

HOLISTIC HEALTH MATTERS

WITH:

*David
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David Sandstrom 0:00

Welcome to the holistic health matters podcast where it's all about maximizing your health potential in body, mind and spirit, so that you can pursue the abundant life more effectively. I'm your host, David Sandstrom, and this is episode number 14. Does God want us healthy? The answer to that question is crucial to the level of health and vitality we enjoy. This episode is based on some of the content in my book the Christians guide to holistic health, specifically, the chapter on answering

the question, Does God want us healthy? If you've read my book already, some of this may sound familiar. I encourage you to keep listening anyway. There is a lot to this topic and this episode will serve as a great review.

David Sandstrom 0:50

What we believe matters. There is a mind body connection that is well documented in the medical literature. our beliefs shape our expectations and our expectations, powerfully influence our physical outcomes. I have a whole section in my book "The Christians Guide to Holistic Health", with several chapters on the mind body connection. We can't possibly cover all that in a single episode. But let me briefly go over one aspect, the placebo effect. When a pharmaceutical company is going through the FDA approval process for a new drug, they must prove that the drug can outperform the placebo, or the drug won't be approved. As much as researchers would love to see the placebo effect go away. It won't. About a third of the time, people in the control group, the ones given a sugar pill or a simple saline injection, actually experience the desired outcome that the drug is purported to elicit This is not just all in the mind either or just or simply a perceived benefit. Among these people, the control group, the beliefs, and the expectations that follow those beliefs actually cause real, physical manifestations that researchers can observe and measure. Things such as blood pressure dropping, ulcers healing, inflammation decreasing, bald men growing hair, and things like that. Even though there is no physical explanation for their improvement, it happens anyway. This is true, even though prior to the start of the study, researchers take steps to minimize the placebo effect by eliminating people who seem to be easily

influenced by suggestions. Considering how powerful this mind body connection is, I encourage people in my book to consider these three crucial questions. Do I want to be healthy? Do I believe I can be healthy? And do I believe I deserve to be healthy? Those are three questions that it's worth everyone's time to ponder and answer them effectively.

David Sandstrom 3:23

Again, we don't have time to go into all of this in this episode, but I mentioned that because I believe probably the most important belief that we can hold towards our health is: Does God want vibrant health and vitality for me? That's worth having a discussion over. I contend that it's God's desire that we all enjoy extraordinary health and well being. Now, when I say that to some of my Christian friends, sometimes it's met with some objections. Sometimes it's verbalized, and sometimes not. I can tell by the expression on their face or the direction the conversation takes after that, that they don't agree. You know, you can actually make a case from The Bible using scripture, that that is not true that sometimes God's desire is that we experience a physical trial. So I do think that this is a discussion worth having. Let me play devil's advocate for a moment. Sure, everyone wants good health, Dave, but maybe that's not God's will for their life. You know, Paul had his thorn in the flesh in 2 Corinthians chapter 12. Paul's physical affliction, shaped his spiritual maturity and ultimately had a positive effect on his effectiveness. If the Apostle Paul, the guy who wrote two thirds of the New Testament needed a physical trial, what makes you think you're exempt? Aren't you being a bit arrogant Dave? After all, God is sovereign over all creation and he answers to no one. Haven't you ever read the book of Job? Job lost a lot of things, including his health. In chapter 38 job was railing against his faith and complaining about his circumstances. And God says to him something like this. Hey, job. Where were you when I gave the earth its dimensions? Where were you when I told the ocean it could only go this far. God told Job in no uncertain terms, that he needed an attitude adjustment. Jesus Himself said, If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me (Matthew 16:24). should we accept the fact that God's ways are not our ways (Isaiah 58:8) Furthermore, God promises to work all things together for our good (Romans 8:28). Therefore, he can sometimes use our afflictions to help us grow and become more spiritually mature, just as he did with the Apostle Paul. CS Lewis 20th century Christian apologist and prolific author said this, quote, "Pain insists upon being attended to. God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our

consciences, but shouts in our pains. It is his megaphone to rouse a deaf world," unquote. These are all valid points, and I agree with them all.

