



What others are saying....

“This well organized book is full of good scriptural tips and sweet stories. I know God will use this book in a mighty way. Rex would have been thrilled with this Bible study and would have enjoyed being friends.”

—Judy Russell, wife of the late Dr. Rex Russell;
author of *What the Bible Says About Healthy Living*

“Based on a passion to bring glory to God alone, Annette Reeder and Dr. Couey present sound scriptural truths, coupled with extensive research data. This journey will teach the readers the joy and benefits of living healthy. Information is given in a unified way that is intriguing to follow and easy to understand. Look forward to being rewarded with life-changing application and treasures you will eagerly want to embrace and share with others!”

—Jerry and Bobbye Rankin, International Mission Board, SBC

“Our bodies were made by God and for God. We are to honor Him through living a healthy lifestyle. In *Treasures of Healthy Living* Annette Reeder and Dr. Richard Couey equip us to maximize our bodies for God. This Bible Study is packed with helpful information. Read and apply to live!”

—Steve Reynolds, Pastor, Capital Baptist Church,
Annandale, Virginia, and author of *Bod4God*

“This book provides a map showing the way to a nutritious lifestyle. These daily teachings serve as a ‘GPS’ on the journey toward health and wellness in the midst of so many confusing choices. Annette and Dr. Couey’s passion to share the treasures and lasting benefits of healthy living, to the glory of God, leaps off these pages.”

—Rhonda Sutton, RN, MSN, CHCR

“Annette and Dr. Couey present a practical, biblical, and natural guide for improving health while making it interesting and relevant.”

—Kim P. Davis, author of *My Life His Mission*,
compiler of *Voices of the Faithful* books



Tribute

Greatest Tribute: The greatest tribute goes to Dr. Rex Russell, who wrote a book, *What the Bible Says about Healthy Living*, that changed my life. His application of the Three Principles made going healthy not only practical but easy to verify in scripture. Along with Dr. Russell is Kim Davis, missionary to Africa, who started me on the search for a foundation to my health and the health of my family. Kim introduced me to Dr. Russell's book and has been a cherished mentor all along the journey.

My partner, co-author, and content advisor: Dr. Couey has a heart for missions and missionaries. His desire to see them stay healthy and continue going forth made writing this book with his expertise a delight.

My foodie friends: Thanks to all participants of the healthy living classes who were persuasive to get this completed book out to more churches and individuals. You can never have enough foodie friends. They are responsible for many of the ideas presented in this book.

My writing team: Without the help of Jessica Buckalew, Dr. Couey, and Carol McLaren (www.uniquelifestories.com), this book would never have been in your hands. They spent endless hours editing and encouraging every step of the way.

My writing group: Tom and Pat Lacy saw in me more than I saw myself. They gave me confidence each step of the way as they do with all members of Richmond Christians Who Write.

My contributing authors: Joel Sutton, with his years of counseling experience, helped tremendously on the forgiveness chapter; Pastor Jeff Brauer, who contributed his personal journey in the exercise chapter; and to Hunter Stoner, who compiled and wrote most of the exercise chapter.



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My family: Their support and prayer never ended. I love each one of them dearly: Steve, Stacey, Brent, Mollie, Chris, Lillie, and our newest grandchild, Stella, who was born just in time to get her name in print.

The work of this book is not one or two people but a collection of gifts God has given to each of these people plus many more. Everyone listed here has the same goal: to reach the world with the treasure of God's health through His Word one person at a time.



About the Authors

Annette Reeder is the founder of Designed Healthy Living and author of *Healthy Treasures Cookbook*, *Designed Healthy Living Bible Study and Resource Manual* and *Treasures of Health Nutrition Manual*. Annette is a graduate of Liberty University and is certified in nutrition consulting, but her greatest training came from being a wife, mother, and caretaker for more than twenty-five years. Her career as a biblical nutrition consultant allows her the blessings of seeing lives changed as people apply Scripture to their physical, emotional, and spiritual health. Annette loves the Lord and continually thanks God for the treasures that come from His Word. She eagerly and generously shares her personal journey into God's truths and treasures.

