

BY DALE FLETCHER, M.S.

Faith and HEALTH connection

*Physical exercise has some value,
but spiritual exercise is much more
important for it promises a reward
in both this life and the next*
—1 Timothy 4:8 NLT

“His Instruction Manual... Our Guidebook for a Healthy Life”

The Bible is designed by God to provide us a blueprint for living life. It's like an owner's manual for a piece of exercise equipment. We can make the best use of the equipment if we read the owner's manual so we are aware of how to use all the special capabilities and how all the “buttons and whistles” work. When it breaks down, we can look in the manual to know how to repair it.

One secret to living an abundant life, according to Warren Wiersbe, is obeying God. As we live our lives according to God's principles we will be in His presence more frequently and this empowers us to bear more fruit in our lives. If we desire to obey God, then reading his Word is essential. The more we read and study the Bible the more knowledgeable we can become about how to live our life according to His principles and commandments.

What the Bible Says: There is a chapter of the Bible that tells us the benefits of living according to His principles more than any other chapter - Psalm 119. In the 176 verses of this chapter, the words such as principles, decrees, commandments and laws are used 156 times as the author writes about how God blesses him as he lives according to the principles of God. Happiness, joy, a renewed life, hope, freedom, understanding, comfort, wisdom, peace and health are some of the blessings mentioned that the author received and that we can have if we live as God instructs us to live in the Bible. Two verses that apply to health are as follows: “I will never forget your commandments for you have used them to restore my joy and health.” (verse 93) “As pressure and stress bear down on me I find joy in your commands.” (verse 143) James captures the essence of the value of reading the Bible and obeying God's principles when he wrote “But if you look carefully into the perfect law that sets you free, and if you do what it says and don't forget what you heard, then God will bless you for doing it.” James 1:25

What the Research Says: I have yet to find medical research that suggests explicitly that obedience to God's Bible promotes good health. However, if you read Psalm 119 you will see that following His principles will bring many blessings that are

apt to impact on health. When you experience joy, happiness and peace on a regular basis, you are very likely to live in better emotional and physical health. It just makes sense. And, according to the Bible, when we follow the principles and commandments of God we will experience these sorts of blessings.

What You Can Do: Grow deeper and deeper in love with God as you read the Bible and know Him better. A deeper love for Him will give you a greater desire to follow His commandments. Read Psalm 119 in a contemporary translation. If you don't own a contemporary version, visit www.biblegateway.com and read the New Living Translation. Ask God to reveal to you the benefits He wants you to receive personally as you obey his principles. Be aware of how reading the Bible on a regular basis impacts on your day-to-day attitude and your emotional well being. Recognize how this ongoing positive state of emotional health impacts your physical health.

The middle three letters of the word obedience are “die.” To be able to follow God's commandments requires that we “die” to ourselves and live for God. This is not easy because we are selfish in nature and it's a big risk to believe and trust that His ways are bigger and better for us than our ways. But the Bible makes it clear. Over and over it reminds us that when we disobey His principles, we are likely to suffer negative consequences in our life. When we follow God's ways, we will have life... the kind of life that Jesus mentions in John 10:10 when He tells us that He came so that we might have life to the fullest.

Secrets of Living an ABUNDANT LIFE

*The secret of living is fruitbearing.
The secret of fruitbearing is abiding in God.
The secret of abiding is obeying God.
The secret of obeying is loving God.
The secret of loving is knowing God.*

Adapted from 5 Secrets of Living by Warren W. Wiersbe

© 2007 Dale Fletcher, M.S.

Dale Fletcher is a speaker, writer and health coach who lives in Charlotte, NC.

Connect with him at www.faithandhealthconnection.com

This article appears in Faith and Fitness Magazine, Aug/Sept 2007

www.faithandfitness.net