David Sandstrom 6:44

No one asks for a physical trial. But sometimes graciously accepting a trial with peace and patience is the path to greater spiritual maturity. But here's an important point. Just as any loving parent would prefer their kids learn their lessons without suffering negative consequences. God would prefer that we learn life's lessons without the trial. God doesn't impose suffering, but he does permit it. Paul's thorn in the flesh where told was a messenger from Satan. God allowed it to keep him humble. And this did contribute to his spiritual maturity. God does work all things, even the negative together for our good. But that doesn't mean we should just roll over and forget about pursuing vibrant health. That doesn't mean we should accept various health challenges as God's will for our lives. Just as we often see in Scripture, this account of Paul's thorn in the flesh is descriptive, not prescriptive. Physical suffering is not necessarily everyone's lot in life. We have a role to play in the maintenance of our physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual vitality. Even though God can use health challenges for our growth, it's my contention, that we should do everything in our power to eliminate unhealthy lifestyle choices that could impede our health. Let's not let our choices bring us harm that God would prefer to spare us from. It's not a sign of spiritual maturity to neglect our physical vitality. That's not being a good steward with what God has provided us. God has given us an amazing thing in the human body. What our bodies do for us on a daily basis is nothing short of amazing. Learning about the human body, a study of anatomy and physiology will take your breath away. Sadly Many of us take our bodies for granted until we experience some type of a health crisis. If we really appreciated our bodies, with the Bible refers to as the temple of the Holy Spirit, we'd gladly take care of them. to neglect our physical vitality is actually an affront to God. It's kind of like an ungrateful teenager that rolls their eyes at their parents when they say something like, have you checked the oil and that new car that you just got for your 16th birthday? Come on, dad. It's a new car, I don't need to check the oil.

David Sandstrom 9:37

I'm amazed at the way I see some of my Christian friends treating their health and well being. There seems to be a false underlying belief that goes something like this. health outcomes are largely genetically determined. And God is in charge of the genetics that I inherited. So he's

responsible for my health and well being not me. There's not much I need to do. That notion is a falsehood and a destructive belief. Have you ever noticed if you're in a Bible study group or a prayer group, when people share their prayer requests, a lot of the time, those prayer requests center around some type of a physical health challenge, either for them or loved one. Yes, God can and does perform healing miracles, but we have a role to play in the maintenance of our bodies. By the way, our physical vitality is intimately connected to our mental emotional vitality, and ultimately, our spiritual vitality. All three are interconnected and interdependent. What affects one aspect of our being for good or bad, will inevitably alter the others in the same fashion. Let me give you an example. If you had a pebble in your shoe, and I force you to walk around all day with that pebble in your shoe; I didn't allow you to take it out. Do you think by the end of the day that would affect your mood, this physical thorn in the flesh, if you will, could that affect your mental emotional state? It absolutely would. So there's the connection right there. And it's, of course, much more complicated than that. But that's one way of looking at it. I suggest we not get out of balance with our with our theology before we draw any conclusions about God's desires toward our physical health and well being. Let's look at scripture, reason and science together. If we really have the truth, then scripture, reason and science should all be in perfect harmony, they should all line up together.

David Sandstrom 11:48

Let's look at some of the key scriptures. Of course, there's a lot the Bible has to say about health, but I'm just going to hit a few of the highlights here. We have some pretty encouraging words. In Deuteronomy, chapter seven, verse 15, we see this, "The Lord will remove from you all sickness, and he will not put on you any of the harmful diseases of Egypt which you have known." Psalm 103, verses two through five. "Bless the Lord, oh my soul and forget none of his benefits. Who pardons all your iniquities, who heals all your diseases, so that your youth is renewed like the eagle." Pretty, pretty glowing promise. 3 John, chapter one, verse two says this, "Beloved, I pray that in all respects, you may prosper and be in good health, just as your soul prospers." There we see the connection between physical vitality and the mind or the mental emotional component, our soul. In Matthew chapter nine, verse 35, we see this "Jesus was going through all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness." In Luke chapter nine, verse two says this,

"and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to perform healing." We see good health being addressed in the Old Testament law and poetry books. We see it being addressed in the New Testament epistles, we see it being discussed in the Gospels. And we see Jesus teaching the disciples to do the same thing. It's pretty clear from Scripture. God does care about our health.

