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SPEAKERS

David Sandstrom

D David Sandstrom 00:00

Is self care selfish? Do we really need to spend so much time taking care of our bodies? After all, no matter what we do, we're all getting older, and these bodies are wearing out, and one day they will serve no more useful purpose, and one day we'll get a heavenly body where there'll be no more disease and no more death. So why should we spend so much time taking care of our bodies here on earth? Well, that's a valid question. Some say, since Jesus taught us to live lives of service to our fellow man, that that means that self care is not biblical. Some would contend that activities like going to the gym or getting a massage or watching what we eat amounts to vanity or self centeredness or even narcissism. But if self care amounts to self centeredness, then why did God give us a Sabbath day? Why did he tell us to get all our work done in six days and then take the seventh day for rest? Why did he give the ancient Israelites laws to observe holidays? Why did he create our bodies with a need for sleep every day? Is self care selfish? Let's talk about it.

D David Sandstrom 01:17

Welcome to the Christian Healthy Lifestyle Podcast, where I help Christians over 40 maximize their health potential so they can age gracefully and live abundantly. I'm your host. David Sandstrom, naturopathic doctor and biblical health coach. This is episode number 157

D David Sandstrom 01:33

I want to help you the natural nation to make healthier lifestyle choices, and I really enjoy connecting with my listeners. So I'm doing lifestyle audit episodes. If you got a question pertaining to any aspect of your health and well being, I'd love to talk with you and make an episode out of it. There's no fee. I enjoy connecting with my listeners. So go to my website, ChristianHealthyLifestyle.com/audit. Answer a few questions, and we'll be all set up. I look forward to hearing from you.

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David Sandstrom 02:03

This is the 4th episode in a 10-part series that I'm calling the nine pillars of health. Today we're going to talk about self care. In the last episode, we talked about self worth, or self image. Both self worth and self care come under the same heading of love for ourselves. Now, the spiritual component of health is all about loving relationships, our love for God, our love for one another, and the love we have for ourselves. Now, the biblical foundation for this is found in Matthew chapter 22 verses 37 through 39 Jesus was asked, What is the greatest commandment? 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 first commandment, and a second is like it. You shall love your neighbor as you love yourself. That part about loving ourselves often gets overlooked. So with this episode, I wanted to spell some myths about self care, and at the end of the episode, I'm going to give you some action items that you can implement right away. So stick around at the end. Now there's no doubt that the Bible instructs us to live lives in service to others. James 1:27 says pure and genuine religion in the sight of God the Father, means caring for orphans and widows in their distress. Now, Jesus lived this out in stunning fashion. Matthew chapter 20, verse 28 says this, The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and give his life as a ransom for many.

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David Sandstrom 03:38

Philippians, chapter two, verses five through eight, we find this Christ, Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped. He emptied Himself by taking the form of a servant. And then we have John chapter 13, the night Jesus was betrayed at the Last Supper. He wanted to show the disciples the full extent of his love. The Bible says, starting in verse five, we see this. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples feet and to wipe them with a towel that was wrapped around him. And then, in verse 14, if I then your Lord as teacher have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. So Jesus modeled a life of service in stunning fashion, and he taught us to do the same. All that is true. I believe every word of that. But how do we reconcile that teaching with self care? On the surface, it could look like self care is contrary to biblical teaching. Well, we've got to be careful about building our theology around a handful of verses or teachings or stories. For example, The Bible actually says in Luke chapter 12, verse 19, and I will say to. My soul, soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years, relax, eat, drink and be merry. Now, if we were to take that verse out of context in isolation, we could claim that the Bible teaches hedonism, which it obviously doesn't right.

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David Sandstrom 05:16

So we've got to put things in context. We've got to take the Bible as a whole, not as a single passage or a single story. So yes, the Bible teaches selflessness, to be others centered is to be more godly. But it doesn't stop there. Early on in Scripture, God gave us the Sabbath day. Now the reason for the Sabbath is that we all need a time of refreshment. Ecclesiastes three, verse one says, for everything, there is a season and a time for every matter under heaven. So yes, we're called to serve, but we're also designed to rest. We can look at our anatomy and physiology. We can work all day long, but at night, each night, we require sleep, so try going without sleep one night and see how you feel the next day, and see how productive you are. You're going to see your productivity go way down. Well, our bodies are designed to push into