Dr. Richard (Dick) Couey is professor emeritus of health sciences at Baylor University in Waco, Texas. His areas of specialty are human physiology, human anatomy, sports medicine, and nutrition. He is a former member of the President's Commission on Physical Fitness and Sports, and served as exercise physiology consultant for the U.S. Olympic team. Prior to coming to Baylor he was a pitcher in the Chicago Cubs organization. Dr. Couey was educated at Baylor (B.A), Sam Houston State University (M.A.), and Texas A&M University (PhD). He has written and published more than twenty books on subjects ranging from nutrition, physical fitness, wellness, and enzymes. He has spoken in more than three hundred churches throughout the U.S. and internationally on "Why Christians Should Care For Their Temple (body)." His hobbies include working out, serving as a deacon at his church, and golf.



Introduction

A word from Annette Reeder

Have you ever tried to get your kids to eat healthy? One day, years ago, I thought it was time for my kids to try spinach...from the can, of course. My six-year-old son had chosen to be a picky eater, and he did not trust my choice of vegetables for the evening meal. I told him the spinach was smashed green beans, because that was a vegetable he would eat! My son was required to try everything I served, so he obediently took several bites. The problem was that he was not enjoying it. After several bites his face became distorted, his cheeks grew larger, and he threw up the spinach across the table...right at his younger sister. Then I had two kids who no longer enjoyed spinach. Needless to say, we never had canned spinach again.

Have you had similar experiences at the dinner table? Has God been tugging at your heart to make some diet changes but you don't know how? Change can be confusing. Did you know that what you feed your family can contribute to your kids suffering from common illnesses or even tragic health problems? Are you ready to look to the Scriptures and unveil the health plan God has designed just for you?

Several years ago I was in your seat. We were a family battling many health challenges such as cancer, severe PMS, depression, Osgood Slater's disease, multiple cavities, lethargy, muscle complaints, high cholesterol, acid reflux, weight issues, and other more serious health problems. It tires me out just thinking about all the problems we had and yet we were considered "normal." On the outside we appeared as a normal healthy family but inside we were sick and needed answers.

God was tugging at my heart and mind to prepare better meals for my family and therefore improve our health. But I didn't know how. I looked into some health food stores only to feel like I was abandoning my faith and going into New Age. Some of the food looked weird. If I served sprouts for dinner my family would be fighting for the phone to order a pizza.

Praise the Lord, that all changed. Through the next several years God placed strategic people into my life. I was mentored and taught how to search the Scriptures with a focus on health. These new answers matched what I had studied in college. Once the Bible became my foundation, the food and nutrition fell right into place. I started making changes in my family's diet, which surprisingly tasted great! Health and vitality started returning. Truly, the treasure chest was opened! The foods God gifted us to bring hope and an energized life came flowing forth, and the blessings continue to this day.

A word from Dr. Couey

I was introduced to the gospel by a professional hall of fame baseball player who challenged me “to serve God as long and as best that I can.” My biology teacher in high school told me that if I could learn everything in one human cell I could change the health of mankind. As my education progressed I realized that I could use my knowledge of the human cell to help Christians live longer, free of health problems, and serve God better. Since those high school and college years I have dedicated my life to helping Christians become better servants. I believe the ideas presented in this book will definitely enhance the health of every Christian, not only in the physical sense but also in the mental, emotional, and spiritual. To be the best Christians possible we need to develop equally in each of these areas in our lives. Annette and I have written this book with this philosophy in mind so that you can find and experience the treasures that God has in store for you.

A word for you to join us

This is a fun and rewarding hunt, and even though Dr. Couey and I have found the treasure chest we continue to search the Scriptures for more blessings to keep it full and guarded. God has promised us His mercies are new every morning.

This Bible study is for those of you who are looking for the answers found in Scripture. Your heart’s desire is to provide the very best that God has to offer.

This Bible study is intended to be helpful, but it does not make claims for dramatic healing. It is meant to encourage you to search the Old and New Testaments as you seek God’s design for your life and discover a healthier lifestyle.

This study will lead you to God’s answers so that He can show you how He designed your body to glorify Him. You will find scriptures and scientific studies that will encourage you to make better choices that lead to becoming a healthier person. As God transforms your life, you will witness His marvelous works.

We will learn which foods to purchase and how to prepare them. The food and tasting may become your favorite part. As we begin our study together, take a moment to read this verse from Proverbs as a prayer to the God who made you and moves with a redeeming love.

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight. 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.