David Sandstrom 13:41

This is the way I look at it. When I was researching for my book, I came to this conclusion. God is our loving Heavenly Father. And like any loving parent, he wants what's best for his children. Now God is all knowing he even knows the future. So when he gives us instruction. He loves us enough that those instructions are designed with our well being in mind. And when it gives us some some form of restriction. Those restrictions are designed with our protection in mind. It's kind of like if we went on a jungle Safari, we would do well to hire an experienced guide. Because the guide knows the path. He knows the way and he knows the hazards that are associated with this jungle Safari. He knows what the cliffs are. He knows where the wild animals are hanging out, and we would do well to listen to his instructions. Well in life, God is that seasoned guide for us. We can't enjoy the protections that the guide offers without doing what the guide says. This is why Jesus said we should learn from him. Matthew 11:28 says this Jesus Speaking, "Come to me, all you who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." Why wouldn't we want to let God be our guide? John chapter 10, verse 11, says this Jesus speaking, "I am the good shepherd, the good shepherd lays his life down for the sheep." When we approach scripture this way, the Bible becomes a plethora of useful advice for health and well being. In fact, the Bible tells us exactly that. In Proverbs chapter four verses 20 through 22, we see this "My son, give attention to my words, incline your ear to my sayings. Do not let them depart from your site. Keep them in the midst of your heart, for they are life to those who find them and health to all their body."

David Sandstrom 16:07

In the Bible, we see God's prescription revealed his prescription for health is this stewardship of our bodies, relational connectedness, and righteous living. Physical stewardship comes from Ephesians 5:29. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it. If I gave you a brand

new \$200,000 Ferrari, you would take care of that thing, wouldn't you? I mean, I would. You'd keep it in the garage, you'd keep it waxed and polished. When you did take it out, you wouldn't park it in a tight parking spot. You'd go way out to the end of the lot where there wasn't any other cars parked so you wouldn't get any door dings. You would of course put premium gasoline in it. You'd get the best leather conditioner you could find take care of the seats. Why do we not treat our bodies the same way? God has given each of us something far more valuable than any Ferrari. It's called the human body. Who would trade their eyes for a million dollars? How about \$10 million? How about 100 million dollars? would you would you donate both your eyes for 100 million dollars? I wouldn't. Our bodies are far more valuable than any automobile. We do well to take care of them. It doesn't make any sense not to.

David Sandstrom 17:43

So the other component of God's prescription for health is relational connectedness. And Matthew 22, verse 36, we see this: "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the law. And he said to him, You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and foremost commandment. The second is like it, You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend the whole law and the prophets." So when Jesus was challenged about the law, he reached back into Deuteronomy chapter six and gave him this quote. And basically what Jesus was saying is, this is the Bible in a nutshell, you can sum up the entire Bible, and these two commands love God, love others as you love yourself.

David Sandstrom 18:36

The third component to God's prescription for health is righteous living. We see this in Proverbs chapter three, verses seven and eight. Do not be wise in your own eyes. fear the Lord and turn away from evil. It will be healing to your body and refreshment to your bones. Again, if we're on a jungle Safari and God Is our seasoned guide. We do well to do what he says. How can we expect to benefit from his experience and knowledge if we don't listen to our guide and do what he says? That's what we call righteous living. God's word clearly declares that he cares about our health. the life and work of Jesus Christ demonstrates that our health and well being are important to God. The Bible is loaded with useful advice and God gives us his prescription for health. So, yes, the Bible clearly

teaches that God's desire for us is vibrant health and vitality. He cares about our health.

