

What Seventh-day Adventists Believe about Healthful Living

(From: Chapter 21, “Christian Behavior” in *Seventh-day Adventists Believe*. . ., Published for the General Conference Ministerial Association by the Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1989.)

We are called to be a godly people who think, feel and act in harmony with the principles of heaven. For the Spirit to recreate in us the character of our Lord we involve ourselves only in those things which will produce Christlike purity, health, and joy in our lives. This means that our amusement and entertainment should meet the highest standards of Christian taste and beauty. While recognizing cultural differences, our dress is to be simple, modest, and neat, befitting those whose true beauty does not consist of outward adornment but in the imperishable ornament of a gentle and quiet spirit. It also means because our bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit, we are to care for them intelligently. Along with adequate exercise and rest, we are to adopt the most healthful diet possible and abstain from the unclean foods identified in the Scriptures. Since alcoholic beverages, tobacco, and the irresponsible use of drugs and narcotics are harmful to our bodies, we are to abstain from them as well. Instead, we are to engage in whatever brings our thoughts and bodies into the discipline of Christ, who desires our wholesomeness, joy, and goodness.

(Fundamental Beliefs #21)

Christian Behavior

Christian behavior—the lifestyle of a follower of God—arises as a grateful response to God’s magnificent salvation through Christ. Paul appeals to all Christians: “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be trans-

formed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove which is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God” (Rom. 12:1, 2). So Christians willingly protect and develop their mental, physical, and spiritual faculties in order that they may honor their Creator and Redeemer.

Christ prayed, “I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.” (John 17:15, 16). How can a Christian be both in the world and separate from it? How should the Christian lifestyle differ from that of the world?

Christians should adopt a different lifestyle, not for the sake of being different but because God has called them to live by principle. The lifestyle to which He has called them enables them to reach their full potential as His creation, making them efficient in His service. Being different also advances their mission: to serve the world—to be salt in it, light to it. Of what value would salt be without taste, or light that didn’t differ from darkness?

Christ is our example. He lived so thoroughly in the world that people accused Him of being “a glutton and a drunkard” (Matt. 11:19, NIV), though He was not. He so consistently lived out God’s principles that no one could prove Him guilty of sin (John 8:46, NIV).

Behavior and Salvation

In determining what is appropriate behavior, we should avoid two extremes. The first is accepting the rules and applications of principles to become as a means of salvation. Paul sums up this extreme with the words, “You who are trying to be justified by law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace” (Gal. 5:4, NIV).

The opposite extreme is believing that since works do not save, they are therefore unimpor-

tant—that what a person does really doesn't matter. Paul spoke to this extreme too: "You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature" (Gal. 5:13, NIV). When each member follows his or her own conscience, "there is no mutual discipling of fellow Christians in keeping with Matthew 18 and Galatians 6:1, 2. The church becomes not the body of Christ, within which there is mutual love and care, but a collection of atomistic individuals, each of whom goes his or her own way without taking any responsibility for one's fellows or accepting any concern for them."¹

While our behavior and our spirituality are closely related, we can never earn salvation by correct behavior. Rather, Christian behavior is a natural fruit of salvation and is grounded in what Christ has already accomplished for us at Calvary.

Temples of the Holy Spirit

Not only the church but the individual Christian is a temple for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit: "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?" (1 Cor. 6:19).

Christians, then, practice good health habits to protect the command center of their body temples, the mind, the dwelling place of the Spirit of Christ. For this reason Seventh-day Adventists—throughout the past 100 years—have stressed the importance of proper health habits.² And this emphasis has been paying off: Recent research reveals that Adventists are less likely than the general population to develop almost any of the major diseases.³

As Christians, we are concerned with both the spiritual and the physical aspects of people's lives. Jesus, our pattern, healed "every disease and sickness among the people" (Matt. 4:23, NIV).

The Bible views human beings as a unit (chapter 7). "The dichotomy between spiritual and material is foreign to the Bible."⁴ So God's call to holiness involves a call to physical as well as spiritual health. Susannah Wesley, mother of

the founder of Methodism, aptly summarized this principle: "Whatever weakens your reason, impairs the tenderness of your conscience, obscures your sense of God, decreases the strength and authority of your mind over the body—that thing is wrong, however innocent it may be in itself."⁵

God's laws, which include the laws of health, are not arbitrary but are designed by our Creator to enable us to enjoy life at its best. Satan, the enemy, wants to steal our health, our joy, our peace of mind, and ultimately to destroy us (see John 10:10).

