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“THE REDEMPTION OF OUR BODIES”

If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the Lord that healeth thee” (*Exod. 15:26*).

The promise of immunity from Egypt’s diseases was given to the children of Israel soon after they left their captivity. Yet, this promise wasn’t based simply on supernatural intervention; it was based also, maybe even especially, on the natural laws of health. If they followed what the Lord commanded them to do in the area of health and sanitation, as opposed to what their captors did (for instance, while the Egyptians used human excrement for medicinal purposes, the Hebrews were to bury theirs outside the camp), they would be spared the ailments that afflicted the Egyptians.

Even here, then, we can see God’s concern for not just the spiritual well-being of His people but for their physical well-being, their health, as well. This idea also is found in the Hebrew word *shalom*, commonly translated as “peace.” Yet, the word conveys a deeper sense, that of a completeness, of a wholeness and a fullness that involves the total person, physical health included. The first use of the word *shalom* in the Old Testament appears when Jacob, inquiring about Laban, the grandson of Abraham’s brother, asks, “And he said unto them, Is he well? And they said, He is well” (*Gen. 29:6*). In both instances, the word translated “well” comes from *shalom*.



Of course, it makes perfect sense that God would care about our physical health. After all, He created us as physical beings. Before sin, before the Fall, we were already in the flesh. We were made as fleshly beings. Our fall wasn't *to* the flesh; it was a fall *in* the flesh. Our bodies aren't evil, or bad, the prison houses for the soul or the like (as some religions have taught). Our bodies are wonderful gifts from a loving God who created us in His image and who wants us to enjoy our physical existence, at least as much as possible in this fallen world.

Thus, this quarter we are going to look at what's often been a neglected aspect of the wonderful truths God has given us as a movement, and that is the health message. The Lord revealed these principles to us for the same reason He died for us, because He loves us and wants what's in our best interest.

Of course, we all are mortal. We all face sickness, and, unless Christ comes in our lifetime, we all die. Nothing is going to change that now, and certainly not healthful living. But that doesn't mean we shouldn't do our best to take care of ourselves; that doesn't mean we aren't under a divine obligation to take care of our bodies as

temples. As Paul expressed it, "Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's" (*1 Cor. 6:19, 20, NKJV*).

This quarter's lesson on healthful living, written by the General Conference Health Ministries Department in Silver Spring, Maryland, U.S.A., was produced with the desire to help us enjoy all the *shalom* we possibly can now, until that final day in which we receive, once and forever, "the redemption of our bodies" (*Rom. 8:23, NIV*).

Our bodies are wonderful gifts from a loving God who created us in His image and who wants us to enjoy our physical existence, at least as much as possible in this fallen world.

Contributors from the Health Ministries Department of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists were Allan Handysides, Kathleen Kuntaraf, Peter Landless, Stoy Proctor, and the late Thomas Zirkle, who served as an associate director for the world church's department of Health Ministries.

How to Use This Teachers Edition

Get Motivated to Explore, Apply, and Create

We hope that this format of the teachers edition will encourage adult Sabbath School class members to do just that—explore, apply, and create. Each weekly teachers lesson takes your class through the following learning process, based on the Natural Learning Cycle:

1. Why is this lesson important to me? (Motivate);
2. What do I need to know from God’s Word? (Explore);
3. How can I practice what I’ve learned from God’s Word? (Apply); and
4. What can I do with what I’ve learned from God’s Word? (Create).

And for teachers who haven’t had time to prepare during the week for class, there is a one-page outline of easy-to-digest material in “The Lesson in Brief” section.

Here’s a closer look at the four steps of the Natural Learning Cycle and suggestions for how you, the teacher, can approach each one:

Step 1—Motivate: Link the learners’ experiences to the central concept of the lesson to show why the lesson is relevant to their lives. Help them answer the question, Why is this week’s lesson important to me?

Step 2—Explore: Present learners with the biblical information they need to understand the central concept of the lesson. (Such information could include facts about the people; the setting; cultural, historical, and/or geographical details; the plot or what’s happening; and conflicts or tension of the texts you are studying.) Help learners answer the question, What do I need to know from God’s Word?

Step 3—Apply: Provide learners with opportunities to practice the information given in Step 2. This is a crucial step; information alone is not enough to help a person grow in Christ. Assist the learners in answering the question, How can I apply to my life what I’ve learned?

Step 4—Create: Finally, encourage learners to be “doers of the word, and not hearers only” (*James 1:22*). Invite them to make a life response to the lesson. This step provides individuals and groups with opportunities for creative self-expression and exploration. All such activities should help learners answer the question: With God’s help, what can I do with what I’ve learned from this week’s lesson?

When teachers use material from each of these four steps, they will appeal to most every student in their class: those who enjoy talking about what’s happening in their lives, those who want more information about the texts being studied, those who want to know how it all fits in with real life, and those who want to get out and apply what they’ve learned.