



**Saint John United Methodist Church**  
**12700 W. Hwy. 42, Prospect, KY 40059**  
**stjohnky.com**  
**Message for January 8, 2023**

**“Health Assessment: Body”**  
**Speaker: Pastor Tom Grieb**  
**Scripture: Proverbs 25:16, I Corinthians 6:19-20, I Timothy 4:8**

## **Day 8**

Today is Day 8. Some of you will remember that last Sunday, I asked you to read a chapter of Proverbs each day during the month of January. Coincidentally, there are 31 days in January and 31 chapters in Proverbs. Some people make a practice of reading a chapter of Proverbs every day of the year. That's not a bad practice.

I am asking you to read through Proverbs because our sermon series here in the new year will be based on Proverbs. Proverbs is a wonderful book. It is at once both challenging and inspiring. It is written primarily to offer instruction. It offers great truth about human behavior. In the end, it always points us toward God and his wisdom for our lives.

For the next seven weeks, we will hear from Proverbs and what it says about health. All through we will be assessing our health.

We will be doing a health assessment, if you will, from God's point of view. We will be looking at health as God sees it—on many different fronts. Today we consider physical health.

### **If You Have Your Health**

My friend, Rec Slaton, was a retired County Judge Executive who was a member of my first church in Madisonville, KY. I always enjoyed visiting with Mr. Slaton. He had a warm and winsome way about him. When I was with him he always offered a nugget or two of wisdom, all borne out of experience.

I will never forget him saying one day, *“If you have your health, you have just about everything.”*

This was a man who had all the money he would ever need, yet with his health failing, he knew what really mattered. *“If you've got your health, you have just about everything.”*

### **Health Conscious, But Not Very Healthy**

Let's face it, we live in a very health-conscious culture. A lot of time and attention is spent on staying healthy. There is no end to the number of supplements, pills, diet plans, and exercise programs designed to whip us into shape. A quick stroll through the local bookstore or a fleeting glance at the internet will all but confirm that.

A friend of mine, who has been battling Type 2 diabetes, told me the other day that he went off his diabetes medicine. Upon telling me that he said, *“You know a lot can be overcome with diet and exercise.”* He had not been too attentive to either one until now. He is a little more conscious about such things.

It is certainly possible to be conscious of our health and not be that healthy. The fact that the average American consumes almost 100 pounds of refined sugar a year all but seals it. I shudder to think how much I consume. I think I did that during the Christmas season alone.

As a society, we spend billions on supplements and vitamins, yet 60% of us are overweight and 30% obese. Nearly 17% of our young people are obese. And, like my friend, diabetes runs rampant.

## **Resolutions Made and Broken**

Here in the New Year all of us are concerned in some form or fashion with a new “me.” Resolutions have been made and just now, eight days into the New Year, those same resolutions are not being kept. Who of us hasn’t resolved to eat better, exercise more, and generally take better care of ourselves.

You probably don’t know, but we have a group of guys who meet in the back parking lot each morning at 5:30 a.m. to exercise. They really go to it. They even haul around cinder blocks with chains attached. You can find those behind the fence where the dumpsters are. Of course, you welcome to join them.

I will often grab a sandwich at the Subway next to the Burn Boot Camp. Those folk really go to it as well. For me, I am content to run up the hill near our house every morning. It is a long hill after all.

## **Diet**

When it comes to health the Book of Proverbs has a lot to say about such things. Regarding proper diet, Proverbs 25:16 says, “*If you find honey, eat just enough—too much of it, and you will make yourself sick.*” (Proverbs 25:16) And again, in Proverbs 25:27 we are reminded that “*it is not good to eat too much honey.*” Moderation is encouraged, particularly when it comes to those 100 pounds of refined sugar, we mentioned a bit earlier.

Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14 are primarily given over to a set of dietary laws. Those laws not only set the children of Israel apart, they offered guidance regarding health and hygiene. We’d do well to remember that during the day when those laws were written there was no such thing as a side-by-side refrigerator.

Not only does the Book of Proverbs talk about a proper diet it also speaks to the right use of alcohol. In Proverbs 20:1 we find this, “*Wine is a mocker and beer is a brawler; whoever is led astray by them is not wise.*” (Proverbs 20:1)

I have come to realize that alcohol, if given sway, has the potential to absolutely destroy one’s life. I stay away from it tee-totally. I refrain from drinking so not to muddle or confuse my witness, particularly with young people. Moreover, I’m quite afraid of its seduction, particularly given the alcoholism that runs in my own family. I am careful not to be “*led astray,*” as the scripture says.