God's Blessings for Total Health

Attaining this health depends upon practicing a few rather simple but effective God-given principles. Some of these are obvious and quite agreeable to most people. Others, such as proper diet, are more difficult to accept since they involve orientations and habits so basic to our lifestyles. For this reason, we will devote more space to those principles that are either misunderstood, debated, or rejected.⁶

The Blessing of Exercise. Regular exercise is the simple formula for increased energy, a firm body, stress relief, healthier skin, more self-confidence, effective weight control, improved digestion and regularity, and reduced depression and the risk of heart disease and cancer. Exercise is not merely an option, it is essential to maintaining optimal health—both physical and mental.⁷

Useful activity tends to prosperity; inactivity and laziness tend to adversity (Prov. 6:6-13; 14:23). God prescribed activity for the first man and woman—care for their garden home in the open air (Gen. 2:5, 15; 3:19). Christ Himself set an example of physical activity. For most of His life He was engaged in manual labor as a carpenter, and during His ministry He walked the roads of Palestine.⁸

The Blessing of Sunlight. Light is essential to life (Gen. 1:3). It powers the process that produces the nutrients that nourish and energize our bodies and that releases the oxygen we must

have to live. Sunshine promotes health and healing.

The Blessing of Water. The human body is 75 percent water, but this vital fluid is continuously being lost through exhaled air, perspiration, and waste products. Drinking six to eight glasses of pure water a day would aid in maintaining efficient, happy well-being. Another important function of water is its use for cleanliness and the relaxation it affords.

The Blessing of Fresh Air. An environment of impure air, in or outside of the home, causes the blood to carry less oxygen than is required for the optimal function of every cell. This tends to make a person less alert and responsive. It is therefore important to do everything possible to secure a generous supply of fresh air daily.

The Blessing of Temperate, Drug-Free, Stimulant-Free Living. Drugs have saturated our society because they offer stimulation and release from stress and pain. The Christian is surrounded with seductive invitations to use drugs. Even many innocent-appearing, popular beverages contain drugs: Coffee, tea, and colas contain caffeine,⁹ and fruit-flavored wine coolers contain alcohol. Research has shown that the milder gateway to drugs tend to lead progressively to stronger mind-altering drugs. The wise Christian will abstain from all that is harmful, using in moderation only that which is good.

1. **Tobacco.** In any form tobacco is a slow poison that has a harmful effect on the physical, mental, and moral powers. At first its effects are hardly noticeable. It excites and then paralyzes the nerves, weakening and clouding the brain.

Those who use tobacco are slowly committing suicide,¹⁰ transgressing the sixth commandment: "Thou shalt not kill" (Ex. 20:13, KJV).

2. **Alcoholic beverages.** Alcohol is one of the most widely used drugs on Planet Earth. It has devastated untold millions. Not only

does it hurt those who use it, but it exacts its toll from society in general—through broken homes, accidental deaths, and poverty.

Since God communicates with us only through our minds, it is well to remember that alcohol adversely affects their every function. As the level of alcohol in the system rises, the drinker progresses through loss of coordination, confusion, disorientation, stupor, anesthesia, coma, and death. Drinking alcoholic beverages on a regular basis will eventually produce loss of memory, judgment, and learning ability.¹¹

Scriptural stories involving the use of alcoholic beverages may give the impression that God approved their use. However, Scripture also indicates that God's people participated in such social practices as divorce, polygamy, and slavery—practices that God certainly did not condone. In interpreting such Scriptural passages, it is helpful to keep in mind that God does not necessarily endorse all that He permits.

Jesus' answer to the query as to why Moses permitted divorce points to this principle of interpretation. He said, "'Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, permitted you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so'" (Matt. 19:8).¹² Eden is the divine model to which the gospel would restore us. As is true of these other practices, the use of alcohol was not a part of God's original plan.¹³

3. **Other drugs and narcotics.** There are many other harmful drugs and narcotics through which Satan destroys human lives.¹⁴ True Christians beholding Christ will continually glorify God with their bodies, realizing that they are His prized possessions, bought with His precious blood.

The Blessing of Rest. Proper rest is essential for health of the body and mind. Christ extends to us the compassionate directive He gave His weary disciples; "'Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest'" (Mark 6:31, NIV). Periods of rest provide much needed quiet-

ness for communication with God: “Be still, and know that I am God” (Ps. 46:10). God stressed our need for rest by setting aside the seventh day of the week as the day of rest (Ex. 20:10).

Rest is more than sleeping or ceasing our regular work. It involves the way we spend our leisure time. Weariness is not always caused by stress or by working too hard for too long: Our minds can be wearied by overstimulation through media, sickness, or various personal problems. Recreation is re-creation in the truest sense of the word. It strengthens, builds up, and refreshes the mind and body, thus preparing believers to go back to their vocations with new vigor. To live life at its best, Christians should pursue only those forms of recreation and entertainment that strengthen their bond with Christ and improve health.

Scripture lays down the following principle, which will help Christians select good recreation: “Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world” (1 John 2:15, 16).

1. Movies, television, radio, and videos. These media can be great educational agencies. They have “changed the whole atmosphere of our modern world and have brought us within easy contact with the life, thought, and activities of the entire globe.”¹⁵ The Christian will remember that television and videos make a greater impact on the life of an individual than does any other single activity.

