

Who is a Healthy Christian?

Grace be to you and mercy be yours from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Our last question in this summer sermon series of Life's questions is "What is a Healthy Christian?" That's the question that was given for a sermon. I've renamed it to "Who is a Healthy Christian" because the "what" tells us the description of a healthy Christian and the "who" tells us the application of the description.

So, "what is a healthy Christian?" We certainly have signs that tell us that we are physically healthy or not. Let's do a quick check-up:

Are you breathing?

Is your heart pumping?

Are you eating and keeping your food down?

Do you have 20/20 vision?

Can you hear and distinguish what sounds you hear?

Do you sleep through the night?

Do you have any aches or pains?

This simple check-up may indicate that you are healthy or fairly healthy or your health is poor. However, to get a clearer picture of your health, tests would need to be run and a doctor would need to analyze the results to tell you whether or not you are physically healthy.

There are also tests to see if you are mentally healthy or emotionally healthy.

What kind of tests or checkups are there for seeing if you are a healthy Christian? We spend a lot of time and money on checking on our physical well-being, but how much time and money do we spend on our spiritual health? Let's check.

Do worship God every Sunday?

Do you read God's Word every day?

Are you in a Bible Study with a fellow group of believers?

Do you pray before and/or after meals – when you get up or before you go to bed?

Do you pray for others or only for your needs?

**Are you serving God with your spiritual gifts? **

Do you know what your spiritual gifts are?

Do you love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength?

Do you love your neighbor as you love yourself?

Are you going out into the world (home, neighborhood, work-place, city, state, etc) to make disciples for Jesus?

Are you denying your self and taking up the cross of Christ and following Him?

Do you put on the armor of God every day as you go forth to serve the Lord with gladness?

How's the checkup? There are tests to determine your spiritual health and the Great Divine Physician can give you a true picture of your spiritual health.

As the divine Physician looks at your heart, what does He see and hear?

Scripture says that ¹⁸*“But the things that come out of the mouth come from the heart, and these make a man 'unclean.’* ¹⁹*For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander”* (Matthew 15:18-19).

In Proverbs 24:2 we read, *“their hearts plot violence, and their lips talk about making trouble.”*

***The Lord says: “These people come near to me with their mouth and honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. Their worship of me is made up only of rules taught by men”* (Isaiah 29:13).**

We have a huge focus on our body shape. Millions if not billions of dollars are spent to get in shape, get fit. Fitness centers are all over the place. Diets, diets, diets, and more diets are being offered to become healthy. People are walking, jogging, running, lifting, stretching, pushing, pulling, and straining to get the body in shape.

What are we doing to get our spiritual body into shape? Again, let's see what Scripture tells us about spiritual body-building!

St. Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 12, ¹²*“The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. ¹³For we were all baptized by^[c] one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.*

¹⁴Now the body is not made up of one part but of many. ¹⁵If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. ¹⁶And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. ¹⁷If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? ¹⁸But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. ¹⁹If they were all one part, where would the body be? ²⁰As it is, there are many parts, but one body. ²¹The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!" ²²On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, ²³and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, ²⁴while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has combined the members of the body and has given greater honor to the parts that lacked it, ²⁵so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. ²⁶If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. ²⁷Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it" (12-27).

¹¹"It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, ¹²to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up ¹³until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. ¹⁴Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. ¹⁵Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. ¹⁶From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work" (Ephesians 4:11-16).

And later in the same chapter we read, ²⁹"Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. ³⁰And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. ³¹Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. ³²Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you."

Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 13, Colossians 3, Philippians 2 and 4 a description of what is a healthy Christian.

Now the question comes, “Who is a Healthy Christian?” How do you compare to what we have read so far? I fail the test and the description. I am spiritually unhealthy and I need more of a workout program. How about you?

Like anything else, especially with getting our bodies healthy, it takes work, perseverance, and commitment. There are costs involved.

To become a healthy Christian, means that we need to commit to reading and studying God’s Word daily and weekly. We need to be eating the right spiritual food – the Bread and Water of Life that comes only from Jesus Christ. It is feasting on His body and blood at the banquet celebrating forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation. It is daily prayer that keeps the lines of communication flowing. Coming into the presence of almighty God in worship on a weekly basis and daily honoring Him in our daily tasks.

No pain, no gain is a mantra we’ve heard. We expect that when we are doing God’s will that we face suffering and persecution. But God’s Word reminds us to put the whole armor of God on to face the suffering and the persecution.

St. Paul writes, in his first letter to Timothy, to *“fight the good fight, ¹⁹holding on to faith and a good conscience. Some have rejected these and so have shipwrecked their faith”* (1 Timothy 1:18b – 19).

And again in chapter 6 he tells Timothy, *“⁶But godliness with contentment is great gain. ⁷For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. ⁸But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. ⁹People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. ¹⁰For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. ¹¹But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness. ¹²Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses”* (1 Timothy 6:6-12).

In order to be a healthy Christian, one needs to be in worship, in the Word, in prayer, living in love, and serving God and others so that God is glorified and we grow up into the maturity of our Lord Jesus Christ. God help us! Amen.