stress and then to back out. Think about exercise. Exercise is a form of hermetic stress, and when we work out, we break down our muscle tissue, and then we take a rest, and we recuperate, and our muscles come back even stronger than they were before. So pro athletes know that rest is just as important as training. Now this same concept applies to a lot of areas in life. I have two daughters in high school right now in our school calendar, year is grueling. It starts in mid August, and it goes through late May, and there's nine long months of winter where we have very little time off. Yeah, the kids get two weeks off for Christmas and New Year's. But other than that, we're hard pressed to run a few days together where we don't have any school, and that's very grueling on the body. When I was in college, I went to Embry Riddle Aeronautical University, and I took night classes because I was working during the day as a flight instructor, and our terms lasted 10 weeks. We went to class one day a week for four hours, and we did that 10 times, and we knocked out a whole semester. So it was really pressing into a lot of stress for 10 weeks. But then at the end of that 10 weeks, we got to relax for three and 10 times four is 40, plus three times four is 12, making a total of 52 weeks. And they lined it up with the holidays quite well. And it really worked very well. And you never found yourself in this grueling nine month long school year, it was far more in alignment with the way our physiology is designed. So there's a time for selfless service toward others, but also a time to pull back and recharge our batteries.

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David Sandstrom 07:55

Now many of you know I was an airline pilot for 35 years, and if I heard this PA once, I heard it 1000 times, and it goes like this. In the event of a sudden change in cabin pressure, oxygen masks above your seat will drop. If this happens, pull the mask to the full extent of the tubing. Fasten the mask around your nose and mouth and breathe normally. Don't worry if the bag doesn't fully inflate. Oxygen is flowing. If you're traveling with a child or someone who needs assistance, put on your mask first and then assist the child. So why your mask first? Because at 39,000 feet, your time of useful consciousness is about 20 seconds or maybe less, in an unconscious adult is of no use to the child. So I'm advocating biblical self care, self care that makes sense and puts us in a better position to serve others. Now, there's a difference between self indulgence and self care. There's a difference between being self absorbed and caring enough about others to be prepared to show up as the best version of ourselves. In last episode, I talked about biblical self esteem or self worth, and I was advocating that we need a balanced view of our human dignity and our human depravity. Same is true here. We need a balanced view on service to others and self care. Mark, chapter one, verses 32 and 33 says this that evening, after sunset, many sick and demon possessed people were brought to Jesus. The whole town gathered at the door to watch. So Jesus healed many people who were sick with various diseases, and He cast out many demons. Now this gathering started after sunset, so with the whole town there watching, that must have gone late into the evening, I'm sure by the time Jesus' head hit the pillow that night, he was exhausted, so he needed some refreshment as well. And we often see Jesus pulling away from the crowds and getting alone and spending some alone time with God the Father, Luke, chapter five, verse 16, Jesus often withdrew to the wilderness for prayer. So the wilderness is where Jesus recharged his batteries. It's where he got his spiritual tank filled or his soul restored. Then, of course, we have Psalm chapter 23, starting in verse one, The Lord is my shepherd. I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside quiet waters. He restores my soul. So there's something very restorative about being in nature. We should make time to spend some time outdoors on a regular basis. We need that time to restore our souls. Now, if we want to practice generosity

and we want to give money to a worthy cause, we've got to have some money left over. We've got to plan to spend less than we make. If we're living paycheck to paycheck, we don't have any money to give. See, we can't give what we don't have.

D David Sandstrom 11:01

I like to look at our ability to serve as a reservoir. If a stream continues to flow and does nothing but give its water away with no restrictions, it never builds up any reserve. But when that water is dammed up, the basin can be filled from beneath, and once the reservoir is full. It can give its water without being depleted itself. The same is true with us and our ability to serve in this metaphor, the stream is the living water, the fruit of the Spirit, the love, joy and peace that Jesus wants to fill us with. Ephesians, 5:18, the dam is our lifestyle habits that recharge our batteries and give us that margin that prepares us to serve others well. Now that doesn't happen automatically. We have to be deliberate, and we have to not feel guilty about taking care of ourselves either.

