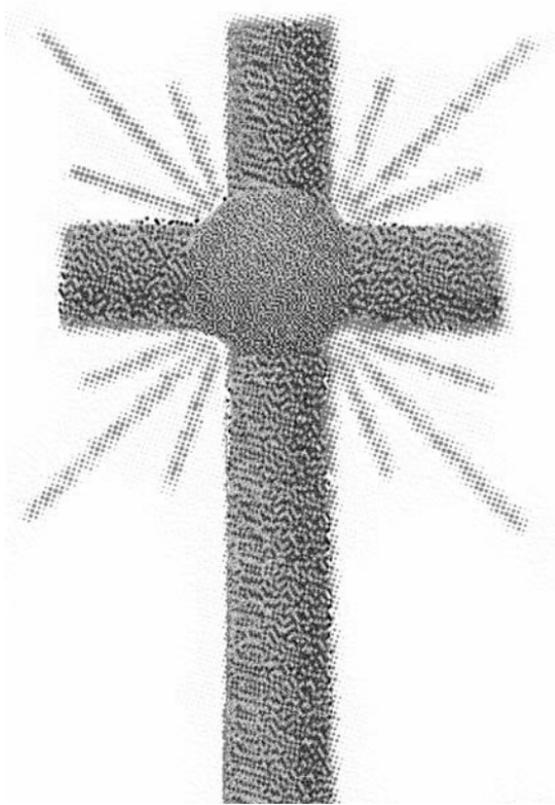


The Blessings of the Prophetic Gift



“Surely the Lord God does nothing,
Unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets”
(Amos 3:7, NKJV).

Turning Back to God for Health

INTRODUCTION

Isa. 1:18

I have read many books and attended many seminars on health. I've also organized nutrition classes in my community. However, I'm still left with an important question to answer: in what specific ways can we live today so we can ask God for the health we need?

Our world is in desperate need of good health. This can be clearly seen from the numerous health messages that continue to flood the electronic and print media. In the beginning, out of His love for humans, God Himself designed a three-dimensional health plan for us to enjoy as long as we obeyed the heavenly principles stipulated in His Word.

Unfortunately, however, sin has corrupted our health. The paradise on earth, once brilliant and perfect in health, has been reduced to physical, mental, and spiritual substandards. We cannot escape this situation unless we go back to our Creator to inquire of His original plan for healthful living.

**Our world is in desperate
need of good health.**

God pleads with us through the voice of the prophet Isaiah to come to Him so that we can reason together with Him (Isa. 1:18). It's quite difficult for us, with our weakness of heart, to experience a restoration of total health.

But if we don't return to God to have an intimate relationship with Him, His Word will not be able to infiltrate the inner sanctum of our being. To regain the original noble powers and well-balanced minds with which God created human beings, we must inquire of Him what we must do. We must act in line with the instructions He gives us.

God's health principles champion a wholesome, healthful lifestyle, which, in turn, institutes a wholesome healing both at the individual and corporate levels. We in the Seventh-day Adventist Church are faced with a challenge of holding up the mantle of health reform and of sharing God's health principles with an ailing world.

Ellen White revealed God's health principles to our church. Without these principles, our church probably would not exist the way it is now. This week we are studying how the gift of prophecy through Ellen White has revolutionized health. How has the Lord used this gift to benefit the church?

The Schools of the Prophets

EVIDENCE

1 Cor. 2:12, 13

“The Lord himself directed the education of Israel. His care was not restricted to their religious interests; whatever affected their mental or physical well-being, was also the subject of divine providence, and came within the sphere of divine law.”¹

From this inspired comment of E. G. White, we can learn that the prophets and the people of Israel received the most balanced education desired for the human mind. Again, we should not sidestep the fact that God Himself directed their learning process through parents, nature, and God’s Word.

This same type of education should benefit all generations, from the past to the present, and into the future. Like the role-model ministers in Israel, our present ministers should set an example that will exalt the presence and power of God, so we also will stand as an example to other people.

“Such was the training of Moses in the lowly cabin home in Goshen; of Samuel, by the faithful Hannah; of David, in the hill dwelling in Bethlehem; of Daniel, before the scenes of the captivity separated him from the home of his fathers. Such too, was the early life of Christ at Nazareth; such the training by which the child Timothy learned from the ‘lips of his grandmother Lois, and his mother Eunice,’ the truths of Holy Writ.”²

God often uses the less fortunate . . . members of society to bring liberation and peace to His people.

We need to know whether modern-day prophets have followed in the footsteps of the pioneers. How were the great reformers of the past educated and trained? God often uses the less fortunate and the despised members of society to bring liberation and peace to His people. Such were the roots of Luther, who “sprung from the ranks of poverty. His early years were spent in the humble home of a German peasant. . . . Hardship, privation and severe discipline were the school in which Infinite Wisdom prepared Luther for the important mission of his life.”³

1. *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 592.

2. *Ibid.*

3. *The Great Controversy*, p. 120.

