

A PRESCRIPTION FOR OPTIMUM HEALTH

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Theme: This seminar presents the eight laws of health and suggests how families can be more in harmony with them.

Setting: The program is designed to be used in a variety of ways. The material is suitable for family camp, for a Sabbath afternoon presentation, a Family Enrichment Seminar, or other uses.

Format: The following material is presented as a fairly complete outline from which leaders may select material or add their own additional material and illustrations.

Handouts: There are a number of [handouts](#) as follows: Useful Emergency Items Found in the Home, and Supplies to Have at Hand for an Emergency. They can be duplicated and distributed to the participants for take home use. During the program the Family Health Questionnaire and the quiz on Immediate First Aid can be used to generate interest in the afternoon topic. Answers to these surveys are enclosed for the benefit of the leader.

Introduction

The *British Medical Journal* once reported an unusual case of the rare and bizarre *de Clerambault's syndrome* in which a 36-year-old unmarried woman clerk had a very strong delusion that her director was in love with her. She personally had never spoken to her boss, a married man, but had written fourteen love letters.

When further examined, it was found that this lady had been suffering from Grave's Disease for the past five years (Grave's Disease is a disease in which there is excessive production of the thyroid hormone). It was the untreated hyperthyroidism that caused her imbalanced hormonal state, creating a systematized delusion that her director was in love with her.

De Clerambault's syndrome is a condition in which a patient has the delusion of being loved by someone, usually of higher status. It is certainly a unique example of the risk a patient has to face if he/she chooses not to comply with the prescription given by the doctor.

God has also given us the divine prescription for optimum health. Are we showing the same noncompliance with God's divine prescription as this lady showed in not being treated for the so-called *de Clerambault Syndrome*?

God's Plan for Holistic Health

When God created Adam and Eve, their health was in a perfect state.

As Adam came forth from the hands of his Creator, . . . He was more than twice as tall as men now living upon the earth . . . he was of noble height, and of beautiful symmetry . . . and well proportion. Eve was not quite as tall as Adam. Her head reached a little above his shoulder . . . She too was noble, perfect in symmetry and very beautiful (*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 3, p. 43).

Adam's vital force was twenty times as much as the vital force of what a man has now. In *Testimonies*, vol. 3, pp. 138, 139, it is stated, "If Adam at his creation, had not been endowed with twenty times as much vital force as men now have, the race with their present habits of living in violation of natural law, would have become extinct."

God really longs for each one of us to return to the perfect health He had given to Adam and Eve back in Eden before the fall. The prescription for optimum health for us is found in *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 78, "Pure air, sunlight, abstemiousness, rest, exercise, proper diet, the use of water, trust in divine power—these are the true remedies." To simplify remembering these eight natural remedies of the optimum health prescription, use the acronym, NEWSTART, which was developed at Weimar Institute.

N- Nutrition
E- Exercise
W- Water
S- Sunshine
T- Temperance
A- Air
R- Rest
T- Trust in God

This is not a list of things from which we can choose, but a total packaged prescription. We need to comply with all the eight remedies prescribed in order to acquire total health.

Nutrition

The first item of the packaged prescription for optimum health is nutrition. We all realize when God created Adam and Eve, He gave the exact instruction of what they were to eat. Genesis 1:29 says, "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."

Adam's diet of fruits, nuts, and grains was modified to include the whole plant after he was exiled from the Garden of Eden. "It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field" (Genesis 3:18).

However, a millennium later in Noah's time following the flood, a total destruction of all the vegetation, led God to permit the use of animals for food. God said, "Everything that lives and moves will be food for you. Just as I gave you the green plants, I now give you everything" (Genesis 9:3).

This specific permission has three accompanying qualifications that are often overlooked.

- The flesh was to be drained of blood (Genesis 9:4).
- Only "clean" animals were to be used as food (Genesis 7:2, Leviticus 11:1-28).
- No unnecessary killing of animals was to be done (Genesis 9:5).

The human body was created in such a way, with its specific body organs and functions, that any deviation from the laws of nature will have a disastrous effect on it.

Scientists long ago discovered the difference between herbivores (plant-eating animals) and

carnivores (meat-eating animals). For example the:

Mouth. The human mouth has a small opening, whereas carnivorous animals such as the dog have a larger mouth opening which allows them to eat chunks of meat.

Dental structure. Humans have sharp cutting incisors with flat or nodular surfaced molars used for crushing and grinding foods just like the herbivorous animals. On the other hand, the carnivores have elongated, strong, and sharp canines for grasping and tearing flesh. The molars have sharp lateral edges in approximating jaws that are used for slicing flesh.