David Sandstrom 19:41

Can we draw that same conclusion by using our reason or logic? Can we justify that God's desire for us as exceptional health and well being from reason? I believe we can. God is a God of order and purpose. First Corinthians 14:33. He didn't create him beings haphazardly. We've been designed and built with a goal in mind. We are His workmanship. And God doesn't make junk. Ephesians 2:10 says this, "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works which God prepared beforehand, so that we would walk in them." God wouldn't create us for good works, and not enable us to accomplish them. God desires that we be capable of accomplishing our missions. Second Timothy chapter two, verse two says this, "He will be a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the master, prepared for every good work." as individuals. Each of us has been given specific gifts, talents, and abilities to advance God's kingdom and the building up of the church body. God expects us to use what we've been given. Romans 12:6 says this, "Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us is to exercise them accordingly." Each of us has been given a unique role or position to fill in God's kingdom. Ephesians four verses 11. And 12 says this. "And he gave some as apostles and some as prophets, and some evangelists, and some is pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints, for the work of service to the building up of the body of Christ." God has even appointed a specific time in place for our lives. Acts 17:26 says this, and he made from one man, every nation of mankind to live on the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times, and the boundaries of their habitation." So God knows your address. He knows where you're going to be living 10 years from now, with this kind of exquisite precision and forethought, would God give us assignments and not empower us to fulfill our purpose? Would he ask us to make bricks without straw? Would he intentionally put stumbling blocks in our way to prevent us from fulfilling our mission? Again, he desires that we be, quote, thoroughly equipped for every good work. Second Timothy 3:17. I would suggest that compromised health is a significant stumbling block in carrying out our assignments and fulfilling our unique mission. In my MBA program, they taught us that the worst form of stress in the workplace is responsibility without authority. A supervisor should never assign a task that the individual is not empowered to perform or hold someone accountable for

outcomes that they are powerless to influence. That's an extreme source of stress for the individual that's put under those circumstances. In the same way, God would never give us assignments or expect us to execute our good works, without empowering us to use our God given resources to affect his desired outcome. God would not put stumbling blocks in our paths. The enemy does that not God. This is the reason why Jesus spent so much time feeding and healing people. Jesus had a message, his message was going to save the human race from destruction. He knew that if physical concerns were dominating their thinking and desires, and people would not be able to move on to the more critical spiritual missions he had for them, the salvation of their souls and new life in Christ. We can often feel overwhelmed in dealing with the demands and responsibilities of adult living. Now, overwhelm is bad enough in and of itself. But we further complicate matters with health challenges. When I was a certified flight instructor teaching students to learn to fly, sometimes during the lesson, the student would have so much mental activity going on that they would become what we called task saturated. And what the brain does is when you are task saturated, there's so much stimuli coming in, the brain just kind of shuts off and starts to load shed and ignores the rest of the any further incoming stimuli. So when the student gets to that point, there's no learning going on. You can't teach them anything because their brain has shut off, they might not even hear you. So when I saw that happening with a student and it would actually happen quite frequently, I would take the airplane, I would take the controls, and I'd say, I've got the airplane. I want you to take a couple deep breaths, and I might demonstrate the maneuver for them and they would have a chance to take a break. Take a mental break and collect your thoughts. And then we could resume the lesson again. But but if someone is tasked saturated, there's no learning going on, you can't give them any more. In the same way. God cannot give us any more responsibilities or assignments when he knows that we're already overwhelmed by our life's circumstances. compromised health hinders our productivity as a result. It's like a ball and chain attached to our ankles or a boat dragging an anchor. poor health slows us down, inhibits our progress. Personally, when I was suffering from the ravages of Lyme disease, I didn't have the mental fortitude to meditate on scripture and consider noble things such as purpose and calling. I didn't have the energy to serve others effectively. I was more concerned with getting through the day than I was about leaving a legacy for my children or advancing God's kingdom. I've talked about this before, but we can only give out of our abundance. We can't give what we don't have. We have to

be so filled up with love, joy and peace, that it overflows from our lives into other lives. That's that's how we that's how we give and serve others. So yes, it stands to reason. God wants us healthy, so that we can be more effective with our God given mission. We can conclude from reason that God wants us healthy.