Monday
March 16

Health Quest

LOGOS

Exod. 17:14; 19:4–6; 34:27; Lev. 11:1–8; Isa. 44:8; 49:6

A Light to the Nations (Isa. 44:8; 49:6)

Ages before the Egyptians built the first pyramid, God had chosen Israel and revealed His truths to them. Israel was chosen to preserve God's law for all the world. Read Isaiah 44:21. The voice of the Creator through the prophet Isaiah shows how particular He was about His chosen people Israel. The deliverances brought through the guidance of the prophets were a symbol that Israel was chosen to reveal God to the world in all spheres of life.

The bitter truth, however, is that, although chosen by God as the symbol of heaven on earth, Israel often was concerned with worldly greatness. "They had studied the prophecies, but without spiritual insight. Thus they overlooked those scriptures that point to the humiliation of Christ's first advent, and misapplied those

that speak to the glory of His second coming. Pride obscured their vision. They interpreted prophecy in accordance with their own selfish desires."

As Moses was to the Israelites, so were the church pioneers to our denomination.

Confirming the Covenant (Exod. 17:14; 34:27)

For several years, war and captivity ravaged the people of Israel. They were held captives in other lands, and they spent years fighting for the land God had promised them. Despite all this, their stamp as a chosen nation became more and more significant amid the disasters that befell them. Even after Israel had been wasted by war and captivity, the promise was theirs, that "the remnant of Jacob, / surrounded by many peoples, / shall be like dew from the Lord, / like showers on the grass, / which do not depend upon people / or wait for any mortal" (Mic. 5:7, NRSV). It is against this backdrop that Israel stood strong among nations, conquering one kingdom after another, by the leading hands of God's messengers. All the regulations and guidelines regarding the festivals, diet, and other rituals were given to Moses to confirm the covenant between God and Israel.

God's Peculiar Treasure (Exod. 19:4–6)

"From a race of slaves the Israelites had been exalted above all peoples, to be the peculiar treasure of the King of kings. God had separated them from the world,

that He might commit to them a sacred trust.”² Through Moses, the people of Israel were instructed not to forget the commandments given to them by the only true God. The Ten Commandments represented not only the will of God for humankind but God’s holy character as well. These laws of holy living were to guide them in their spiritual, economic, and social undertakings.

Because these laws represent God’s holy character, they are eternal. Thus, these laws are for humankind today just as much as they were for Israel and the people of their time. As Moses was to the Israelites, so were the church pioneers to our denomination, pioneers who laid the foundation of the worldwide Adventist movement. So is Ellen White, who went extra miles to spread the health principles God revealed to her. By maintaining the principles given to the Israelites in the Ten Commandments, we confirm that we descend from the roots of Israel and that God’s sacred trust is upon us.

Prescription for Healthful Living (Lev. 11:1–8)

For the best results in terms of health, God Himself instructed the Israelites regarding the foods to eat for optimum health and long life. God specified the ideal diet for humans in Genesis 1:29. However, sin affected the nature of this diet. God had to come up with a different diet so people could continue with a better life. Thus He specified which animals were fit for human consumption.

In order to maintain this standard of diet, we must return to God in reverence to receive the insight needed to fight the counterfeit diet that Satan has put in place today. Currently, the Spirit of Prophecy directs us to a simple, natural diet. “Grains, fruits, nuts, and vegetables constitute the diet chosen for us by our Creator. These foods prepared in as simple and natural a manner as possible, are the most healthful and nourishing.”³

REACT

1. What did the people of Israel need to do in order to serve God as the chosen nation? Was it all just about obeying the rules? What else was involved? Support your answer from texts in both the Old and the New Testaments.

2. What other activities besides eating support good health and long life? Which of the Ten Commandments supports a long life?

1. *The Desire of Ages*, p. 30.

2. *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 314.

3. *Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 81.

Tuesday
March 17

Doing It the Creator's Way

TESTIMONY

Ps. 25:14

The Bible is clear that our bodies are the temple of the Lord, and that any physical defilement degenerates us to a lower standard. It is therefore critical that we thoughtfully study Ellen White's counsel on health. "God demands that the appetites be cleansed, and that self-denial be practiced in regard to those things which are not good. This is a work that will have to be done before His people can stand before him a perfected people."¹

The Israelites were warned by God to be careful as far as their diet was concerned. They were to educate themselves regarding the spirit of obedience, based on the fact that "an ordinary mind, trained to obey a 'Thus saith the Lord,' is better qualified for God's work than those who have capabilities, but do not employ them rightly."²

Today, with so many unhealthful food choices available, the blessing of the prophetic gift concerning health reform must not be overlooked. It is given to us anew through Ellen White, so that we can share it with a world bombarded with unhealthy choices.

**"The dust of selfishness
and earthliness must be
expelled."**

"Man was originally endowed with noble powers and a well-balanced

mind. He was perfect in his being, and in harmony with God. His thoughts were pure, his aims holy. But through disobedience, his powers were perverted, and selfishness took the place of love. His nature became so weakened. . . . He was made captive by Satan, and would have remained so forever had God not specially interposed."³

"The windows of impulse, of feeling, must be opened up toward heaven, and the dust of selfishness and earthliness must be expelled."⁴

REACT

Ellen White did not have a PhD in health sciences. However, such science continues to verify her words regarding healthful living. What does this teach us about her instructions?