Motion of the jaw. Carnivores' jaw motion is singular—open and shut only. On the other hand, herbivorous animals have three distinct jaw motions—vertical, or up and down, lateral, or side ways, and forward or backward, just like a human.

Intestines. Carnivores have a simple stomach, relatively short small intestines, and a large intestine that is very short, straight, and smooth. On the other hand herbivores have a larger stomach capacity with the parts sometimes complicated, such as the multiple stomachs of cattle. The small intestine is very long and the large intestine is long and smooth. The human intestine has no carnivores features.

Perspiring route. Herbivores perspire through the skin just like the human beings, while the carnivorous animals perspire through the mouth.

Blood. The blood of herbivores and humans shows a lower alpha and beta lipo protein ratio. In the blood of carnivores, the ratio is higher.

Saliva. Human saliva contains the enzyme ptyalin, as does that of the herbivores, which is used for the digestion of starch. The saliva of carnivores cannot digest starch.

Drinking. Humans drink water by suction as do other herbivores, while all carnivorous animals lap the water with their tongues.

Bile salt. Human bile salt is like that of the herbivores and unlike that of the carnivores.

Since humans were designed not to eat meat, no wonder there are many diseases that resulted from meat eating.

The testimony of health experts. I once attended Dr. Nathan Pritikin's seminar in California, and I was very surprised to hear him saying from the platform: "If you only follow the instruction in this book, Counsels on Diet and Foods, written by Ellen G. White, you will indeed be healthy." I almost couldn't believe what I had heard with my own ears! Here is a non-Adventist lecturer, who has written many books, promoting Mrs. White's book to a group of about 2000 people attending his seminar. How grateful we are that Mrs. White warned us 130 years ago as to the types of food that are injurious to our bodies. Medical science is now discovering more and more of the truth of her advice.

Rita Butram, Ph.D., Chief of the Diet and Cancer Branch at the National Cancer Institute (NCI), USA, said that 35-49% of all cancer deaths are diet related. She further said that the NCI has set the year 2000 for achieving the goal of reducing cancer deaths by 50 percent. According to Dr.

Butram, this goal is feasible if people follow the NCI recommendation to:

- Reduce fat intake to 30% of total calories
- Increase dietary fiber to 20-30 gm daily, with an upper limit of 35 gm
- Maintain optimum body weight
- Consume more fruits and vegetables.

It sounds very much like Mrs. White's advice. Dr. Butram continued by saying that 150,000 lives could be saved annually by following the National Cancer Institute recommendations.

- Colon cancer could be cut by 50%
- Breast cancer decreased by 25%
- Prostate, endometrial, and gall bladder cancer decreased by 15%

Noncompliance with this first natural remedy prescription certainly brings risks to our lives.

Exercise

The second item of the packaged prescription for optimum health is exercise. You have heard time and again about the importance of exercise. There are many advantages of regular exercise. If we try to gather all the benefits of exercise we would come up with a list of 30 advantages to exercise, which include:

- A healthy and efficient heart.
- Healthy circulation.
- Normalizing of the blood pressure —high blood pressure will be reduced and low blood pressure could be raised.
- Healthy bones.
- Improved immunity by increasing the circulating white blood cells (WBC), primarily the lymphocytes and polymorphonuclear (PMN), stimulating the beta endorphin production from the brain, which increases the natural killer (NK) cell activity against tumor cells. One pico gram (one trillionth of a gram) of beta endorphin increases the NK cell activity against tumor cells by 42 percent.
- More efficient lungs because exercise stimulates deep breathing.
- Decrease in negative emotions, so you feel more comfortable with yourself, due to less anger and frustration.
- Aids digestion and promotes intestinal activities, decreasing gas and constipation.
- Strengthens the muscles, bones, and connective tissues.
- Sharpens the intellect of the brain making it function better. Students will find that they will be more efficient in their studies and will be able to learn material much faster.
- Healthier skin and complexion.
- Increases energy level because exercise produces more energy than the amount utilized so you do not get tired as easily and will feel much better.
- Decreases the aging process.
- Helps you to sleep better at night.

The question that comes into mind is, "What type of exercise is considered to *be healthy*?"

Aerobic exercise

While there are various types of exercise from which the body can benefit, the type emphasized here will be the aerobic exercise because it has the *aerobic benefit*. It is the type of exercise that improves the performance of the cardiovascular system's ability and efficiency in the transport of oxygen to the cells of the body. The benefit is seen in longevity and good health.