David Sandstrom 26:39

So, what about science? Can we justify God's desire for our health and well being from science? Once again, I believe we can. Remember Epheisans 2:10 we are God's workmanship. In architecture, the phrase form follows function was coined by an architect by the name of Louis Sullivan. The idea is that the purpose of a building should determine it's design. Look at an airplane. airplanes are designed for flight. The ability to get off the ground is built in by design. The human body is built with a purpose in mind. A woman's breasts are designed to feed an infant. Feet are made for balance and walking. eyelashes are positioned to keep dust out of our eyes. Our spinal cords are curved to support bodyweight and absorb shock. fingernails are hard and durable, they protect our fingertips and they help us pick up small objects. Form does follow function. Our form or design follows our function. Remember, by design, the human body's default setting is health. Now this is an important concept I've got a whole chapter on this in my book, The concept is called vitalism. By looking at our anatomy physiology, we can clearly see that human beings are designed and wired for health. Since God has built health into our physiology as a default setting, that obviously his intention is wellness. Now, let me go over this concept of vitalism. Once again. Our bodies have a built-in God-given innate intelligence to them and it never takes a break. It's on duty 24 hours, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It never takes a break. vitalism states this. All of our 75 trillion cells know how to do their jobs. We don't have to tell our bodies how to digest food or fight off a cold. We don't consciously think about things such as blood sugar levels, temperature regulation, acid alkaline balance, those things just take place automatically. If we were to cut our finger with a knife, we don't have to tell our blood to clot. Neither do we send instructions to our skin to heal. All this takes place automatically by default. That's vitalism. And that's the way we're made. Our bodies are designed to heal, and repair automatically. Health is our default setting. So we can see from our anatomy that the way God designed us speaks volumes about his desire for health and well being. Our physical form and design, follow our

function and purpose. God created us to enjoy vibrant health because it helps us accomplish our individual missions here on Earth.

David Sandstrom 29:40

So, we see scripture, reason, and science in perfect harmony, simultaneously testifying to the idea that God's desire for us is exceptional health and well being to conclude otherwise would be to suppress the obvious. Yes, we can confidently state that God wants us to enjoy vibrant health. Don't believe the lie that poor health is your genetic destiny, health and well being are built into every fiber of your being. So let's summarize what we talked about that was a lot. So here's what we talked about. The idea that God wants us healthy is sometimes met with some objections. And you can make a case a case biblically in the Bible, that, well, maybe health is not what God has in mind for everyone. Now God does use affliction and suffering to help us grow. However, just as any loving parent wants what's best for their children. God's preference is that we learn our lessons without the trial. Scripture has some glowing promises toward our health and well being; we went over a few of them. In God's word, he gives us a prescription for health and well being. That prescription is this, individual stewardship of our bodies, relational connected, it is not good for the man to be alone, and righteous living, learning what he says, and actually doing it. Also, reason and logic support the idea that God wants us healthy. God designed our bodies for health. Health is our default setting, because he wants us healthy. Once again, what we believe matters because of the mind body connection. And what we believe about God's desire for our health and wellness is one of the most important beliefs we can hold. So we've got to get this straight. This is an important concept. If you enjoyed this teaching, I think you'll enjoy my book "The Christians Guide to Holistic Health," you can go to amazon.com and pick it up. It's available in paperback, Kindle and Audible. You can always go to my website, DavidSandstrom.com. And I always post links to everything I talked about or mentioned in the episode. And there's also a transcript there. You can read it online, or you can download it and take it with you and read it later. So, that's it for now. That's enough. That's a mouthful. So I appreciate you. Thank you for listening. I'll talk with you next week. Be blessed.