—Prov. 3:5-8 NASB





Starting the Treasure Hunt

The *Treasures of Healthy Living Bible Study*, *Treasures of Health Nutrition Manual*, and *Healthy Treasures Cookbook* are designed to guide you to a balanced approach to improve your health and understand God's provision. The balance comes from understanding God's Word, applying modern scientific studies, and preparing satisfying meals. If we separate the equation we will be unbalanced; all three are needed to balance the body, mind, and spirit. This balance will be presented throughout the next twelve weeks to achieve the highest level of health God has in store for us. The Designed Healthy Living website (www.designedhealthyliving.com) will be updated with new studies, class notes / suggestions, DVDs, CDs, and recipes to help you in this transition and to share with others. Keep watching for new updates.

The *Healthy Treasures Cookbook* is a great accompaniment and is a collection of recipes that incorporates better ingredients. These are designed for enjoyment with all that God has given us to please our taste. If you do not have this book already you can get one from the website.

This study is designed to be completed with a church group or in a home setting. You will be asked to look up verses from the Bible, primarily the New American Standard Bible (NASB) and the New King James (NKJV). If you do not have these translations then you can find these verses on the internet at www.biblegateway.com.

Treasures of Healthy Living DVD and CD Series: To fully benefit from this course, complete all the reading assignments each week and attend the classes or listen to the CD collection available from the website. The entertaining and sometimes humorous videos and recorded teachings from Annette Reeder and Dr. Couey will complement your reading and give practical tips to implementing changes. The teachings will also include many pertinent talks on understanding your health and making wise shopping choices. The topics included in the Bible study and *Nutrition Manual* will not all be covered during class time and vice-versa; topics covered in classes are not fully discussed in the Bible study. So don't miss out on any part of the equation.

Getting started:

- **Sample Day in Treasures of Healthy Living**— Read “A Sample Day in Treasures of Healthy Living” in the *Nutrition Manual* to get an idea of how a person can have a healthy lifestyle.

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- **Health Assessment**—In the appendix you will find a Health Assessment form. This will assist you in tracking the changes in your life as you begin to apply the principles learned. Fill this out now so that you will have a reference to see the physical, mental, and emotional changes you will experience by personally applying God's treasure.
- **Action Plan**—Weekly you will be given a chance to implement the truths you learned by making one commitment on the Action Plan located in the Appendix of this book. The Action Plan page will give you the opportunity to check off the items as you complete them. The growing list of changes will reflect improvements in your health and life. Both Dr. Couey and I encourage you to not overlook this simple task—it is a rewarding experience.
- **Foodie Friend**—With whom would you like to cook or share cooking ideas? Who would you enjoy as a fun partner in the kitchen? This person or group of people—whether it is your spouse, children, good friend, or group of friends—will be your foodie friends. Foodie friends are great for accountability, sharing spices, and being a cooking partner. They are also people with whom you can share what God is teaching you. Fabulous Foodie Friday will give you ideas each week to make health fun and easy to accomplish. Remember to pray for your foodie friend daily.





Treasure of Health

DAY ONE—ARE YOU READY TO MAKE A DISCOVERY?



Treasure Clue:

*My son, if you will receive my words and treasure my commandments
within you...then you will...discover the knowledge of God.*

—Prov. 2:1, 5 NIV

Imagine yourself standing in awe as you gaze at an unbelievably huge room full of gold coins and priceless artifacts glistening on the floor, draping the walls, and hanging from the ceiling. The farther you step into the room and feast your eyes on the treasure, the more details stand out of the intricate jade jewelry and breathtaking diamonds. Such a marvelous discovery is beyond anything you ever have imagined, yet you realize that without a map with the clues to the real treasure, it would still be a mystery.

We have all seen movies or read books where encrypted clues on a frail weathered map lead the hero or heroine on a suspenseful trek to a promised fortune. Perils and tragedy lurk around every corner as the clues begin to unveil themselves. Some who follow the leader begin to quit for fear of the unknown, but with each turn more clues emerge, and the treasure is just around the next bend. Those that keep on have renewed energy to keep going, and they don't give up until they reach their reward.

This sounds like the typical, wonderful, incredible discovery of many movies and books, but in our lives is there a treasure we should be looking for? Money and gems are wonderful, but they are not typically what we want most in life. What if you replaced the gold and diamonds for a rewarding adventure to discover vibrant health, healthy relationships, and a grateful heart? Would such rewards be worth getting your hands on the treasure map? Would these rewards be worth following the clues?

