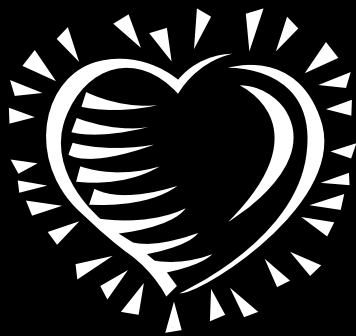


The gospel is a life manual for Christians, just as the other sacred scriptures are for other believers. As Jesus taught, each of us is responsible to live and use what we possess to reveal and magnify our Creator. Yet as humans we are entirely free to choose whether or not to do it.

If we want to know why we are here, we simply need to look at what we are and what we have. If we consciously make the best of everything we have, just as it is today, someone will know God's goodness and praise Him.

God woke me up this morning because He has something for me to do. Whatever shape my body is in today, it pleases God to serve His purpose. So I must not hesitate to offer it back to myself and to Him, and to make the best of it as it is today.

More than anything else, my body and natural gifts are my responsibility alone. So – what is the best I can do with my physical self, right now? How better may I serve God tomorrow, given another day of life, in a body fit for more than the best I can give today?



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Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?

1 Corinthians 6:19

Stewardship of Health

MY HEART

Let me begin with my heart.

Cardiovascular disease (CVD), including coronary heart disease, heart defects and high blood pressure, is the **leading cause of death** in the U.S. It kills a million Americans every year. **62 million Americans have some form of CVD.**

- A **heart attack** is severe damage to the heart muscle due to **blockage in the vessels that supply it with blood and oxygen**. This causes chest pain and pressure. If not treated within 20 to 40 minutes, the blockage can result in **heart and organ failure**. A heart that stops beating and is not restarted within five minutes can lead to **permanent brain damage and death**.
- A **stroke** is the sudden death of brain cells due to a loss of blood and oxygen. It can be caused by **clogged arteries or bleeding in the brain**, or by **hardening or a blockage in arteries** leading to the brain. It can impair a person's ability to think or function. It can cause **paralysis, weakness and difficulty in speaking or swallowing**. A major stroke can be **fatal**.

Some risk factors for CVD cannot be changed. For example, most people who die of coronary heart disease are **65 or older**. **Men** have a greater risk of heart attack than women. CVD tends to **run in families**. African Americans, Mexican Americans, American Indians, some Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders are at higher risk.

But many risk factors can be changed, treated or controlled.

"When it comes to heart health, it is so important to live a healthy lifestyle," says **Samir Dabbous, MD**, medical director of the Center for Heart and Vascular Services, Oakwood Healthcare System.

"A number of lifestyle risk factors contribute to heart disease, including **high blood pressure, high cholesterol, being overweight and smoking**. Everyone should know them and be proactive about their overall health. This is particularly important advice for **anyone over the age of 40.**"

These are things I need to do to promote good cardiovascular health:

- Have my blood pressure and blood cholesterol checked regularly. If either is too high, know and follow my doctor's orders to reduce or control it.
- Don't smoke or use tobacco products.
- Know my heart-healthy weight for my height and build, and maintain it.
- Eat less animal fats and more foods low in saturated fat and cholesterol.
- Use less salt in cooking and at meals.
- Moderate my intake of alcohol.
- Get 30 minutes of moderate to vigorous aerobic exercise at least 5 days per week.
- Don't get stressed. When upset, count to ten. Use less caffeine. Get rest and exercise.
- Learn the warning signals and know what to do in case of heart attack and stroke.

And he answered,

"You shall love the Lord your God with
ALL YOUR HEART,
and with all your SOUL,
and with all your STRENGTH,
and with all your MIND;
and your NEIGHBOR as YOURSELF."

Luke 10:27