

HEALTH & HEALING



Jehovah Rapha

6. Living in Good Health (1)

Introduction

As we have learnt, one of the names for God is 'Jehovah Rapha', which means, 'I am the God who heals you.' This is a wonderful truth. However we need to understand that God doesn't even want us to get sick! He wants his children to be healthy and strong. Look at 3 John 2. Sadly many people abuse their bodies and as a result suffer sickness.

- ☐ In what ways do people abuse their bodies? What are some of the sicknesses they suffer as a result?

(Wrong sexual relationships, smoking, alcohol consumption, drugs, over working, are some examples. This can cause cancers, AIDS, sexually transmitted diseases, heart and liver problems.)

- ☐ Others may not abuse their bodies in the ways we have discussed but they neglect the care of their bodies. What do our bodies need to stay healthy and strong? Discuss.

(Our bodies need clean water, sunshine, exercise, healthy food and rest. When we neglect these we may not be so strong and become more susceptible to sickness.)

- ☐ Does the Bible give any guidelines on how to live a healthy life? How can we keep in good health according to Exodus 15:26 and Proverbs 4:20-22

(We need to listen closely to God's Word and obey it.)

Often we think that the Bible only speaks about spiritual things. That is not so! As we saw in Proverbs 4:22, by obeying God's Word we will have health in our entire being, which includes our spirit, soul and body. God has created us and wants us to glorify him in our bodies. Let's look at some of the commands God has given us. In this study we will see what the Word of God says about food!

A. Eat Healthy Foods

- ☐ What foods did God create for man to eat in the beginning? Genesis 1:29

(Seed bearing plants and fruits with seeds.)

We can see that this includes vegetables, fruits, nuts and grains, such as rice, barley and wheat. These are the best foods for us and we should eat plenty of them. In fact during the time when man only ate these foods they lived very long lives! It was only after the flood that God told man to eat meat. Read Genesis 9:3. At that time God said there were two kinds of animals and birds.

- ☐ How did God divide the animals and birds according to Genesis 7:2-3?

- ☐ What are the clean animals according to Leviticus 11:1-3? Which animals are these? On the other hand what animals did God say they could not eat? Leviticus 11:4-8?

(Those that have split hooves and chew the cud, including the cow, deer, oxen, sheep and goat.)

- ☐ What fish did God say they could eat, and which ones could they not eat? Leviticus 11:9-12

(They could eat fish with fins and scales, but not eel, crabs, lobsters, shellfish and shrimps etc.)

☐ What birds were not to be eaten? What birds are not mentioned that can be eaten? Leviticus 11:13-19

(Those that can be eaten would include chickens, ducks and pigeons.)

As you look at these lists you may be wondering, “Yes, but the new Testament says that what was unclean is now clean.” Let’s look now at what Jesus says.

B. Importance of our Spiritual Health

☐ What makes us unclean according to Jesus in Mark 7:17-23? Is he referring to our physical body or to our spiritual life?

(Jesus says that what makes a person unclean are the evil thoughts that come from inside him, so Jesus is not referring to our physical body, but our spiritual life.)

As we have seen Jesus is speaking about what makes us spiritually unclean. The type of food we eat will not affect our relationship with God as the ‘Kingdom of God is not meat or drink’. Just as circumcision no longer has spiritual value for us, neither does eating certain kinds of food.

However that does not necessarily mean that all food is good for our health! God gave laws about clean and unclean food to the people of Israel for spiritual reasons, as well as physical reasons. He wanted his people to be in good health. Scientists have discovered that the foods God said were unclean have high toxic levels in them, whereas the foods God said were clean are good for men’s bodies. It would be wise for us to listen closely to what God says, as Proverbs 4 tells us.

C. Foods that are Forbidden to be Eaten

☐ What did God forbid his people to eat, and why? Deuteronomy 12:23-25

(God forbade them to eat blood as the life is in the blood.)

☐ What else did God forbid his people to eat in the Old Testament? Leviticus 3:17, 7:22-25

(God told them not to eat the hard fat.)

Conclusion

We may think that God seemed very strict! It is only recently however that scientists have discovered that the blood carries infections and toxins and when people eat the blood they are exposed to these harmful things. The same is true of fat. It is the storage place of toxins and parasites, which are not killed easily even when cooked. In the New Testament the only restriction given to believers is that they should not eat blood. Long before the Law was given, in the time of Noah, God told man not to take the blood, as the life of all living creatures is in the blood.

God loves you and wants you to prosper in your health. We can eat all kinds of food, with the exception of blood, and they will not affect your relationship with God, but they may affect your health. What a good God we have! He knows all things and wants us to be well and strong.