D David Sandstrom 11:53

You know, I wrote a book, and it's tough enough to write a book, but it's really difficult to market a book well, and if you're going to make the New York Times bestseller list, you have to plan for that. You don't just write a book and throw it off on Amazon and say, oh, you know, I just wrote this book, put it on Amazon and just kept selling and selling, and now I'm number one a New York Times bestseller list. That is not accurate. If someone makes it to the New York Times bestseller list with a book, they're an author. They planned for that. They had a team of people around them planning for that. It doesn't happen by accident. So if we want to operate at our peak, it we need as much spiritual strength and mental, emotional fortitude and physical vitality as we can get. We need more than the minimum. We need to get through our day. We've got to have some margin. And that doesn't happen by accident. We have to plan for it. Benjamin Franklin said, fail to plan. Plan to fail.

D David Sandstrom 12:51

So how do we keep our tank full? How do we keep our our soul full? Well, at its core, these nine pillars of health that we're talking about here all promote some form of self care or personal development. But what I want to focus on here is what we can do on a personal level right now.

D David Sandstrom 13:11

So ask yourself, what charges your batteries, what restores your soul on a spiritual level? Quite obviously, we should start with spending time in God's Word. In episode 146 a couple of weeks ago, I did a whole episode on having a habit of a daily devotion. And we, we nourish our spirit that way. And we, we get some spiritual nutrition, and that nutrition spills over to our mental emotional state and our physical vitality as well, another way we can expose ourselves to the word is read some books by Christian authors, or pull out a commentary and start going through some passages and looking up the the origin of the definitions of words. It helps a lot.

We can listen to some online sermons. You can do what you're doing right now and listen to a faith based podcast like this one, congrats for doing that. So you could be a part of a small group. Iron sharpens, iron Proverbs, 27:17,

D David Sandstrom 14:10

Another thing you could do is spend time with friends and family. You might be saying, well, wait a minute, Dave, I'm an introvert. I don't get recharged by spending time in large groups like that. I get charged by I get recharged by spending time alone. Well, I'm with you on that, because I'm an introvert as well, but I like to think of myself as an introvert that loves people who shouldn't avoid the group. So the gatherings of the get togethers, we should go. But if you're starting to feel stressed and you're starting to feel a little drained, just go ahead and excuse yourself and remove yourself from the situation. Go out in the patio, get some fresh air by yourself. If you're in a hotel conference area, get out to the lobby and just walk around a little bit. You'll feel yourself get refreshed and renewed pretty, pretty rapidly. Then you can come back in and continue to mingle with the people, but you've got to make sure that you're taking care of yourself in the process.

D David Sandstrom 14:59

And. Now when you remove yourself, you don't have to apologize. When you get back in the room, they're not even going to notice you were gone. So take a mini vacation, and that way you'll be showing up as the best version of yourself for those people. Now, if you want to go further on the introvert stuff, Episode 25 spoke with a guy by the name of John Baker, and he helps leaders get the most out of introverts and introverts to become the best employees and the best leaders they can be. It's a great conversation. Episode 25 check it out.

D David Sandstrom 15:29

On a personal level, we should be participating in some type of a hobby. Do you enjoy working with your hands? Do you enjoy woodworking? What is it? Gardening? Whatever it is, you should have a hobby, something that helps you to recharge your batteries. Maybe it's recreation, sports. Maybe like to go hiking.

D David Sandstrom 15:47

One of the things I found that can be very useful in recharging your batteries is to declutter your home. Maybe it's time to get organized and organize your file cabinet, or clean out the closet, or maybe organize the garage. Those kinds of things can go a long way to giving you a sense of peace and helping you to recharge your batteries. Now you can also, as far as relationships go, volunteer at some worthy cause with some like minded people that can be very uplifting. Again. Spend some time in nature. Take a walk in the woods, if you live near that if you're near a lake, maybe take a swim to Lake, if the season allows. If you near the beach, take a trip to the beach. Very, very refreshing. It gets you a barefoot walk in the beach is an awesome way to renew yourself. Maybe you don't live near the beach, but you can take a day at the spa go get a massage or a facial, or a manicure and a pedicure. Maybe you can do some

exercise. One of the best exercises you can do is walking, stretching. This won't cost you a nickel. You could do some lymph work. You can do some breath work. All of those will serve to help renew your your soul, and help renew your physical vitality and recharge your batteries.

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David Sandstrom 16:59

On a relational level, it's good to practice good self care as well. What I mean by that is we should be setting appropriate boundaries. Sometimes, some of us need to learn how to say no. Sometimes we become people pleasers and we wear ourselves out serving others. That's not God's design. God wants us to show up as the best version of ourselves, and sometimes that means saying no. We also, on the other hand, we also have to learn how to accept help or receive gifts from someone who wants to give to us. We lay we need to learn how to receive that help gracefully, without feeling awkward.