Unfortunately, video and television, with its almost continuous theatrical performances, bring influences into the home that are neither wholesome nor uplifting. If we are not discriminating and decisive, “they will turn our homes into theaters and minstrel shows of cheap and sordid kind.”¹⁶ The committed Christian will turn away from unwholesome, violent, sensual movies and television programs.

Visual and audio media are not evil in themselves. The same channels that portray the depths of human wickedness convey the preaching of the gospel of salvation. And many other worthwhile programs are broadcast. But people can use even the good programs to avoid the responsibilities of life. Christians will not only desire to establish principles for determining what to watch but will also set time limits on their watching, so that social relationships and the responsibilities of life will not suffer. If we cannot discriminate or if we lack the power to control our media, it is much better to dispense with them altogether than to have them rule our lives either by polluting the mind or consuming excessive amounts of time (see Matt. 5:29, 30).

Regarding our contemplation of Christ, an important Biblical principle states that “by beholding we are becoming transformed into His likeness with ever-increasing glory” (2 Cor. 3:18, NIV). Beholding brings change. But Christians must continually remember that this principle works on the negative side, too. Films graphically portraying the sins and crimes of humanity—murder, adultery, robbery, and other degrading acts—are contributing to the present breakdown of morality.

Paul’s advice in Philippians 4:8 lays out a principle that helps to identify the forms of recreation that have value: “Finally, brethren, whatever things that are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.”

2. Reading and music. These same high standards apply to the Christian’s reading and music. Music is a gift of God to inspire pure, noble, and elevated thoughts. Good music, then, enhances the finest qualities of character.

Debased music, on the other hand, “destroys the rhythm of the soul and breaks

down morality." So Christ's followers will shun "any melody partaking of the nature of jazz, rock, or related hybrid forms, or any language expressing foolish or trivial sentiments."¹⁷ The Christian does not listen to music with suggestive lyrics or melodies (Rom. 13:11-14; 1 Peter 2:11).¹⁸

Reading offers much that is valuable too. There is a wealth of good literature that cultivates and expands the mind. Yet there is also a "flood of evil literature, often in most attractive guise but damaging to the mind and morals. The tales of wild adventure and of moral laxness, whether fact or fiction," are unfit for the believers because they create a distaste for a noble, honest, and pure lifestyle and hinder the development of a union with Christ.¹⁹

- 3. Unacceptable activities.** Adventists also teach that gambling, card playing, theater going, and dancing are to be avoided (1 John 2:15-17). They question spending time watching violent sporting events (Phil. 4:8). Any activity that weakens our relationship with our Lord and causes us to lose sight of eternal interests helps to bind Satan's chains about our souls. Christians will rather participate in those wholesome forms of leisure activities that will truly refresh their physical, mental, and spiritual natures.

The Blessing of Nutritious Food. To the first couple, the Creator gave the ideal diet: "I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food" (Gen. 1:29, NIV). After the Fall, God added to their diet "the plants of the fields" (Gen 3:18, NIV).

Today's health problems tend to center on the degenerative type of diseases that are directly traceable to diet and lifestyle. The diet God planned, consisting of grains, fruits, nuts, and vegetables, offers the right nutritional ingredients to support optimum health.

- 1. The original diet.** The Bible does not condemn the eating of clean animals. But God's

original diet for man did not include flesh foods because He did not envision the taking of any animal's life and because a balanced vegetarian diet is the best for health—a fact for which science offers mounting evidence.²⁰ People consuming animal products that contain bacteria or viruses that cause disease may have their health impaired.²¹ It is estimated that every year, in the United States alone, millions suffer from poultry food poisoning because inspection fails to detect contamination by salmonella and other microorganisms.²² Several experts feel that "bacterial contamination poses a far greater risk than chemical additives and preservatives in food" and expect the incidence of the diseases caused by these bacteria to rise.²³

Furthermore, studies conducted in recent years indicate that increased meat consumption can cause an increase of atherosclerosis, cancer, kidney disorders, osteoporosis, and trichinosis, and can decrease the life expectancy.²⁴

The diet God ordained in the Garden of Eden—the vegetarian diet—is the ideal, but sometimes we cannot have the ideal. In those circumstances, in any given situation or locale, those who wish to stay in optimum health will eat the best food that they can obtain.

- 2. Clean and unclean flesh foods.** Only after the Flood did God introduce flesh as food. With all vegetation destroyed, God gave Noah and his family permission to eat flesh food, stipulating that they were not to eat the blood in the meat (Gen. 9:4).

Another stipulation Scripture implies that God gave Noah was that he and his family were to eat only what God identified as clean animals. It was because Noah and his family needed the clean animals for food as well as for sacrifices (Gen. 8:20) that God instructed Noah to take seven pairs of each kind of clean animal, in contrast to only one pair of each kind of unclean, with him into the ark (Gen. 7:2, 3). Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy

14 provide extensive expositions on clean and unclean foods.²⁵

By nature, unclean animals do not constitute the best food. Many are either scavengers or predators—from the lion and swine to the vulture and the bottom-dwelling, sucker-type fish. Because of their habits they are more apt to be carriers of disease.