We need to do aerobic exercises 3-5 times per week, not too much and not too little. One schedule could be:

- Five minutes of warming up, performing your chosen exercise at a low intensity for the first few minutes so that your pulse rate can be slowly elevated to the aerobic benefit level; then followed by easy stretching exercises that will help maintain joint flexibility and prevent muscle soreness.
- Continue with 30 minutes of brisk walking to increase your pulse to the training heart rate.
- End with 5 minutes of cooling-down exercises to decrease pulse rate slowly and safely.

If after the 30 minutes of brisk walking, your pulse is between 120 to 150 per minute, it is sufficient to give you the "aerobic" benefit. You will have improved cardiovascular efficiency in the transport of oxygen to the cells of the body. That means you will feel good.

Walking

Mrs. White had advice for us 130 years ago she wrote, "There is no exercise that can take the place of walking. By it circulation of the blood is improved" (*Counsels on Health*, p. 200). Brisk walking can be done any time and any place. It is inexpensive, requires no special equipment, and has minimal injuries. It calls into action most of the muscles and systems of the body. It is relaxing, and analysis shows that humans are designed to walk.

Some people take this exercise prescription to the extreme and jog for two hours or even more. Dr. Lynn Fitzgerald, an immunologist at London's St George Hospital who is also the world's 200 km woman champion, tested the blood of runners after a 100 km race and discovered their level of antibodies was low. Substantially lower than before the race. It appears that the T cells (antibodies) are suppressed by high adrenaline and corticosteroid (stress hormone) levels, produced by excessive training. Therefore, it is important to be temperate, even in the matter of exercising. While moderate exercise boosts the immune system, too much exercise is detrimental to the body.

Water

The third item of the packaged prescription for optimum health is water. We are advised to drink six to eight glasses of water a day as our body cannot be cleansed with only one or two. The cells in our blood need to take a bath with water and not with soft drinks or juices. A very practical guide to water drinking is to consume enough through out the day so that the urine passed is clear or a very faint yellow color.

I remember when a colleague of mine left his six-year-old daughter at home with a babysitter. Having learned that water is good for the body, the baby sitter asked the child to drink 10 glasses of water that day. When my colleague returned home he noticed his daughter was confused and lethargic. She was brought to the hospital immediately, only to discover she was suffering from dilutional hyponatremia (a decrease of serum sodium concentration due to water intake in excess of output). So again the principle of temperance is needed, even in the matter of drinking water.

Hydrotherapy

We also know the importance of the external use of water as you give hydrotherapy to the needed areas of the body. It is better than taking medicines that have so many side effects. A friend of mine shared this experience with me. Her father injured his elbow during a badminton game. She immediately told her father to compress the hematoma (black and blue) elbow with ice, but unfortunately he would not listen to her. The next day the black and blue area around the elbow grew so much larger that he felt scared and went to see a doctor. The doctor asked: "What happened?" "I played badminton last night and got knocked down, but the black and blue seems to be much larger this morning. I am so afraid!" The doctor's advice was to go home and use ice compress, and he charged US\$100 for the consultation fee!

Mrs. White long ago explained the importance of using hydrotherapy in her book, *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 156.

The external application of water is one of the easiest and most satisfactory ways of regulating the circulation of the blood. . . . But many have never learned by experience the beneficial effects of the proper use of water. . . . All should become intelligent in its use in simple home treatments.

If only my friend's father has believed in his daughter's suggestion based on Mrs. White's teaching, he would not have spent \$100 unnecessarily.

Sunshine

The fourth item of the packaged prescription for optimum health is sunshine. Some of the advantages of sunshine are:

- lower blood cholesterol
- lower blood sugar
- increase in aerobic fitness
- building and repairing bones
- increase of white blood cells, which are used to fight disease
- a decrease of the melatonin level, a bodily chemical that is prevalent in people experiencing depression
- it serves as a disinfectant.

A scientist once did an experiment using a petri dish with bacteria growth on it. One half of the dish was covered and the other half was exposed to direct sunlight. The covered part of the dish was swarming with bacteria, but nothing grew on the half exposed to sunlight. All the bacteria had been killed.

This experiment has tremendous implications for every home. It is a healthful practice to open wide our curtains and windows to allow the sunlight to enter our rooms. Over a period of time, this sunlight will destroy the bacteria lurking in the dust on the window sill and floor. Mrs. White said in *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 179:

In the building of houses, it is especially important to secure thorough ventilation and plenty of sunlight. Let there be a current of air and an abundance of light in every room in the house. . . . No room is fit to be occupied as a sleeping room unless it can be thrown open daily to the air and sunshine.