Imagine another scene. Imagine you, your family, and your friends are enjoying a picnic on a beautiful day. Your kids are breathing in the crisp, clean air, running after the dog, and laughing contagiously. The adults are enjoying a game of volleyball in the warm sand. Everyone is enjoying the time together. It is time for lunch; everyone is hungry. It takes you and two other

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people to lift up the picnic chest and share with everyone. As the lid opens, oohs and aahs come from everyone as the tempting aromas and vivid colors of the inviting food fill their senses. Someone gives a prayer of thanks, and the plates are filled. Contentment, health, freedom, and gratitude mark this second scene and are parts of the far greater treasure that God has given us.

Years ago, my family and I were following the wrong map regarding our health. It led us to challenges beyond our ability to handle. The more we continued down the wrong perilous path, the more problems we endured. High blood pressure, pre-diabetes, obesity, joint problems, high cholesterol, allergies, and other severe health challenges seemed to be our destiny. It seemed there were no other choices.

Then I was shown an old encrypted map, and inside was the answer to our health problems. This map is older than any other on the planet. It has been proven for centuries to be the truth. That map is the Bible, and all I had to do was unroll or open the pages. I was very skeptical at first. How could the Bible answer our health dilemmas? I knew the Bible to be true. Yes, it was a treasure, but I never saw answers to my family's health in it. Now it was time to prove it true for health. With a new vigor, I began poring over Scripture to see what God had to say regarding health. Suddenly the words began jumping off the pages! From the very first day of this new search on my heart, God began revealing His Word in a new and refreshing way. Every verse I read, every sermon I listened to, every song I sang began to speak to my heart. I began to delight myself in the Lord! (See Ps. 37:4.) After much study, I began to apply what God teaches in His Word. My family became much healthier, and the persistent health problems began to disappear. Psalm 119:92-93 says, "If Your law had not been my delight, then I would have perished in my affliction. I will never forget Your precepts, for by them you have revived me!" (NASB). This is what I call a praise tickle (my version of "tickled pink")! I was praising God for the joy of discovery He brings.

You may have searched for answers to your health problems. If you were like me you searched everywhere and asked for advice from everyone—expert or not. Did you encounter the pirates of counterfeits and substitutes that did not bring you good health? Since you are still looking for answers, join Dr. Couey and me on this new adventure. Let's be intentional with our search. Our map will be the Bible, our guide will be the Holy Spirit, and the angels will be cheering us on as we discover praise tickles!

The revelation of Your words brings light and gives understanding to the inexperienced.

—Ps. 119:130 HCSB

Great health is in God's plan. Good health is more than food choices. It includes our attitudes, relationships, and outlook on life. This study will take us deep into the eye-opening trails on our map. At different junctions we will compare our directions with various health experts. This hunt is an opportunity for God to reveal His abundant blessings through deeper

fellowship, refreshed fulfillment, fabulous food, harmonious families, and endearing friends. Are you ready? Remember, those who quit too early never get to see the full reward.

Fellowship



Treasure Clue:

*My son, if you will receive my words and treasure my commandments
within you...then you will...discover the knowledge of God.*

—Prov. 2:1, 5 NIV

The first clue on our map is found in our Treasure Clue, Proverbs 2:1-6. Read all the verses in your Bible. Identify the imperative verbs in these verses, and fill in the blanks.

R _____ my words.

T _____ my commandments.

D _____ the knowledge.

In verse 6, what three things does God say He will give us?

God invites us to “receive [His] words” with an open heart and mind. Even more than that, He tells us to treasure His words so we can discover His knowledge and wisdom. The clue of receiving His words will help unlock the door to ultimate health. God’s most important words have to do with our fellowship with Him through a relationship with Jesus Christ.

Fellowship is defined as shared interest or companionship. The fellowship with our friends and family is a shared interest when we listen to them and treasure that relationship. By listening and treasuring the other person, we are able to discover more about him or her and deepen our friendship. It is the same with our relationship with Christ. If we want health, if we want freedom, then we need to develop fellowship with Him. We are designed for fellowship with God, according to 1 Corinthians 1:9, “God, who has called you into fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful” (NIV). It may seem strange to consider fellowship a part of health, but it all fits together. Health is more than just food.

Read Psalm 139:13-16. At what time in our life did God desire a fellowship with us?