Studies have revealed that “in addition to the moderate amounts of cholesterol found in both pork and shellfish, both foods contain a number of toxins and contaminants which are associated with human poisoning.”²⁶

By abstaining from unclean foods, God’s people demonstrated their gratefulness for their redemption from the corrupt, unclean world around them (Lev. 20:24-26; Deut. 14:2). To introduce anything unclean into the body temple where God’s Spirit dwells is less than God’s ideal.

The New Testament did not abolish the distinction between the clean and unclean flesh foods. Some believe that because these dietary laws are mentioned in Leviticus, they are merely ceremonial or ritualistic, and so are no longer valid for Christians. Yet the distinction between clean and unclean animals dates back to Noah’s day—long before Israel existed. As principles of health, these dietary laws carry with them an ongoing obligation.²⁷

3. Regularity, simplicity, and balance.

Successful dietary reforms are progressive and must be approached intelligently. Eventually we should learn to eliminate, or use only sparingly, foods with high fat and/or sugar content.

Furthermore, we should prepare the foods we eat in as simple and natural a way as possible, and for optimum benefit, should eat at regular intervals. Complex, stimulating diets are not the most healthful. Many condiments and spices irritate the digestive tract,²⁸ and their habitual use is associated with a number of health problems.²⁹

The Blessing of Christian Dress. God provided the first clothing for Adam and Eve and knows that we have need of suitable clothing today (Matt. 6:25-33). We should base our choice of clothing on the principles of simplicity, modesty, practicality, health, and attractiveness.

1. Simple. As it does in all other areas of our lives, the Christian call to simplicity impinges upon how we dress. “Christian witness calls for simplicity.

“The way we dress demonstrates to the world who we are and what we are—not as a legal requirement handed down from the Victorian era, but as an expression of our love of Jesus.”³⁰

2. Of high moral virtue. Christians will not mar the beauty of their characters with styles that arouse the “lust of the flesh” (1 John 2:16). Because they want to witness to others, they will dress and act modestly, not accentuating the parts of the body that stimulate sexual desires. Modesty promotes moral health. The Christian’s aim is to glorify God, not self.

3. Practical and economical. Because they are stewards of the money God has entrusted to them, Christians will practice economy, avoiding “gold or pearls or costly clothing” (1 Tim. 2:9). Practicing economy, however, does not necessarily mean purchasing the cheapest clothing available. Often higher quality items are more economical in the long run.

4. Healthful. It is not only diet that affects a person’s health. Christians will avoid clothing styles that do not adequately protect the body or that constrict it or otherwise affect it in such ways as to cause the health to deteriorate.

5. Characterized by grace and natural beauty. Christians understand the warning against “the pride of life” (1 John 2:16). Referring to the lilies, Christ said, “even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these” (Matt. 6:29). Thus He illustrated that Heaven’s perception of beauty is characterized by grace, simplicity, purity, and natural

beauty. Worldly display, as seen in transient fashions, has no value in God's eyes (1 Tim. 2:9).

Christians win unbelievers not by looking and behaving like the world but by revealing an attractive and refreshing difference. Peter said unbelieving spouses "may be won by the conduct of their wives, when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear." Instead of adorning the exterior, he counseled, let believers concentrate on developing "the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible ornament of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God" (1 Peter 3:1-4). Scripture teaches that:

a. The character show forth one's true beauty. Both Peter and Paul set forth the basic principle for guiding Christian men and women in the area of adornment: "Your beauty should not come from outward adornment such as...the wearing of gold jewelry and fine clothes" (1 Peter 3:3, NIV). "I also want women to dress modestly with decency and propriety, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or expensive clothes, but with good deeds, appropriate for women who profess to worship God" (1 Tim. 2: 9, 10, NIV).

b. Simplicity harmonizes with reformation and revival. When Jacob called his family to dedicate themselves to God they gave up "all the foreign gods which were in their hands, and all their earrings which were in their ears," and Jacob buried them (Gen. 35: 2, 4).³¹

After Israel's apostasy with the golden calf, God commanded them, "Take off your ornaments, that I may know what to do to you." In penitence they "stripped themselves of their ornaments" (Ex. 33:5, 6). Paul clearly states that Scripture records this apostasy "as warnings for us, on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come" (1 Cor. 10:11, NIV).

c. Good stewardship requires sacrificial living. While much of the world is undernourished, materialism lays before Christians temptations ranging from expensive clothes, cars, and jewelry to luxurious homes. Simplicity of lifestyle and appearance sets Christians in stark contrast to the greed, materialism, and gaudiness of pagan, twentieth-century society, where values focus on material things rather than on people.

