospel only to Jews, and began to preach to Gentiles also.

- "Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed me. But you say, 'In what way have we robbed you?' In tithes and offerings...Bring all the tithes into the storehouse that there may be food in my house. 'And try me now in this, says the Lord of hosts, 'if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such a blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it'" (Malachi 3:8, 10). *Tithe* means a tenth. We return a tenth of all our increase to God as an acknowledgment of our partnership with Him and our dependence on Him for our blessings.
- We also dedicate to God one day out of seven. The Sabbath, given to humanity at Creation, is a reminder of our Creator. "Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he that does the will of my Father in heaven" (Matthew 7:21).

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

- "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God" (John 1:12). Whatever struggles you may be going through, whether financial, physical, or something else, God will be with you and give you power to meet the struggle. As you reach out to Him to obey Him, He will bless you richly with His presence, guidance, and help. And really—giving up bad things for good things and becoming financially generous will bring you only joy!

Just between you . . . and God:

- Perhaps you want to ask God to deliver you from alcohol...drugs...cigarettes...favorite meats...money...or any of so many other harmful idols. God is willing to deliver you and eager to set you free! Ask boldly for the blessings of deliverance, and He will do a mighty work for you.

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