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It is refreshing to understand that God desired fellowship before we were even born.

Throughout this study you will be asked to paraphrase scriptures. This gives you an opportunity to personalize and remember them. It is a way to turn a verse into a prayer. Paraphrase the verses in Psalm 139:13-16 as a prayer of thanksgiving.

God works amazingly in people's lives as they start looking to Scripture for health. Not only do they get great health results, but fellowship with God also keeps increasing. Since my family has been using the Bible as our map to greater health, the physical changes have increased our faith and fellowship. I want you to realize that in order to have true health, you must understand that God wants to have continual fellowship with you.

Leviticus 26:12 says, "I will also walk among you and be your God, and you shall be My people" (NASB). That is fellowship. God wants to walk with us as we learn about health. What better companion could we have?

Can you see how your walk with the Lord (fellowship) may affect your view of God's design for health? Write a prayer of commitment to treasure God's Word as you continue this study.

For further reading about fellowship, read 1 John 1:1-7.

Food

Everyone loves food. Chances are, you have already had some tasty morsel today, but the question is, "Was it truly healthy?" Much of this study is devoted to criteria needed to answer this question. Let's go from loving all food to loving the One who gave us food that builds health. Food is a gift for both necessity and pleasure.

I love trying out new foods and seeing the reaction on the faces of my family or friends when they bite into an innovation from my kitchen. As you partner with your foodie friend, you will have fun making new discoveries also.

The foods God gave us will please even the pickiest eater. As your family members begin to sample new foods, they will each discover at least one new favorite and hopefully many more. Our bodies are not born with a favorite foods gene; favorite foods develop from culture and personal habits. So if we change our habits, our taste preferences change. Many of us have been on diets of cheeseburgers and french fries or fried chicken with lots of gravy. Through this type of eating, our natural taste for nutritious foods has probably become somewhat dulled. Let's awaken those innate sensitivities and broaden our food horizon.

What does Psalm 132:15 say about how God uses food in our lives?

Is that how you have viewed food? God-designed food is a treasure to regain much of our health and return the glory to Him. This will lead to great fulfillment.

Fulfillment

Fulfillment is a sense of achieving something expected, desired, or promised. As we learn to trust God in the area of eating and health, we will discover fulfillment. We will be everything that God intended for us to be and this fulfillment brings gratification and satisfaction in who we are and whose we are.

Write out John 10:10.

How would fulfillment feel to you?

Have you ever considered how your health can bring fulfillment?

In order to completely open the treasure chest and allow absolute health to penetrate our body, mind, and spirit, our twelve-week journey will show us the mudslides of stress and bitterness while giving us an oasis as we camp out on exercise, fasting, and gratitude. As

we personally address these issues and make changes under God's leadership, the feelings of fulfillment and satisfaction will fill our daily lives.

Family

My grandmother had a special cedar box that she kept all of her prized possessions in. I used to sit with her at the kitchen table as she would unwrap her treasures. There were old pictures, coins, gems, a lock of hair, a ribbon from a long passed contest, a pair of old glasses, a hand carved spinning top and a dozen other knick-knacks. My grandmother would tell the story of each and every one, and the love and affection she shared with those memories will stay with me all of my life.¹

God continues to work in families through generations. This is an asset that can give meaning in the present and guidance for the future. As you receive the valuable riches of God's Word, you will have an opportunity to share with your family how God's treasures have impacted your life. Like the grandmother who has a story to share about each prized possession, you also will have a story to share about how you allowed God to work in your life regarding healing. My husband, Steve, and I can share with our grandchildren that God brought us to a point where we had to go back and rediscover the Old and New Testament for answers to health questions. Those answers have brought us years of health, and prayerfully many more years to come. Psalm 78:4 says, "We will not hide them from their children; we will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the LORD, his power, and the wonders he has done" (NIV).

No matter what our family situation, we can receive counsel, guidance, and leadership through our Lord and the Scriptures. Your family's spiritual heritage begins with you as you learn from the lives of Abraham, Esther, Ruth, Paul, and Timothy. From them we can understand how God works and apply those ancient lessons to our lives today.

As you make this paradigm change and develop an attitude of looking to God for all your provision, get ready for an impact in your relationships. It continues to amaze me how being physically out of balance transferred to every area of my life, especially family relationships. Family members were easy targets for negative attitudes, and I would treat strangers with kindness. As my family began to realize the benefits of total health, our home became more peaceful, and problems could be solved quickly and with grace. This new attitude that comes with health brings cooperation and well-being into our relationships with others.