In view of these Scriptural teachings and the principles laid out above, we believe that Christians ought not to adorn themselves with jewelry. We understand this to mean that the wearing of rings, earrings, necklaces, and bracelets, and showy tie tacks, cuff links, and pins—and any other type of jewelry that has as its main function display—is unnecessary and not in harmony with the simplicity of adornment urged by Scripture.³²

The Bible associates gaudy cosmetics with paganism and apostasy (2 Kings 9:30; Jer. 4:30). As to cosmetics, therefore, we believe that Christians should maintain a natural, healthy appearance. If we lift up the Savior in the way we speak, act, and dress, we become like magnets, drawing people to Him.³³

Principles of Christian Standards

In all its manifestations, the Christian lifestyles is a response to salvation through Christ. The Christian desires to honor God and to live as Jesus would live. Although some view the Christian lifestyle as a list of don'ts, we should rather see it as a series of positive principles active in the framework of salvation. Jesus emphasized that He came that we might have life and have it more abundantly. What are the principles that guide us to the full life? When the Holy Spirit comes into the life of an individual, a decided change takes place that is evident to those around that person (John 3:8). The Spirit not only makes an initial change in the life; His

effects are ongoing. The first and most prominent fruit of the Spirit is love (Galatians 5:22, 23). The most powerful argument for the validity of Christianity is a loving and lovable Christian.

Living with the Mind of Christ. “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 2:5). Under all circumstances, favorable or adverse, we should seek to understand and live in harmony with the will and mind of Christ (1 Cor. 2:16).

Ellen White has noted the beautiful results of a life that is lived in this kind of a relationship with Christ: “All true obedience comes from the heart. It was heart work with Christ. And if we consent, He will so identify Himself with our thoughts and aims, so blend our hearts and minds into conformity to His will, that when obeying Him we shall be but carrying out our own impulses. The will, refined and sanctified, will find its highest delight in doing His service. When we know God as it is our privilege to know Him, our life will be a life of continual obedience. Through an appreciation of the character of Christ, through communion with God, sin will become hateful to us.”³⁴

Living to Praise and Glorify God. God has done so much for us. One way in which we can show our gratitude is through the praise that we give Him.

The Psalms strongly emphasize this side of the spiritual life: “I have seen you in the sanctuary and beheld your power and your glory. Because your love is better than life, my lips will glorify you. I will praise you as long as I live, and in your name I will lift up my hands. My soul will be satisfied as with the richest of foods; with singing lips my mouth will praise you” (Ps. 63: 2-5, NIV).

For the Christian, such an attitude of praise will keep life’s other affairs in an appropriate perspective. In looking upon our crucified Savior who redeemed us from the penalty and delivers us from the power of sin, we are motivated to do only “those things that are pleasing in His sight” (1 John 3:22; cf. Eph. 5:10, NIV). Christians “live

no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again” (2 Cor. 5:15). Every true Christian puts God first in all he does, in all he thinks, in all he speaks, and in all that he desires. He has no other gods before His Redeemer (1 Cor. 10:31).

Living to Be an Example. Paul said, “give no offense” to anyone (1 Cor. 10:32). “I myself always strive to have a conscience without offense toward God and men” (Acts 24:16). If our example leads others to sin, we become stumbling blocks to those for whom Christ died. “Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did” (1 John 2:6, NIV).

Living to Minister. A major reason Christians live as they do is to save lost men and women. Said Paul, “I try to please everybody in every way. For I am not seeking my own good but the good of many, so that they may be saved.” (1 Cor. 10:33, NIV; cf. Matt. 20:28).

Requirements and Guidelines

Because of the impact a person’s lifestyle makes upon his spiritual experience and his witness, as a church organization we have set certain lifestyle standards as minimal requirements for becoming members. These standards include the abstention from tobacco, alcoholic beverages, mind-altering chemicals, and unclean flesh foods and the evidence of a growing Christian experience in matters of dress and the use of leisure time. These minimal standards do not comprehend all of God’s ideal for the believer. They simply are essential first steps in developing a growing, radiant Christian experience. Such standards also provide the foundation essential to unity within the community of believers.

The development of Christian behavior—“God-likeness”—is progressive, involving a life-long union with Christ. Holy living is nothing less than a daily yielding of the will to Christ’s control and a daily conformity to His teachings as He reveals them to us in our Bible study and prayer. Because we mature at different rates, it is

important that we refrain from judging weaker brothers and sisters (Rom. 14:1; 15:1).

Christians in union with the Savior have but one ideal: that they shall do their best to honor the heavenly Father, who has provided such a rich plan for their salvation. "Therefore, whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Cor. 10:31).

