**Fixer Upper**

**First Baptist Church, Albemarle**

**September 17, 2017**

Many of you are fans of the HGTV show *Fixer Upper*. Chip and Joanna Gaines own and operate Magnolia Homes, a remodeling and design business in Waco, Texas, and "Fixer Upper" shows the process by which the couple turn dilapidated but potential-rich houses into showplaces that are helping revitalize whole neighborhoods throughout central Texas. Chip manages the construction and realty side of Magnolia and Joanna is the lead designer. They also act as counselors to clients who can't see a structure's beauty beyond the blemishes. Combined, Chip and Joanna save homes that look hopeless, renovating the imperfect, and revealing them as what they were always intended to be.

Last week, we began a series on Faith & Wellness. We began our series by focusing on our souls, the most important aspect of our wellness. This week, we move on to our physical wellness. Dr. John Dunlop, a medical doctor and author of *Wellness for the Glory of God*, writes, “Physical wellness is rarely related to a single factor. Some of its roots are beyond our control, perhaps hidden in our genes. Some are simply the results of living in a world where bad things happen. Yet, many are predictable consequences of the poor choices we make.”[[1]](#footnote-1)

Most of us see our bodies as “fixer uppers.” We simply notice the blemishes and can’t see the beauty of our structure. We need someone like Chip and Joanna Gaines to act as counselors for our bodies to help us see the hidden beauty and reveal what we were intended to be! Yet, we consistently make poor choices that keep us from experiencing wellness physically. We can do better.

In today’s text, Paul is dealing with the rampant problem of sexual immorality. If you think we live in a hypersexual world today, you couldn’t imagine what was happening in the first century Corinth. Even those who were followers of Jesus took their freedom from the Law way too far. They considered matters of the body, such as sexual immorality, to be within the purview of personal liberty, especially since they believed that actions affecting the body had no ultimate consequence. So Paul challenged their view on personal freedom. Paul countered by saying that while all things are permissible, not all things are beneficial. In fact, exercising freedom without regard for what is beneficial may lead to enslavement.

In making the argument against sexual sin, Paul uses the word ***“body”*** seven times. He makes the argument that we cannot separate the physical from the spiritual. In other words, he is making the point that how we treat our bodies is directly tied to our spiritual health. Paul then closes his argument reminding the Corinthians that their bodies are temples in which the Holy Spirit dwells within. We were all bought at a price. We were all given freedom but not without a great cost. Jesus set us free from the grips of sin that enslave us but that freedom didn’t give us the right to do whatever we wanted. We were bought at a price and set free for a purpose.

As Dr. John Dunlop stated, some aspects of our physical health is out of our controls. Yet, there are many more things that are within our control that is preventable so that we can experience physical wellness.

First, of course, is eating healthier. Eating healthy is not a fad. It is not a diet. Healthy eating is heavy on fruits and veggies, rich in fiber, low in starches, moderate in protein, and low in fat. Sounds simple enough but we know that isn’t the case. Everything is permissible but not everything is beneficial. We need to learn moderation in all aspects when it comes to eating healthier.

Second, to experience physical wellness, we need to have appropriate exercise. When it comes to exercise, everything is relative. The general rule of thumb is 20 minutes a day or 150 minutes a week to maintain good health, and twice that will help you lose weight. Our exercise should take four forms: aerobic to keep our heart healthy; anaerobic for muscle toning; stretching; and balance training. Appropriate exercise is going to look different for Lee Allen who trains for Ironman Triathlons than for me who is simply trying to keep off the unwanted pounds. Appropriate exercise is going to be different for someone 25 years of age than someone who is in his 80s. Nonetheless, exercise is important for all of us.

Third and often forgotten, proper rest is important for our physical wellness. James Bryan Smith writes, “The number one enemy of Christian spiritual formation today is exhaustion.” The average amount of sleep needed is eight hours per day. That means that 1/3 of our lives should be spent doing nothing and letting our bodies rest. That is the way God designed our bodies. In addition to proper amount of sleep, rest also includes time away from stresses of life. This is the biblical idea of the Sabbath. Sabbath should not be focused on not working but rather focused on spending time finding rest. We need to create time in our lives to de-stress and pursue other things we enjoy.

Eating properly, getting enough exercise and getting proper rest will help us achieve some level of physical wellness. But why? Why do we need to be concerned about our body’s wellness? Paul tells us: “Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God?” Our body serves as a temple of the Holy Spirit.

Think of the temple in the Old Testament. The temple was carefully built following God’s very detailed instructions. The temple was important because it was the place where God chose to live among the people. In the New Testament, things changed. At the death of Christ, the veil in the temple was torn from top to bottom, and at that point, the temple lost its significance. And so instead of dwelling in a temple, the Lord God made a change and decided to live in the hearts of his people instead. And that is why Paul says here that our bodies serve as the temple of God’s Holy Spirit. Therefore as Christians, God lives in us. God lives in us in the form of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, since God is living in us, Paul argues that it matters what we do with our bodies.

The short chorus that we sometimes sing goes like this: “Lord, prepare me to be a sanctuary, pure and holy, tried and true. With thanksgiving, I’ll be a living sanctuary for you.” Our body is a temple where the Holy Spirit resides. It is God’s sanctuary.

Paul then says: “You are not your own; you were bought at a price.” Our body is a sacred treasure. When Paul says that we have been ***“bought,”*** he uses a word referring to the ancient marketplace, and it seems as if the idea is that we were slaves on the auction block. The Lord saw us in that situation, and he bought us ***“with a price.”*** In 1 Peter 1:19, the writer said that we were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold, but we were bought ***“...with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ.”*** As God’s sacred treasure, then, he cares about us – not just about our spiritual health, but about our physical health as well. As his precious treasure, God cares when we hurt. God cares when we suffer. God cares about what our bodies go through.

Paul completes his thought with a final statement. “Therefore honor God with your body.” Another pastor describes it this way: “The feet that once led you in sin should now be directed in the paths of righteousness, to the house of God and the place of prayer. The eyes that once looked upon things that violated the law of God should now be directed to the Savior. The ears that once listened to impure things should now be eager to hear the Word of Life. The hands that once were swift to shed innocent blood should now be engaged in the service of the Lord. The tongue that once talked so loosely and glibly should now be singing His praises and telling others of His great love. The heart that was set upon earthly things should now be embracing the things of Christ, and sharing His love with friends and neighbors.” (*The Christian’s Body*, Curtis Kittrell)

James Bryan Smith writes in *The Good and Beautiful God*, “The human person is not merely a soul housed in a body. Our bodies and souls are unified. If our bodies suffer, so do our souls. We cannot neglect the body in pursuit of spiritual growth. In fact, neglecting our bodies necessarily impedes our spiritual growth. Everything we do in our lives, including the practices of spiritual formation, we do in and with our bodies.”

Your body is the temple of God where the Holy Spirit resides. We have all been bought at a price and have been redeemed through Jesus. Therefore, let us honor God with our bodies even if it is a *Fixer Upper*. Treat it well.

1. Dunlop, John. Wellness for the glory of God: living well after 40 with joy and contentment in all of life. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014, 32. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)