

# “SUCCESS IN HEALTH”

## 3<sup>rd</sup> in Series: Searching For Success

Rev. Todd G. Leupold, Perth Bible Church, January 24, 2010 AM

### INTRODUCTION:

This morning we continue our Scriptural search for success by looking at the issue of our health. Though degree and specifics will always vary, anyone who has lived for a length of time on this earth has painfully felt it's near-constant assaults upon each one of us in a multitude of ways: physical, mental, emotional, social and spiritual. The LORD God Almighty created our intricate, complex beings to function in such a way that all of these aspects (physical, mental, emotional, social and spiritual) are interconnected. When this system is under attack and/or not functioning properly it 'trips' our God-given alarm system – pain.

Many times, it may seem that our pain, especially mental and emotional, is an intolerable punishment. That, in such times, God has abandoned us to it. Yet, the truth of Scripture is just the opposite. God's desire is for good and He is intimately interested and involved in the process of our healing and wholeness, IF we but permit Him. The pathways that scream warnings of danger and need for care through the vehicle of pain are the very same ones that also shout out our triumphs, satisfaction and fulfillment through the vehicle of pleasure!

**In the fallen, corrupt world in which we live we can not escape these assaults on our health or the resultant pain. We CAN, however, in Christ and by His grace grow in our understanding, management and care of our complete health.**

With this mind, it is my intention this morning to focus on these things and, specifically, to deal with the most common and potentially destructive side-effect of unhealthy realities; be they physical, mental, emotional, social and spiritual. **Depression.**

According to the World Health Organization, depression is currently the 4<sup>th</sup> leading cause of disability in the world, and expected to become the 2<sup>nd</sup> in the next decade. Incidences of depression are increasing at significant rates among EVERY demographic and age group. In Fulton-Montgomery Counties, 40% of adults struggle with some form of depression, despair or anxiety. More than 60% of people who commit suicide suffered from a major depressive disorder. About 8% of people with major depressive disorder will die by suicide. *Yet*, still only 20% of people struggling with depression seek help of any kind. Ignoring or hiding it only makes it worse.

Nor is this something that is only true of people with little or no faith. Many of the greatest, most godly men of Scripture exhibited major depressive episodes (Job, Elijah, David, Jeremiah, Peter, Paul, even Jesus). So too have many of the most famous and effective preachers throughout church history (see The Company of the Preachers by David L. Larsen).

**The true test of our faith and spiritual maturity is not whether or how often we experience ill health and depression, but rather how we respond to such a condition!**

### THE REAL ISSUE: THE MIND

– Perhaps the most natural and largest error we tend to make is assuming that depression in it's various forms is primarily an emotional or feelings issue. **Though there is no question that resultant emotions and feelings are very real and important, they are the after-effects and not the source of or solution to the problem!**

– The true source of and solution to the problem lies in the “mind”: how we ingest and process all available information, which in turn develops our beliefs and solidifies our convictions, which in turn determines our physical, mental, emotional, social and spiritual response.

Consider:

## **Romans 1:18-24**

- All the information (Truth) we *need* is made available to us all by God. Our level of positive or negative recognition, acceptance and application of His revealed Truth in turn produces our level of understanding, our view of the our lives and world, and ultimately the cravings of our hearts and resultant emotional reactions.
- Most importantly, we must recognize and accept in our minds that the present human condition and condition of our world is NOT in balance or as it should be. Sin, any rejection of God's authority and will, has distorted everything!

**Romans 12:1-2** *Therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, I urge you to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God; this is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God.*

- To be “*holy and pleasing to God*,” to “*worship*,” and to have the opportunity to “*discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God*” are all entirely dependent on a personal transformation that is the result of “*the renewing of your mind*.”
- To “be transformed” means (according to Webster's) “to have one's disposition changed.” That is, a significant change in one's frame of mind, how one views oneself, one's circumstances, and one's world; the thoughts, assumptions and conclusions one is most inclined towards. In other words, the very foundation of our emotional response!

**Ephesians 4:17-18** *Therefore, I say this and testify in the Lord: You should no longer walk as the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their thoughts. They are darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them and because of the hardness of their hearts.*

**Proverbs 23:7a** *for as he thinks within himself, so he is.*

- Human 'wisdom' and common sense shouts loudly that “*we are what we feel*.” Or, as it is so frequently expressed “*your feelings are your reality*.”
- God's Holy Word, however, says the OPPOSITE of this! What we think (know, believe, accept) determines who we are, how we act and how we feel. REALITY is reality and the mind determines to what degree we live within or outside of true reality and thus the weakness or strength of our mental, emotional and spiritual health!

**John 8:32** *“You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”*

- Notice, it is the recognition and acceptance of Truth and not feelings that will set us free!
- Yet, how often do we insist on the opposite? How often do we insist that others just sympathize with us, not teach us? Demand that others just need to understand us and how we feel, while it is okay for us to hide from or even reject Truth and reality?
- And we wonder why there is so much mental, emotional and spiritual anemia (weakness)?
- We willfully reject the Great Physician's information, diagnosis, and prescription but then hold Him responsible for the results.
- Friends, this is not the way it should be, and this is not the way it has to be!
- In the Word of God we have at our ever-ready disposal all of the Truth we need to be healthy and free no matter our circumstances!

## **OUR DEEPEST NEEDS**

- With all of this *in mind* (pun intended), what are our deepest needs? That is, in what areas is it most necessary for our minds to be transformed by Truth in order to have success in personal health?

