

Prevention or Healing?



Who does the science of preventive medicine stem from?
Who has helped to save the lives of millions?

Dear Andrew, *

Today we want to turn our attention to the interesting topic of Bible and health.

Preventive Medicine

“The science of preventive medicine stems from Moses, the genius, who more than 3000 years ago led the people of Israel out of Egyptian slavery. The Bible relates that he was inspired by God to establish the first hygiene laws in history. Moses not only imposed a quarantine on people with contagious diseases, but he also developed a scientific healthcare system, which guaranteed clean water and ensured correct waste disposal. His knowledge about disease and its containment was centuries ahead of the times.

In more modern times, scientific enlightenment first came in the 19th century, when Pasteur discovered that many diseases are caused by microorganisms.

Only in the last 125 years have we pursued with scientific earnest disease prevention instead of only treating diseases.”

[Around 1960] “preventive medicine was discovered again, when the focus shifted from infectious diseases to the new epidemic of degenerative diseases – cardiovascular disease, strokes, high blood pressure, diabetes, arthrosis and cancer.

It was discovered that these diseases could be avoided by an increased consciousness of personal “ecology”. These so-called “lifestyle-diseases” could be avoided primarily through personal efforts. (Taken from *New Start! New Health, New Energy, New Joy!* by Dr. med. V. W. Foster – shortened)

* This name was selected to remind us of the biblical Andrew, who led his brother Peter to Jesus (John 1:40-42).

Pride and Prejudice against Proof

An enormous obstacle for both biblical insights as well as health insights is pride and prejudice. A clear example of this is the fate of Dr. Semmelweis.

Around 1840 Vienna was known as a stronghold of medicine. In the Vienna general hospital, one of the most well-known university clinics of the time, almost one in six women died on the maternity ward. The situation was very similar in other hospitals around the world. When the women died, they were taken to the dissecting room. It was the first obligation of the doctors and students to examine the dead women each morning.

Afterwards, the doctors continued – without washing their hands – to examine the women on the maternity ward.

Around 1840 the young Dr. Semmelweis was given the supervision of one of these maternity wards. He had the impression that precisely because the women had gotten sick and died and had been examined by the professors and doctors beforehand, that the problem could lay here. Hence, he ordered that every doctor and student that had taken part in an autopsy should thoroughly wash their hands before they examined any patients on the maternity ward.

In April 1847, before the regulation became effective, 57 women died on this ward. In June only one of 42 women died. In July only one in 84. The statistics clearly proved that the deadly infectious diseases from the corpses had been transmitted to the living patients.

After a certain incident, Dr. Semmelweis ordered that they were to also carefully wash their hands after examining each patient. Immediately, protests arose against this senseless handwashing. But the death rate dropped. And the result:

His superiors ridiculed and criticized him to such an extent that his contract wasn't renewed. He wasn't able to get a new position anywhere in Vienna during the next 8 months. His successor had the sinks taken out again, although this measure had brought a 14-fold improvement. The death rate soon went back to the old alarming numbers.

Then, Dr. Semmelweis went to Budapest. There he implemented the same measures with the same good results. And again, he was disregarded by his colleagues. He wrote a scientifically distinguished and well-founded book about his work, which only spurred his opponents to bitter sarcasm. Dr. Semmelweis broke under the pressure and lost his intellectual capacity and later died in an insane asylum.

Prejudice can be very strong. We should remember that these people that had these prejudices were highly educated people. Unfortunately, the problem of prejudice is still relevant today. Not only in the area of health, but also towards the Bible.

Now we want to see what the Bible shares about these health concerns.

More than 3,000 years ago “Moses already gave exact instructions about a reliable method of washing hands - specifically after touching a corpse or a person with a contagious disease.” (Dr. S. J. McMillen in *None of these diseases* – arguments from a doctor based on the Bible, Aussaat-Verlag, p. 13. The story of Dr. Semmelweis was shortened and also taken from this book. There were many editions of this book, but it isn't printed anymore.) Hence, the Jews didn't have this problem.

Today, this method is taken for granted.

How was the plague defeated in the 14th century?

“Another plague that obviously darkened the middle ages was the Black Death (or plague). Just in the 14th century it is approximated that more than 60 million people fell victim to this mass murderer. It was the greatest catastrophe that has ever befallen man.” (Dr. McMillan, p. 9)

“And what brought these devastating epidemics under control? ... As soon as the European people were convinced of the effectiveness of the biblical quarantine regulations, they gained control over leprosy. They applied the same method to the Black Death. Millions of lives were saved.” (Dr. McMillen, p. 10)

How were people able to overcome deadly epidemics in the 18th century?

What contributed in the Middle Ages to conquering horrific epidemics like dysentery, cholera and typhus, which cost many people their lives? The Bible tells in one sentence how to fight deadly epidemics like typhus, cholera and dysentery: *“Also you shall have a place outside the camp, where you may go out; and you shall have an implement among your equipment, and when you sit down outside, you shall dig with it and turn and cover your refuse.”* (Deuteronomy 23:12-13 NKJV) (Dr. McMillen, p. 11)

The Bible was ahead of science by 4,000 years

“Uterine cancer is one of the most widely spread cancers among women. It comprises 25% of all cancers. At the beginning of the 20th century, Dr. Hiram N. Wineberg determined after a thorough examination of the medical records of the Mount Sinai Hospital in New York that Jewish women comparatively seldom have uterine cancer.