References

1. L. A. King, "Legalism or Permissiveness: An Inescapable Dilemma?" *The Christian Century*, April 16, 1980, p. 436.
2. For the development of the Biblical basis of healthful living in the SDA Church, see Damsteegt, *Foundations of the Seventh-day Adventist Message and Mission*, pp. 221-240; Damsteegt, "Health Reforms and the Bible in Early Sabbatarian Adventism," *Adventist Heritage*, Winter 1978, pp. 13-21.
3. See Lewis R. Walton, Jo Ellen Walton, John A. Scharffenberg, *How You Can Live Six Extra Years* (Santa Barbara, CA: Woodbridge Press, 1981), p. 4; D.C. Neiman and H.J. Stanton, "The Adventist Lifestyle—A Better Way to Live," *Vibrant Life*, March/April 1988, pp. 14-18.
4. *Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishers, 1975), vol. 1, p. 884.
5. C.B. Haynes, "Church Standards—No. 5," *Review and Herald*, Oct. 30, 1941, p. 7.
6. For a fuller treatment of these simple health rules, see V.W. Foster, *New Start!* (Santa Barbara, CA: Woodbridge Press, 1988).
7. See e.g., Kenneth H. Cooper, *Aerobics Program for Total Well Being* (New York: M. Evans, 1982); *Physical Fitness Education Syllabus* (Loma Linda, CA: Department of Health Science, School of Health, Loma Linda University, 1976-1977); John Dignam, "Walking Into Shape," *Signs of the Times*, July 1987, p. 16; B.E. Baldwin, "Exercise," *Journal of Health and Healing* 11, No. 4 (1987): 20-23; Jeanne Wiesseman, *Physical Fitness, Abundant Living Health Series*, vol. 5 (Loma Linda, CA: School of Health Loma Linda University, n.d.), pp. 21, 37, 38, 45. See also Dianne-Jo Moore, "Walk Your Tensions Away," *Your Life and Health*, No. 4 (1984): 12, 13.
8. Among the various forms of exercise, walking ranks as one of the best. See J.A. Scharffenberg, "Adventist Responsibility in Exercise" (unpublished manuscript); White, *Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 78; White, "Temperance," *Health Reformer*, April 1872, p. 122; Dignam, "Walking Into Shape," pp. 16, 17.
9. Caffeine has also been found to contribute to increased blood cholesterol, high blood pressure, increased gastric secretions, and peptic ulcers. It has been implicated in heart disease, diabetes, and cancers of the colon, bladder, and pancreas. Its heavy use during pregnancy increases the risk of birth defects and low-birth-weight infants. See Robert O'Brien and Sidney Cohen, "Caffeine," *Encyclopedia of Drug Abuse* (New York: Facts on File, 1984), pp. 50, 51; Marjorie V. Baldwin, "Caffeine on Trial," *Life and Health*, October 1973, pp. 10-13; E.D. Gorham, L.F. Garland, F.C. Garland, et al, "Coffee and Pancreatic Cancer in a Rural California County," *Western Journal of Medicine*, January 1988, pp. 48-53; B.K. Jacobson, and D.S. Thelle, "The Tromsso Heart Study: Is Coffee Drinking an Indicator of a Lifestyle With High Risk for Ischemic Heart Disease?" *Acta Medica Scandinavica* 222, No. 3 (1987), 215-221; J.D. Curb, D.M. Reed, J.A. Kautz, and K. Yano, "Coffee, Caffeine and Serum Cholesterol in Japanese Living in Hawaii," *American Journal of Epidemiology*, April 1986, pp. 648-655. High consumers of coffee are also "less active in religion" (B.S. Victor, M. Lubetsky, and J.F. Greden, "Somatic Manifestations of Caffeinism," *Journal of Clinical Psychiatry*, May 1981, p. 186). For the caffeine content of the various beverages, see "The Latest Caffeine Scoreboard," *FDA Consumer*, March 1984, pp. 14-16; Bosley, "Caffeine: Is It So Harmless?" *Ministry*, August 1986, p. 28; Winston J. Craig and Thuy T. Nguyen, "Caffeine and Theobromine Levels in Cocoa and Carob Products," *Journal of Food Science*, January-February, 1984, pp. 302-303, 305.
10. Regarding the circulatory system, tobacco increases the risk of heart attacks, high blood

pressure, and peripheral vascular disease such as Buerger's disease, which necessitates the amputation of fingers and toes. As to the respiratory system, tobacco brings an increase of deaths as a result of lung cancer, chronic bronchitis, and emphysema. It paralyzes the bronchial cilia that cleanse the lung and bronchi of impurities and is associated with cancer of the larynx, mouth esophagus, urinary bladder, kidney, and pancreas. It is also associated with an increase of duodenal ulcers and deaths from complications resulting from ulcers. See e.g., *Smoking and Health: A Report of the Surgeon General* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1979).

11. See e.g., Galen C. Bosley, "The Effects of Small Quantities of Alcohol," *Ministry*, May 1986, pp. 24-27. Among social drinkers alcohol causes shrinkage of the frontal lobes, the center of moral discernment (L.A. Cala, B. Jones, P. Burns, et al, "Results of Computerized Tomography, Psychometric Testing and Dietary Studies in Social Drinkers, With Emphasis on Reversibility After Abstinence," *Medical Journal of Australia*, Sept. 17, 1983, pp. 264-269). Cf. Bosley, "Why a Health Message," *Adventist Review*, July 30, 1987, p. 15. Psychological testing of social drinkers showed that their mental abilities and intellectual performance were significantly impaired (D.A. Parker, E.S. Parker, J.A. Brody, and R. Schoenberg, "Alcohol Use and Cognitive Loss Among Employed Men and Women," *American Journal of Public Health*, May 1983, pp. 521-526). As alcohol intake increases, church attendance decreases (A.M. Eward, R. Wolfe, P. Moll and E. Harburg, "Psychosocial and Behavioral Factors Differentiating Past and Lifelong Abstainers," *American Journal of Public Health*, January 1986, p. 69).