## A.) Salvation

**2Corinthians 5:14-18** *For Christ's love compels us, since we have reached this conclusion: if One died for all, then all died. And He died for all so that those who live should no longer live for themselves, but for the One who died for them and was raised. From now on, then, we do not know anyone in a purely human way. Even if we have known Christ in a purely human way, yet now we no longer know Him like that. Therefore if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation; old things have passed away, and look, new things have come. Now everything is from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation:*

- Without salvation from our sins and slavery to our human nature, there can be no transformation, no proper understanding, and therefore no lasting or persevering mental, emotional or spiritual health.
- With salvation in Christ, however, there IS transformation! All of the old thinking, perceiving, delusion and resulting reactions is gone and replaced with the coming of new thinking, perceiving and resulting reactions based upon Truth. Having been saved in Christ by grace through faith, we are to receive and grow in reconciling His revealed Truth and it's implications against our self's and world's distortions. ONLY through such a process, led by and submitted to the Holy Spirit, can we have and live balanced, healthy lives in this world no matter our circumstances!

## B.) Significance

- Everyone needs to know that amongst all of the other billions of people and vastness of the universe, their life nevertheless has individual and eternal value: a 'worthwhile' human being.
- Dr. Gary H. Lovejoy explains: *“God isn't just loving; He is love (John 4). We were created in His image, and since that which is created in His image must be lovable or it would violate His own character, we must therefore bear that same stamp of love. To be sure, there is a difference here between our person and our behavior. The latter is certainly not always lovable; indeed, it all too often leaves the indelible footprint of sin. But it is our person that is the subject of God's unfailing love and the impetus for His desire that we see ourselves through His eyes.”*  
(from article, “Depression, Preachers and The Pastorate” on www.sermoncentral.com).
- Or, as Haddon Robinson regularly points out: *“God does not love us because we are good, but because we are precious.”*
- Every human being NEEDS not only love and salvation, but a purpose for our lives! We need meaning in our existence (whatever that includes). A purpose which will make a lasting, significant impact and that is achievable through me.

**Jeremiah 29:11-13** *For I know the plans I have for you"--this is the LORD's declaration--"plans for your welfare, not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope. You will call to Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart.*

**Ephesians 2:10** *For we are His creation--created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared ahead of time so that we should walk in them.*

## C.) Security

- Security means the unfaltering certainty that God's love never leaves us and that what He provides is always enough.

– Dr. Larry Crabb: “*Personal problems begin with a wrong belief which leads to behaviors and feelings which deny us the satisfaction of our deep personal needs... The problems of resentment, guilt and anxiety seem to be the three central underlying disorders in all personal problems and they exist because we think incorrect thoughts... We believe that what God has provided is not best, whether it is harsh parents, a cold wife, an unloving husband, physical illness, whatever. We resent what God has given. When we disobey God in order to seize what He has disallowed ... we are in a condition of guilt. When things in our lives are going our way and we are depending on them for our happiness, we worry that tomorrow things may take a turn for the worse and so we suffer from anxiety. It all begins with wrong thinking about how our personal needs are met... We fail to trust our loving, infinite God to meet our needs.*”

(Basic Principles of Biblical Counseling, pp. 81-82)

## **Romans 8:35-39**

### **'LIFE' BEGINS WITH DEATH**

– **This is the solution and key to successful health! AND, this is where our responsibility toward our own health is paramount!**

#### **A.) Death To Sin**

**Romans 6:10-12** *For in that He died, He died to sin once for all; but in that He lives, He lives to God. So, you too consider yourselves dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, so that you obey its desires.*

– FIRST there must be death, the death of sin's control and influence in our lives.

– **We identify and imitate Christ in His death by doing with sin just what He did: crucify it! That is, completely reject it and absolutely submit to the will and authority of our Heavenly Father.**

#### **B.) Life For Righteousness**

**Romans 6:4-5** *Therefore we were buried with Him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too may walk in a new way of life. For if we have been joined with Him in the likeness of His death, we will certainly also be in the likeness of His resurrection.*

– **Not only must we kill the influence of sin in our lives, but we must also choose to live for and under the authority of righteousness!**

– The meaning, purpose and goal of our lives that is achievable by all (through Him) and has eternal value is to become more and more like Christ in all of our ways.

– As we have already seen, this begins with the transforming of our minds conformed to His revealed Truth.

### **THE GREAT PHYSICIANS INSTRUMENT: COMMUNITY**

#### **Ephesians 4:15-24**

– We have examined a lot here this morning. It can easily seem like a burdensome procedure that we're not sure we can handle. That is why it is so important that we recognize this is not something we are called or left to accomplish by ourselves. It is God's Work that He performs through the gifts, availability, and connection of His community: **the local church!**

## **BENEDICTION: 2 CORINTHIANS 6:4-10**

### **RECOMMENDED READING:**

*Inside Out*, Dr. Larry Crabb

*The Search For Significance*, Robert S. McGee

*Where Is God When It Hurts?*, Philip Yancy

*Light On The Fringe: Finding Hope In The Darkness of Depression*, Drs. Gary H. Lovejoy & Gregory Knopf.

*The Source of My Strength*, Charles Stanley

*Shattered Dreams: God's Unexpected Pathway To Joy*, Dr. Larry Crabb

*Connecting*, Dr. Larry Crabb

*Living On The Ragged Edge*, Charles R. Swindoll

*Laugh Again*, Charles R. Swindoll

*Praying Through The Tough Times*, Lloyd John Obilvie