We know that family members can either help or hinder our walk with the Lord. List the family members who can assist you in making positive food and health changes. This week let them know of your commitment to a new action plan.

What areas in your life would you like to commit to the Lord and give up your hold on so that He can do marvelous things?

List a few ways God could be glorified by following through with these commitments.

Family Meals a Priority

Which one is better, to grab meals on the go or eat at the kitchen table? According to the British Columbia Medical Association, children who eat at least one meal a day with their families in the home develop more nutritious eating habits, since mealtimes give parents a chance to lead by example and demonstrate healthy food choices. Further research has shown that kids who eat meals at home are more likely to have higher grades, better vocabulary, and improved communication skills.² This is good reason to be intentional about family meals. In addition, families usually save money by eating food prepared at home.

Sharing mealtimes together helps to instill a sense of belonging in children and provides a way to transmit Christian family values and traditions. Think of the opportunities you will have to help develop character in your kids as you spend time enjoying a home-cooked meal together. The longer it takes to prepare, serve, and enjoy a meal, the more opportunity there will be for sharing conversations. Consider involving every family member in shopping, cutting, preparing, cooking, and setting the table.

Take a moment to set a goal for how often your family will eat meals together at home this week. We will eat _____ meals per week at home at the kitchen table.

Friends

“A friend is someone who knows all about you and likes you just the same,” according to Ralph Waldo Emerson. Friends help us when we are down, they pray with us, and they are the

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ones we can go to when we're excited. God has put many friends in my life, and they were the ones who helped me get started on this biblical health scavenger hunt.

In 2004, my husband was dealing with many health issues, and we were getting tired of problems, prescriptions, and side effects. When he visited the doctor, he was given three new prescriptions and was informed that he would need all of them for the rest of his life. I began to understand what Matthew 9:36 means, "When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd" (NIV).

We felt harassed and helpless like sheep without a shepherd. We wanted a different answer. The previous year, God had moved us from St. Louis, Missouri, to Richmond, Virginia. Being new to the area, I had only made a few friends. I went to my new friend Kim when we couldn't figure out what to do about Steve's health. She showed me the shepherd's plan for eating and health. I affectionately refer to her as Dr. Kim; she is not a doctor, but a missionary who found God's treasure for her family's health.

After Kim, God sent other people who have encouraged me to continue to follow God's plan for health and healing. These friends became instrumental in our health and the birth of the Designed Healthy Living classes. We can follow God's plan successfully on our own with only a Bible, but it's more fun to have friends joining us on the journey.

Here are some suggestions as to how can you be a friend along this valuable hunt:

- Share scriptures that mean the most to you.
- Encourage friends to join you.
- Pray for your friends.
- Share healthy recipes and herbs, but never the spice of gossip.
- Invite friends to dinner and have an "Everything Goes on Pizza Night."
- Find foodie friends. A foodist can never find enough fabulous foodie friends!

Read Proverbs 18:24. How must we act if we want friends?

What friends are joining you in this treasure hunt? Star the ones that are foodie friends.

Finally

There are several great authors who have written about health. Those who have looked to Scripture and applied it have come to the same conclusion: God's laws (commandments) are a blessing to His people. This blessing was not just a spiritual blessing; it was a holistic

blessing. Specifically, the laws God gave His people were both a method God used to teach His people obedience and a way to spare them from many easily preventable illnesses and problems. Fellowship, food, fulfillment, family, and friends are all clues to this holistic blessing. Can you just imagine that treasure chest overflowing with all these blessings you are learning to experience? What a great opportunity to see God in a new way! Hang on; the joy of discovery is just beginning.



DAY TWO—WHY WE NEED THE TREASURE



Treasure Clue:

My son, do not forget my teaching, but let your heart keep my commandments; for length of days and years of life and peace they will add to you.

—Prov. 3:1-2 NASB

Read Proverbs 3:1-6. How is God speaking to you in these verses?

Take a moment to say a prayer of thanks for these words. Commit this truth to memory, saying it several times throughout the day.

Some people ask, “Why do we need to look at Scripture for our health?” The answer is so we can be balanced, wise, and healthy. There are many lopsided Christians who are not reaching their potential because they do not look at Scripture in regard to their health.