12. See Chapter 15, footnote 8 for a discussion of wine at the Lord's Supper.

13. In the Old Testament, the general term for wine is *yayin*. This term designates the juice of the grape in all its stages from unfermented to fermented, though it is frequently used for fully aged wine that contains alcohol. The usual word from unfermented wine is *tiros*. It is frequently translated as "new wine," which is freshly

pressed grape juice. Both terms are rendered *oinos* in the Septuagintal Greek translation of the Old Testament (LXX). *Oinos* is the term generally used for wine in the New Testament and refers to both fermented and unfermented wine, depending on the context. (For the Old Testament see Robert P. Teachout, "The Use of 'Wine' in the Old Testament," (Th.D. dissertation, 1979, available through University Microfilms International, Ann Arbor, MI); Lael O. Ceasar, "The Meaning of *Yayin*" (unpublished M.A. thesis, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI, 1986; William Patton, *Bible Wines* (Oklahoma City, OK: Sane Press, n.d.), pp. 54-64.

The expression "strong drink" (*shekar* in Hebrew) signifies a sweet drink, usually fermented, and generally made from sources other than grapes. It includes products like beer (from barley, millet, or wheat), and date or palm wine. The expression does not refer to distilled liquors because distillation was unknown to the Israelites (Patton, pp. 57, 58, 62).

Fermented wine. Scripture condemns alcoholic wine because it brings violence, misery, and destruction (Prov. 4:17; 23:29, 35). It causes religious leaders to be oppressive (Isa. 56:10-12) and was associated with the perversion of judgment of Israel's leaders (Isa. 28:7) and of King Belshazzar (Dan. 5:1-30).

Unfermented wine. The Bible speaks favorably of unfermented wine or juice and recommends it as a great blessing. It is to be presented as an offering to God (Num. 18:12, 13; Neh. 10:37-39; 13:12, 13). It is one of God's blessings (Gen. 27:28, NIV "new wine"; Deut. 7:13; 11:14; Prov. 9:2, 3). It also is a healthful drink (1 Tim. 5:23).

14. See e.g., Drug Enforcement Administration, *Drugs of Abuse*, 3rd ed. (Washington, D.C.: United States Department of Justice, n.d.); Dan Sperling, "Drug Roundup," *Adventist Review*, Apr. 9, 1987, pp. 12, 13.

15. SDA Church Manual, p. 147.

16. *Ibid.*

17. *Ibid.*, p. 148. For examples of the degradation in much modern music and entertainment, see Tipper Gore, *Raising PG Kids in an X-rated Society*, (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1987).

18. "Another form of amusement that has an evil influence is social dancing. 'The amusement of dancing, as conducted in the present day, is a school of depravity, a fearful curse to society.'—Messages to Young People, p. 399 (See also p. 192). (See 2 Cor. 6:15-18; 1 John 2:15-17; James 4:4; 2 Tim. 2:19-22; Eph. 5:8-11; Col. 3:5-10.)' In view of these influences to sin, Christians would do well not to "patronize the commercial amusements, joining with the worldly, careless, pleasure-loving multitudes who are lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God [2 Tim. 3:4]" (SDA Church Manual, p. 148).

19. *Ibid.*, pp. 146, 147.

20. On the adequacy of a vegetarian diet, see S. Havala, J. Dwyer, "The Position of American Dietetic Association: Vegetarian Diets—Technical Support Paper," *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*, March 1988, pp. 352-355; Terry D. Shultz, Winston J. Craig, et al "Vegetarianism and Health" in *Nutrition Update*, vol. 2, 1985, pp. 131-141; U.D. Register and L.M. Sonnenberg, "The Vegetarian Diet," *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*, March 1973, pp. 253-261.

21. See Committee on the Scientific Basis of the Nation's Meat and Poultry Inspection Program, *Meat and Poultry Inspection* (Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press, 1985), pp. 21-42; John A. Scharffenberg, *Problems With Meat* (Santa Barbara, CA: Woodbridge Press, 1979), pp. 32-35.

22. See, e.g., Committee on the Meat and Poultry Inspection, *Meat and Poultry Inspection*, pp. 68-123; Robert M. Andrews, "Meat Inspector: 'Eat at Own Risk,'" *Washington Post*, July 23, 1986. Cf. White, *Counsels on Diet and Foods* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1946), pp. 384, 385.