However, a word of caution is needed. Sunlight can also be harmful. Prolonged exposure:

- causes skin to burn
- increases the risk of skin cancer
- speeds up the aging process
- can damage the eyes
- can cause cataracts.

So again, the principal of temperance is applicable here.

Temperance

The fifth item of the packaged prescription for optimum health is temperance. This is a very important natural remedy in the prescription. "True temperance teaches us to dispense entirely with everything hurtful and to use judiciously that which is healthful" (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 562).

Many people think temperance only applies to avoiding the use of tobacco, tea, coffee, alcohol and drugs. But the avoidance of harmful chemicals is only part of temperance. True temperance involves moderation in every aspect of life. We are advised to use judiciously even the good things.

I remember studies done in Egypt that showed that lack of iron causes anemia, which affects the learning and problem-solving capacity of school-age children. However, those anemic children

who scored less than the non-anemic, improved on treatment which involved taking iron tablets.

However, study done in the Solomon Islands and Taiwan shows that excessive use of iron will result in hemochromatosis, a disease in which the liver has high iron storage. This is related to a risk of acquiring hepatoma, a liver cancer. Therefore, even a good mineral—if not taken temperately—can be detrimental to the body. Temperance truly involves moderation in every aspect of life, which includes eating, drinking, sleeping, exercising, seeing, working, earning money, etc.

Air

The sixth item of the packaged prescription for optimum health is air. People cannot live without oxygen even for a few minutes. Oxygen, taken from the air as we breathe, is needed by each cell to perform its functions.

I remember the shocking news that I heard while vacationing in Indonesia. My brother-in-law's acquaintance was robbed and since his wife was the only person at home, she could only scream. The robbers panicked and, seeing a bucket of water, quickly plunged her head in that bucket for more than five minutes causing her death. Such a sweet lady, dead because of no oxygen supply. People cannot live longer than a few minutes without air.

Pure, clean, fresh air is the ideal quality of air one should seek to breathe. However, it is unfortunate that our air is polluted by the vast numbers of automobiles, trucks, airplanes, internal combustion engines, heavy industries, soft cheap coal, or sulfur fuel power plants.

Where can we find quality air? The most healthful air comes from locations by the trees or green plants or by the ocean. Formerly it was thought that good air is merely clean, diluted oxygen. Now it is becoming more and more obvious that fresh air must contain electrified oxygen produced by trees or vegetation floating in the ocean. It is estimated that the algae in the ocean provide almost 90 percent of the oxygen in our atmosphere, with the rest coming from plants on land.

We feel exhilarated when coming near a waterfall or by the ocean. In the mountains, where an abundance of negatively ionized air is present, resorts and vacation areas flourish. Therefore, efforts need to be made to breathe the natural electrified air, for example do our morning exercise in the outdoors, thus imparting a vitality to the blood and the nervous system.

However, a word of caution is needed. While we realize breathing is very important to our bodies, on the other hand, hyperventilation (excessive breathing) will cause reduction in the blood's carbon dioxide. The severe alkalosis produced (blood become alkaline) will consequently produce dizziness, tetany with carpopedal spasm (contractions of distal muscles, particularly in the hand). Again, the temperance principle is applicable, even in breathing fresh air.

Rest

The seventh item of the packaged prescription for optimum health is rest. In one day a human heart beats 100,000 times, pushing blood through 17 million miles of arteries, veins and capillaries. We speak about 4,000 words, breathe 20,000 times, move major muscles 750 times, and operate 14 billion brain cells. No wonder rest is a very important element in acquiring optimum health.

The need for sleep is highly personal, and it is not known why. It does not match one's sex, intelligence, or the amount of exercise one gets. But it is evident everyone needs some sleep. A newborn baby sleeps an "average" 20 hours a day; a 6-year-old, 10 hours; a 12-year-old, 9 hours; an adult, 7 hours, and 20 minutes. But there are wide variations around these figures.

Sleep experts have devised this rule of thumb: Your sleep need is being met if you are not sleepy during the day and are fully alert with a sense of well-being.

Many hormones are being produced when we are sleeping including:

- *Growth hormones*. Important for growth, enables nerve cells to make learning permanent and useful. Growth hormones are most produced during deep, peaceful pre-midnight sleep.
- *Cortisol hormones*. Plays a large role in helping us deal with the stressors of each day; reduces inflammation and fatigue. Peak production time is from midnight to early morning.

Thus when we go to bed late, we hurt ourselves by limiting the body's ability to repair the wear and tear of today and lessen the energy and vitality of tomorrow.