Be Balanced

These verses in Proverbs help us see that keeping our body (vs. 2), mind (vs. 6), and spirit (vs. 5) in balance is necessary for total health. Scripture tells us many times to treasure His Word in our heart, to never forget it, and to keep telling it to our children and grandchildren. God knows how easy it is for us to forget His teachings when we are faced with the barrage of information coming at us from all directions. He wants us to always remember His words so that we can keep His

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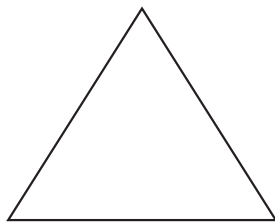
commandments. By following His commandments, we may be given many more years here on this earth to rejoice in the Lord, and peace will be added to those years.

This peace is not something the world can give us. We can follow all the guidelines for eating a healthy diet, and we can even gain health, but peace will only come from following the God of peace. The apostle Paul speaks of the God of peace and how He wants to sanctify us.

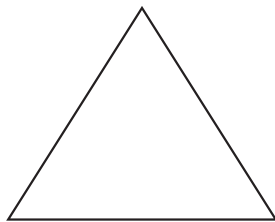
Read 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24. This is another very important clue in our treasure hunt, so read it carefully.

In the book *Praying God's Word*, Beth Moore discusses this verse in view of a triangle. Our God is a God of peace and that peace comes when our body, soul, and spirit are properly surrendered to His wise, loving, and liberating authority. She says, "God deeply desires for us to grant Him total access, to set apart every single part of our lives—body, soul and spirit—to His glorious work."³ Look at the triangle below, and imagine that the point at the top represents what is in control of our lives. When the body is on top of the triangle, we are controlled by our appetites, physical drives, and bad habits. When the soul (mind) is on top we are controlled by our feelings and personality types. We do not always act the best toward ourselves or others when we are controlled momentarily by either body or soul. As you know, our feelings can drive our physical appetites just as our physical appetites can drive our feelings. Instead, we need to be controlled by the spirit—it should be at the top of the triangle. As Moore says, "The spirit represents that part of us that was created in the image of God to know and enjoy His fellowship. Our bodies, our feelings, and personalities are wonderful components sanctified by God when the Holy Spirit is in control."⁴

Label each triangle below using the words *body*, *soul*, and *spirit*.



My life today



My commitment to how I want my daily life to be

Take a moment to ask God to lead you to a balanced life. Allow God to sanctify your whole spirit, soul, and body.

Be Wise

In order to be wise, we need to take the teachings that we receive from man and measure them against God's Word. If they match, then the teachings are sound advice. Steve Reynolds, pastor of Capital Baptist Church in Annandale Virginia, learned the wisdom of listening to God.

I weighed 104 pounds in first grade. I still have a report card that says, "Your son is thirty-six pounds overweight." I started playing football when I was eight years old, and played all the way through until I was twenty-two. Then, when I finished, I made myself a promise: "Nobody's ever going to make me run again in my life."

Unfortunately, I kept that promise from age twenty-two to forty-eight. Here I was, not exercising and eating whatever I wanted. I grew and grew to 340 pounds. I had terrible health: high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and diabetes. I was literally digging my grave with a knife, fork, and, of course, an ice cream spoon. At that point God was working and telling me I needed to do something about my overeating and lack of exercise.

God is faithful and He is able. From Colossians 1:16 I learned everything that exists was created for Him and by Him. That included me. If He was in control of all things, then He was in control of my life, and if I'd let Him, He could be in control of my weight issues too.

God gave me a prescription for making a huge change in my life. Once I began to follow it, I began to see results. My faith increased with each change I made and each pound I shed. Today, I am proud to announce that I'm a loser. I've lost more than one hundred pounds. God has helped me get to this point and I intend to stay on track."⁵

Pastor Reynolds applied the treasure map to his health. He is no longer limited with physical ailments, and he is able to reach more people with the gospel of Christ.

Because of a lack of wisdom, disease fills our daily lives. We experience everything from the common cold to cancer to high blood pressure. Genesis starts with a perfect world that God called good. In Genesis 3 everything changed. Sin came into the world and with it came harmful influences that were not a part of God's original grand design.

The Bible gives another clue about how we can avoid some of these problems and be wise. Look up Exodus 15:26 and write it here. Then underline all the verbs and verb phrases.