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David Sandstrom 17:37

Now, some of us might need to have a difficult conversation with someone, maybe someone that we know is unaware of how they hurt us and how their actions actually cause us harm. We might need to have a conversation about that. Now the conversations should always have the goal of restoration of the relationship. That should always be the goal in episode 155 on love for others, I talked about Confession and forgiveness and how useful that can be to restoring relational connectedness. Now, along those lines, if we're going to have a difficult conversation with someone, we need to make sure we're sharing the truth in love. Ephesians, 4:15, sometimes the truth without love could do more harm than good. For instance, somebody might, a spouse might be tempted to say something like, you've been coming home late from work for every day for the last month, and I'm sick of it now. That would be the wrong way to handle it. A better phrase. You could communicate the same thing, the same truth, but with love attached. You could say something like this, you know, honey, I really appreciate how hard you're working to support the family, but with all the overtime I've been missing you lately, do you think we could plan a date this Friday? See the difference in tone there? I think the the second version of that is going to be much more likely to be received well, and the your spouse to respond appropriately. So truth in love, maybe we need to stop being a doormat. Maybe we need to be a little more assertive in standing up for our rights. But again, sharing the truth in love.

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David Sandstrom 19:14

Another thing we can do to support our self care is to live on margin. We should add some or build in some white space into our calendars. We should have some time in there where we're not jamming one activity back to back with another all week long. That's not a healthy way to be you want to build some margin into your calendar and your scheduling. If you have to drive somewhere, leave 10 or 15 minutes early. If it's a 30 minute drive, leave 45 minutes ahead of time. You'll be surprised at the level of peace you'll enjoy not only on the drive, but when you show up and you have a few spare minutes. That's living on margin. It's really an important concept, and it goes a long way towards proper self care.

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David Sandstrom 19:56

Another way to live with margin is to live well below your means. Yes, I like budgeting. Budgeting doesn't create stress. It should relieve our stress, it should reduce our stress. A budget doesn't restrict our freedom, it should be giving us more freedom. For instance, let's say you have an envelope in your budget for vacations, and you haven't been on a vacation in a while, and you're seeing that balance start to build up a little bit. Well, you can plan a trip and spend the money in that envelope and not feel guilty about it. You have the freedom to spend that money on that vacation, and it might have been more than you would have spent otherwise, in a stressful way, looking at it, you can spend that money stress free because you've saved for it. You've planned for it, and now you get to simply enjoy the vacation, spend that money and enjoy the time spent there. It's a much better way to live, live on margin.

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David Sandstrom 20:51

So is self care selfish? The answer to that is an emphatic no, not practicing self care is self destructive, and it limits our ability to serve others and advance the kingdom. Remember natural nation as we strive to age gracefully, live abundantly and become thoroughly equipped for every good work, let's embrace self care as a God honoring act of love by taking care of ourselves, we're better able to love God, love others, and fulfill our purpose in advancing God's kingdom here on earth. So that's my thoughts on self care. I'd love to hear what you think, um, let me know in the comments. If you're watching this on YouTube, let me know in the comments. What recharges your batteries? I'm sure you have a some. You could think of some ideas that that I haven't thought of here. Leave me a comment. I do my best to reply to every one of those comments.

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David Sandstrom 21:44

Now don't forget, with this show, I want to help you make better lifestyle choices, so I'm doing lifestyle audits. If you got a question or something you think I can help you with, I'd love to have you on the show or make an episode out of it. There's no charge. You'll be helping me make some great content for the show, and for a limited time as a thank you, I'll send you a complimentary copy of my book, the Christian's guide to Holistic Health. Go to my website, christianhealthylifestyle.com/audit. Answer a few questions, and we'll be all set up. I look forward to hearing from you.

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David Sandstrom 22:15

You know Holistic Health, from a biblical, Christian perspective, is hard to find. If you have a like minded friend, would you tell them about the show? You can go to this episode at www.christianhealthylifestyle.com/157 copy that URL and text it to a friend. They'll think you're brilliant, and I'll bet they'll thank you for it. Now be sure to tune in next week where I'll be talking about pillar number four, which is our mental emotional component, specifically our mindset and how we develop mental toughness as it pertains to our personal development journey. You don't want to miss it. That's it for now. Thank you for listening. I appreciate you. Go out there and live abundantly. Be blessed.