Sleep is certainly an important aspect of rest. It is a great restorer. It restores the cells of your muscles, including your heart, your kidneys, bone marrow, stomach, and brain. If you sprain an ankle, cut yourself, or break a bone, it will heal faster when you get extra sleep. Sleep prepares you for greater speed, accuracy, and efficiency, both physically and mentally. It sweeps away fatigue and is one of nature's most effective brain fresheners. As a person sleeps, the skin cells divide and make new cells twice as fast as when a person is awake. That's the reason sleep is one of the important factors in helping people look young. However, too much sleep is detrimental to our bodies.

An article in the American *Journal of Public Health* reported a study involving 1,064,004 men and women. This study compared deaths with the number of hours slept each night. The lowest death rate was in those men averaging around seven hours of sleep per night. However, those that skimped on their sleep or spent too much time in bed, died at a younger age than those who got the proper amount of sleep on a regular basis. So again, the temperance principle is applicable in sleeping as well. Six to seven hours of uninterrupted sleep prolongs life, but too little or too much sleep shortens life.

Trust in God

The eighth item of the packaged prescription for optimum health is trust in the Lord. This is an important "natural remedy" prescription. People face many difficulties, problems, and pain—emotional and physical. The success of people depends on how they handle the pain and difficulty.

Commonly used methods of handling pain and problems that yield poor results are:

- "head in the sand" — pretending it isn't there
- bitter resistance, anger, resentment
- avoidance techniques: seeking comfort in drugs, alcohol, fiction, flight, and food.

A more productive way of handling pain and problems that yields excellent results is to accept the fact that pain and problems are normal and common to the entire human race. Accepting that fact, one can then take responsibility for wise, reasonable, and workable solutions.

Once we are mature enough and responsible enough to accept the fact that problems and pain are normal in this world, life is no longer difficult. However, if refusal to accept life's pain continues long enough, emotional illness can be expected—often followed by physical illness. The problem faced will not be an *eustress* (normal stress) but a *distress*, causing human beings to suffer from various psychosomatic diseases all the way to psychiatric disorders.

Hence, it is important for us to know how to handle the problems we face without experiencing too much stress. Being cheerful and happy doesn't mean people don't have pain and problems. It means they realize that pain and the problems that pain brings are necessary for mental and spiritual growth. Far from grumbling about these painful situations and events, we ought to be

thankful for them.

Even the righteous have troubles. However, when they recognize their plight and deep need for divine help, they pray and God comes to their aid. This dependency on God encourages their growth as well as happiness and joy. Furthermore, every time you responsibly work out correct solutions to the problems faced, you are enhancing your mental health and strength. "Blessed is the man whom God corrects; so do not despise the discipline of the Almighty" (Job 5:17).

One of the reasons it is good to remind us to accept life's pain and problems graciously is based on the text in Romans 8:28, "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him." God loves us and values us immensely. Therefore, it is for our benefit that we trust the Lord as we deal responsibly with pain and problems. Isaiah 26:4, "Trust in the Lord forever, for the Lord, the Lord, is the Rock eternal."

For if we fully trust in Him, the results will be as stated in Isaiah 26:3: "You will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in you."

Yes, if we trust in God, we will experience a perfect peace. The *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, p. 203, states that:

"Trouble and turmoil may surround us, yet we enjoy a calmness and peace of mind of which the world knows nothing. This inward peace is reflected in a . . . vigorous, glowing experience that stimulates all with whom we come in contact. The peace of the Christian depends not upon peaceful conditions in the world about him but upon the indwelling of the Spirit of God."

Yes, trusting God means experiencing a peace of mind of which the world knows nothing. I recall some poetic lines that have been penned about trust that I would like to share with you:

Trust in yourself, and you are doomed to disappointment;

Trust in your friends, and they will die and leave you;

Trust in money, and you may have it taken from you;

Trust in reputation, and some slanderous tongue may blast it;

BUT — TRUST IN GOD, and you are never to be confounded in time or eternity.

Conclusion

As we take all of these eight natural remedies prescribed to make one complete package, through the strength of God, we will not only make our bodies healthier, which will prolong our lives, but our nerves will be greatly strengthened too. "Firm quiet nerves and a healthy circulation help man to follow right principles and to listen to the promptings of conscience" (*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 298).

It is only when we have healthy nerves that God can communicate with us freely, making it possible for us to develop the Christlike character that makes us fit for heaven. May we continue to receive His strength to comply with the divine packaged prescription. Thus we can obtain and enjoy optimum health, the favorable environment for developing a Christlike character that will make us fit for eternal life.

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