Let's look at this verse in depth, using Hebrew definitions.

- The term “listen carefully” in Hebrew is *shema*—to be earnest, heed, hear intelligently, consider, be content, or obey.

When you are about to tell your kids something that is very important, you want them to really listen to you. You want your kids to listen carefully so that you can avoid repeating yourself and so they will learn the importance of immediate obedience. This usually happens when you get down on their level and look them straight in the eye.

- The term “do” in Hebrew is *asah*—to accomplish, advance, be busy, execute, finish, fulfill, sacrifice, maintain, or bring to pass.

We all know what *sacrifice* means, but now God is applying it to this verse, asking for us to listen intelligently and to sacrificially do whatever it takes.

- The term “pay attention” in Hebrew is *azon*—to give ear, expand, or listen.
- The term “keep” in Hebrew is *shamar*—to keep, hedge about, guard, protect, take heed, beware, or observe.

We protect what is important. Typically parents pray for a hedge of protection around their children. This continues to show the intensity of this verse.

God is calling to us in these verbs. You will sacrifice your time and risk having your family looked upon as being different as you start changing your eating habits. To help with this, you should realize that you are called to put a “hedge about” your family, which carries a heavy responsibility. These verbs tell us a lot about this passage. If we do these things, *then* He will not bring certain things upon us. God gives us steps and responsibilities to follow in order to take care of our bodies.

John Jay, a Christian statesman in the late 1700s, also knew what it meant to be wise. Consider his words:

In order to become wise, [we] have much to unlearn as well as to learn—much to undo as well as to do. The Israelites had little comfort in Egypt, and yet they were not very anxious to go to the promised land. Figuratively speaking, we are all at this Day in Egypt, and a Prince worse than Pharaoh reigns in it, although the prophet “like unto Moses” offers to deliver from Bondage, and invites us to prepare and be ready to go with him, under divine guidance and Protection, to the promised land; yet great is the number who prefer remaining in slavery and dying in Egypt.⁶

Write down what you have learned and what you need to unlearn. What wise and sacrificial choices might you need to make for your own health and that of your family?

Be Healthy

Read Deuteronomy 4:39-40, and consider what God is telling you.

The Bible is God's owner's manual. Everything we need to know is in this manual, including how to help our bodies. In Deuteronomy, God confirms that He has the authority to guide us and has given us His statutes and commandments. Keeping His commandments are the means by which we will do well, including with our health. Obey God; do well.

Being healthy or being well does not mean being perfect. We still live in a sin-cursed earth. We live in a toxic environment. We will grow older. Even though we cannot achieve perfection in our health, we should take care of ourselves.

Read 3 John 2 and write it here:

Consider the advantages of being healthy:

- It's easier to be cheerful and vibrant.
- It helps us represent our Lord.
- It helps us not feel tired and run down.
- There is less time for discouragement.

However, we also need to realize that there are exceptions to healing. God does use sickness in the following ways:

Treasures of Healthy Living

- God uses sickness for testing and to bring glory to Him, as in the case of Job and the blind man in John 9. “My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness,” God said in 2 Corinthians 12:9 (KJV).
- Sickness can be a result of disobedience or ignorance. Hosea 4:6 says, “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge” (KJV). And Isaiah 1:19-20 says, “If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword” (KJV).
- The purpose of sickness may also be for death. It is one way we get to heaven! “It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment” (Heb. 9:27 KJV).

Taking this treasure to heart: Being balanced, wise, and healthy requires an understanding that the biblical stewardship of our whole life, body, mind, and spirit—they all belong to God. We are custodians of what He has given us. If He is our Lord and we are His servants, then shouldn't we take care of what He has given us?

Look back at the triangles you labeled a few pages ago. What steps can you take to begin to improve the care of your body, mind, and spirit today?

Applying this treasure at home: Fill out the Health Assessment in the Appendix if you have not done so already.



DAY THREE—WHAT IS KEEPING US FROM THE TREASURE?

Knowledge is love, life, and vision.

—Helen Keller

“The cat spit first!” My daughter and I heard this defensive remark as we arrived at Sarah's home. She was trying to discipline her two rambunctious boys after the neighbor had complained that the boys were spitting at her cat. Their response—which made perfect sense to them—was to defend themselves against a spitting cat by spitting back.