## **Exercise**

When it comes to exercise, I’ve always taken into consideration the instruction Paul gave to his young protégé, Timothy. His wisdom speaks to this day, and we’d do well to heed it. Paul helps put things in right perspective when it comes to exercise, and our health overall.

Regarding physical training, Paul writes, “*For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come.*” (1 Timothy 4:8)

Paul asserts that exercise is of “*value*,” but not nearly as important as tending to our spiritual lives.

Physical exercise does have its benefits, which pay great dividends in this life. We were not created to sit on the couch and watch TV while eating bonbons. God didn’t create us to be sedentary.

Jesus himself was a carpenter and that was during a time when there weren’t any power tools. Christ’s disciples were, for the most part, fishermen. They were robust men who were used to a day of hard work. Upon deciding to follow Christ, those same disciples also made the decision to walk with him hundreds of miles.

As I mentioned earlier, I try to run a bit every day. While I stay at it in a somewhat disciplined way, I intentionally don’t try to overdo it. Running, for me, has always been a matter of recreation, which is another way of saying that it’s a matter of re-creation.

It provides a great opportunity for contemplation and prayer. I do some of some of my most creative thinking when I run. Running is great release. It’s a lot of fun. And allows me to eat without packing on a lot of pounds.

I realize though that when it comes to exercise there are other things that are more important.

“*Godliness*,” Paul says, “*has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life, and the life to come.*”

When it comes down to it though, what little bit of running I do essentially is a means to an end. Running helps me stay healthy, and when I’m healthy I am better able to serve.

What are those things you can do to become healthier which, in turn, will help you be better able to serve?

## **Body and Soul**

Evelyn Laycock asserts that “*We are spiritual beings in a physical body.*” Because of that we’d do well not only to be concerned about our physical health, but our spiritual health as well.

The Jews have always understood a person to be an organic whole. They take a wholistic view when it comes to personhood. For the Jews, body and soul are indivisible partners.

We hear a lot these days about health and wholeness. We will be hearing a lot about that during this sermon series. Health only comes when we tend to the whole of who we are—body, mind, AND spirit.

We are an integrated whole. Physical health, emotional health, and spiritual health are intrinsically tied together. One effects the other.

## **The Temple of the Holy Spirit**

In I Corinthians 6:19-20, Paul writes, “*Your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, who you have received from God. You are not your own, you were bought at a price. Therefore, honor God with your body.*” (I Corinthians 6:19-20)

The context of that scripture is a discussion about sexual immorality. The scripture is clear we are to flee from it.

Paul puts it that our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, and we should do all in our power to make sure we are good stewards of them. To desecrate our bodies in any way is an affront to the Spirit that lives within us. In all we do, we are to “*honor*” God.

So many figure that “*it’s my body I can treat it any way I like.*” Not so for those who consider they are a product of the Master Designer, the creator of all.

Psalm 139:14 reminds us that, “*We are wonderfully and beautifully made.*” (Psalm 139:14) We believe that God created us and, as the adage goes, “*God doesn’t make any junk.*”

When it comes to maintaining a healthy lifestyle, we are called to be good stewards of that which God has first given, our bodies included.

### **Tending to the Temple**

Every week persons come into this Sanctuary and make sure it is in good order for the next time we gather for worship. It is an “*honor*” to tend to the temple.

What’s the current state of your temple, and how are you tending to it?

And by that, I am talking about the “*temple of the Holy Spirit,*” that is your body.

- What do you need to do to become healthier?
- What changes do you need to make when it comes to your health?

We’d all do well to consider such things, particularly here in the New Year.

Our health insurance offers a wellness survey called “*Blueprint for Wellness.*” Every year we are asked to take a 360-degree survey of our health. I find it to be quite helpful. We can also earn points for any activities we do. Those points translate into money. I call it “*a very small carrot on a very long stick.*” All of that provides a bit of motivation though.

Some of those points are tied to things that don’t have anything to do with physical exercise.

- Proper rest is emphasized.
- So is a proper diet.
- Building strong relationships is consistent theme.
- Living a balanced life is as well.
- We are even encouraged to serve.

Points aside, and the little bit of money at the end, the best motivator when it comes to health is what goes on inside. When the heart is into it, we are more apt to make progress.

When we make up our minds, get disciplined, and develop new habits, before we know it, we find ourselves embarking upon a whole new way of life.