In 1954 a large-scale study in Boston furthermore revealed that uterine cancer is 8 times more prevalent in non-Jewish women than Jewish women.

What is this attributed to? The cancer researchers openly admit that the noticeable freedom of cancer is attributed to the practice of circumcision of Jewish men – which at God’s instruction Abraham introduced 4,000 years ago.” (Dr. McMillen, pages 16-18)

Investigations and research on circumcision have shown that the Bible says: *“He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised, every male child ...”* (Genesis 17:12 NKJV)

Why at 8 days old?

“Since vitamin K (blood clotting factor) isn’t produced by the infant’s intestines until the 5th to 7th day, the safest day for circumcision is the 8th day, mysteriously the day on which God commanded Abraham to circumcise Isaac.

Another blood clotting factor is prothrombin. On the third day only 30 % is present. On the 8th day Prothrombin is present at a higher than average level – 110 %. Apparently, an 8-day old infant has more prothrombin on hand than on any other day of his life. One cannot but help notice that from the standpoint of vitamin K and prothrombin the 8th day has been chosen as the most suitable day for circumcision. A miracle of God!

We can hardly presume with this background of scientific outcomes that Abraham arbitrarily chose this day. Neither he nor his contemporaries in Ur in Chaldea had ever been circumcised.” (Dr. McMillen, p. 19-20 partially shortened)

A Special Promise from God

“When Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt, God gave him and his people a remarkable promise:

“If you diligently heed the voice of the LORD your God and do what is right in His sight, give ear to His commandments and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you which I have brought on the Egyptians. For I am the LORD who heals you.” (Exodus 15,26 NKJV)

‘None of the diseases ...’ What a promise!” (Dr. McMillen, p. 8)

“Show that the laws of nature, being the laws of God, are designed for our good; that obedience to them promotes happiness in this life, and aids in the preparation for the life to come.” (E.G. White, *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 146.4)

“Pure air, sunlight, abstemiousness, rest, exercise, proper diet, the use of water, trust in divine power—these are the true remedies. Every person should have a knowledge of nature’s remedial agencies and how to apply them.”
(E.G. White, *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 127.2)

A Church with Experience in Preventive Medicine

Besides being strongly involved in healing the sick for 150 years, the Seventh-Day Adventist Church, which bases its beliefs only on the Bible, is also active in preventive medicine. The impact has been documented in more than 150 scientific studies. Professor Dr. Anselm Hennis, one of the directors at the World Health Organization (WHO), said the following during the opening address at the second international conference for health and lifestyle in Geneva which was conducted by the Seventh-Day Adventist Church and WHO from July 7-12, 2014:

“I believe that we need to come to you to learn how we can have more success in our attempts to change the lives of people – meaning making healthy choices.” (Gabriele Pietruska, BWgung-Mitteilungsblatt der Siebenten-Tags-Adventisten in Baden-Württemberg)

Nr. 6/2014, S. 7, 8 He directed an urgent appeal to the Adventists to share their expertise about a healthier lifestyle with the rest of the world. Because the health condition of the world population is dramatically deteriorating, especially in the lower- and middle-income bracket. Non-communicable diseases like diabetes, obesity, cancer and cardiovascular diseases have now taken on epidemic proportions on all levels.

Here are the results of one of the first studies, which prompted great interest.

Major Studies

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Here are the results of one of the first studies, which prompted great interest.

A major study in California over the span of 10 years investigated the cause of death of 57,000 Seventh-Day Adventists and 57,000 comparative people, who were of the same sex, resided in the same place and had the same occupation. The Adventists had:

64% less heart diseases

51% less cancer

75% less diseases of the respiratory organs

46% less stroke

And because they had fewer diseases than the 57,000 comparative people, they lived 5-6 years longer.

What are the main reasons for the better outcomes?

- › A personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Prof. A. Jores commented on this report at an internist congress in Wiesbaden, that in fact 50% of all diseases could be avoided if a person really embraces the message of salvation in the sense of conversion. (Prof. Arthur Jores was a German doctor and joint founder of the scientific psychosomatics; starting in 1950 he was the head of the University of Hamburg. The source of this quote has unfortunately been lost.) Here, it has to do with a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and is not a question of denomination. Don Mackintosh emphasized the same thing: “The real need of our time is not simply health education – we have excellent information. What is necessary is health information connected with the strength

to put it into practice; it has to do with the power of change.” (Don Mackintosh, Director of Newstart Global, Weimar/USA, quoted from D’Sozo by Dave Fiedler, foreword, Remnant Publications) This strength comes from the gospel. Paul said: “*For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power [Greek: dynamys] of God...*” (Romans 1:16 NKJV) (see *Letter to Andrew No. 14 – Life in God’s Strength – How?*)

- › Observance of the biblical insights on lifestyle. I want to close with God’s desire for every person: “*Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers.*” (3 John 2 NKJV)

With warm greetings,

Helmut

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