1. *Counsels on Diet and Foods*, pp. 380, 381.

2. *Maranatha*, p. 63.

3. *Steps to Christ*, p. 19.

4. *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 940.

Understanding Reform Products

HOW-TO

Prov. 3:7

Understanding Ellen White's comments and principles on health is crucial to our lives as Adventists, because health reform is one of the key areas that gives Adventism its special mission. Therefore, we should seek to know through the Holy Spirit's guidance how we can better understand the principles regarding health issues. Mrs. White herself wrote, "Man is forbidden to give to any other object the first place in his affections or his service. Whatever we cherish that tends to lessen our love for God or to interfere with the service due him, of that do we make a god."* This is why it is important to revisit the issue of health reform and discover how we can better understand it.

1. *Learn about the social context of Ellen White's writings.* There are some places in the world where her writings are construed in a particular context other than the context in which they were written. However, we should understand the original context of the issue she is addressing, for once her writings are lifted out of that context, their whole meaning changes, and we misinterpret her words.

It is critical that Ellen White's counsel regarding health be considered in its totality.

2. *Learn about the time and place of her writings.* In applying the principles of health reform, the time and place aspects of the issue should be considered in relationship to the topic being discussed. What was a problem in one part of the world may not have been an issue in another part of the world. Also, time changes many aspects of life, so a piece of advice written at one point in time might not be applicable to another point in time.

3. *Understand the overall counsel on a given topic.* In some parts of the world, issues of health reform have caused major contention. It is critical that Ellen White's counsel regarding health be considered in its totality. Her absolute statements and her variable statements must be taken into account. Her absolute statements refer to what may seem as policy statements that leave little or no room for a cheapening form of compromise. Her variable statements, on the other hand, are those based on underlying principles that can be used to interpret meaning or to guide behavior given the time, place, and circumstances she was addressing.

**Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 305.

Thursday
March 19

Redeeming Our Salvation

OPINION

1 Pet. 1:13, 14

Just like Israel of old, I believe our church needs the *three Rs*: revival, repentance, and reformation. For Israel, revival means a new flush of spiritual growth; repentance is shedding the shackles of sin to acquire forgiveness; and reformation implies a combined state of revival and repentance, in order to be acceptable before God.

The same three elements still apply to us today, both as individuals and as the church. In order to grow in righteousness, we need a daily dose of spiritual growth. That is revival. Also, we cannot afford to dispense with the act of repentance. These two elements working together in an individual or in a church bring about reformation.

As far as health reform is concerned, biblical health principles are still the best life extenders. Christ Himself championed the ministry of healing. A healing ministry and the teaching of God's health principles are ways we too can spread the good news of salvation.

**Christ Himself championed
the ministry of healing.**

However, as we share our message of health reform, we must "be careful to ensure that our interpretation of Ellen White's writings is consistent with the teaching of Scripture

regarding salvation. Our safety is by paying close attention to the principles of interpretation, by not overlooking the context, time and place, and the overall counsel of Ellen White on health issues. By so doing, as we share the principles of our health message, we will at the same time guard against the pitfalls of setting up false criteria for salvation."*

REACT

1. How does the Adventist health message enable us to live a life that prepares as both physically and spiritually for Christ's second coming?

2. How can we use the medical expertise available to us without compromising our faith?

* Limoni Manu, "Nonvegetarians Will Not Enter Heaven? Guidelines for interpreting Ellen White on the Topic of Health," *Adventist Review*, August 25, 2005, <http://www.adventistreview.org/2005-1538/story2.html>. Retrieved December 10, 2007.

A Sacred Trust

EXPLORATION

3 John 2

CONCLUDE

The healthful living principles that God has given the Adventist Church are a priceless treasure. No other church has been entrusted with this special knowledge. But just having the information is not enough. We must incorporate it into our lives. Then we, as living examples, can share this lifesaving health message with the world.

CONSIDER

- Using your computer or various art supplies to create a poster based on 3 John 2. Post it where it can be seen every day, by you and/or others.
- Rating yourself on how well you have been following important health guidelines. NEWSTART has been used as an acronym for the basic Adventist health principles: Nutrition, Exercise, Water, Sunshine, Temperance, Air, Rest, and Trust in God. Using O, S, and N (Outstanding, Satisfactory, Needs Improvement), grade yourself on how well you have been following each principle during the past month.
- Learning more about Adventist health studies. A grant from the National Institutes of Health has made it possible for Loma Linda University to conduct a second Adventist health study. The study, involving over 100,000 church members, is the largest health study ever attempted. Visit <http://www.llu.edu/llu/health/> to learn about the research being done and also what was discovered during the first study.
- Singing all three verses of the song "We Praise Thee With Our Minds," number 642 in the *Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal*. Thank God for the health principles He has given to our church.
- Deciding which two or three health principles would have the most positive effect on your life. Set a goal to follow these principles for a month and journal your daily progress.

CONNECT

Don McMahon, *Acquired or Inspired?*; Mervyn G. Hardinge, *A Physician Explains Ellen White's Counsel on Drugs, Herbs, and Natural Remedies*.

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