23. Frank Young, Commissioner of the Food and Drug Administration and Sanford Miller, Director of the FDA's Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition, as quoted by Carole Sugarman, "Raising Fears Over Food Safety," *Washington Post*, July 23, 1986. Cf. White, *Counsels on Diet and Foods* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1946), pp. 384, 385.

24. Scharffenberg, *Problems With Meat*, pp. 12-58.

25. See Shea, "Clean and Unclean Meats." (unpublished manuscript, Biblical Research Institute, General Conference of SDA).

26. Winston J. Craig, "Pork and Shellfish—How Safe Are They?" *Health and Healing* 12, No. 1 (1988): 10-12.

27. The New Testament concern for holiness is consistent with that of the Old Testament. There is a spiritual as well as a physical interest in people's well-being (Matt. 4:23; 1 Thess. 5:23; 1 Peter 1:15, 16).

Mark's statement that Jesus "declared all foods clean" (Mark 7:19, RSV) does not mean that He abolished the distinction between clean and unclean foods. The discussion between Jesus and the Pharisees and scribes had nothing to do with the kind of food, but with the manner in which the disciples ate. The issue was whether or not the ritual washing of hands before meals was necessary (Mark 7:2-5). In effect, Jesus said what defiles a person is not the food eaten with unwashed hands but the wicked things from the heart (Mark 7:20-23), because the food "'does not enter his heart but his stomach, and is eliminated.'" Thus Jesus declared that all foods eaten with unwashed hands are "clean" (Mark 7:19). The Greek word for food (*bromata*) used here is the general term for food that refers to all kinds of foods for human consumption; it does not designate just flesh foods.

Peter's vision of the animals, recorded in Acts 10, did not teach that unclean animals had become fit for food; instead, it taught that Gentiles were not unclean and that he could associate with them without being contaminated. Peter himself understood the vision in this way, explaining, "'You know how unlawful it is for a Jewish man to keep company with or go to one of another nation. But God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean'" (Acts 10:28).

In his letters to the Romans and Corinthians (Rom. 14; 1 Cor. 8:4-13; 10:25-28) Paul addressed the implications for Christians of the widespread practice in the Gentile world of offering flesh foods to idols. The issue among the early Christians was whether the eating of food offered to idols was an act of worship. Those strong in their faith did not believe it was, and thus they would eat all edible things offered to idols. Paul

urged that no one should despise those who eat vegetables, or judge those who “eat all things” suitable for food (Rom. 14:2).

Paul warned against future heresies that would forbid believers to partake of the two things God gave humanity at Creation—marriage and food. The foods involved are all foods God had created for human consumption. Paul’s words here should not be taken to mean that unclean foods were “created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth” (1 Tim. 4:3).

28. Pepper, spices, mustard, pickles, and similar substances hurt the stomach. At first they irritate the lining of the stomach. Then they break down its mucous barrier, destroying its resistance to injury. Irritation of the stomach affects the brain, which in turn influences the temperament, often producing irritability. Cf. M.A. Schneider et al., “The Effect of Spice Ingestion on the Stomach,” *American Journal of Gastroenterology* 26 (1956): 722, as quoted in “Physiological Effects of Spices and Condiments,” (Loma Linda, CA: Department of Nutrition, School of Health, Loma Linda University [mimeographed]). White, *Counsels on Diet and Foods*, pp. 339-345.

29. Condiments and spices can also produce inflammation of the esophagus and destroy the mucous barrier of the small intestine and colon. They irritate the kidneys and may contribute to

hypertension. Some contain carcinogens. See Kenneth I. Burke and Ann Burke, “How Nice Is Spice?” *Adventist Review*, Jan. 89, 1987, pp. 14-15; Department of Nutrition, “Spices and Condiments”; Marjorie V. Baldwin and Bernell E. Baldwin, “Spices—Recipe for Trouble,” *Wildwood Echoes*, Winter 1978-79, pp. 8-11.

30. William G. Johnsson, “On Behalf of Simplicity,” *Adventist Review*, March 20, 1986, p. 4.

31. *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, p. 417.

32. See Year-End Meeting Actions of the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists (1986), pp. 23-25.

33. The use of cosmetics is not totally harmless. Some of the chemicals used in their preparation can enter the blood circulation through absorption by the skin and, depending on the chemical and the sensitivity of the person, may injure the health. See N. Shafer, R.W. Shafer, “Potential Carcinogenic Effect of Hair Dyes,” *New York State Journal of Medicine*, March 1976, pp. 394-396; Samuel J. Taub, “Cosmetic Allergies: What Goes on Under Your Makeup,” *Eye, Ears, Nose, and Throat*, April 1976, pp. 131, 132; S.J. Taub, “Contaminated Cosmetics and Cause of Eye Infections,” *Eye, Ears, Nose, and Throat*, Feb. 1975, pp. 81, 82; Cf. White, “Words to Christian Mothers,” *Review and Herald*, Oct. 17, 1871.

34. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 668.