

5. Your Health



When you first opened lesson 5 of the Fathering in 15™ program were you surprised that it was about your personal health? I was. After all, isn't this program about how we can become better fathers? Well, as it said in the lesson, "Your physical, emotional, and spiritual health affects your ability to become the best dad you can be." Let's take a closer look at each of these three areas.

Concerning our physical health, to be a good dad we have to be in our children's lives. We can't be of much help to them if we're not in good health or, even worse, we're no longer alive. If you are young and healthy it may seem that this isn't a problem in your life, but that can change slowly or in an instant. The stresses of life can slowly wear us down, and cause us to neglect our health. The prophet Isaiah wrote about this in the Bible. He knew that the pressures of life could affect our health, so he wrote:

The LORD gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.

Isaiah 40:29-31

Taking good care of ourselves doesn't just mean taking care of our physical health, it also means taking care of our emotional health. If you doubt that then just think about some of the people in your own life, maybe right in your own family. Can you think of anyone that is so overcome by worry or anger or stress that it is affecting their health and hurting their relationships with others? Do you want to live like that? Fortunately we have a God that loves us and wants to help us with that.

Have you ever heard of the Sermon on the Mount? It is recorded in the Bible, in chapters 5-7 of the book of Matthew. Matthew was one of Jesus' followers and he wrote down much of what Jesus had to say about life and our relationship with God. In chapter 6, verses 25-34, Jesus taught the disciples about how to handle worry. In particular he says in verse 27, "Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?" But then he goes on to emphasize how valuable each one of us is in God's eyes, and how God cares for each and every one of us. And then later on in chapter 11 of the same book he encourages us by saying:

Then Jesus said, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls."

Matthew 11:28-29

Finally, there is the issue of spiritual health. Do you remember back in lesson 1 we talked about a young man by the name of Timothy, and his relationship with an older man by the name of Paul? The Bible contains two letters that Paul wrote to Timothy to give him advice on how to live. In the first of those two letters Paul wrote:

Spend your time and energy in training yourself for spiritual fitness. Physical exercise has some value, but spiritual exercise is much more important for it promises a reward in both this life and the next. This is true and everyone should accept it.

1 Timothy 4:7-9

What is Paul trying to say here? He does say that physical health is important and there are many other places in the Bible where Paul and others teach us to take care of our physical health, but here Paul is pointing out the importance of good spiritual health. After all, physical health only affects our earthly lives, but spiritual health affects both our earthly lives as well as our lives after we die. As was said above, we can rest in knowing that we have a God that has immense love for everyone of us.

So let's make sure we do all that we can to be physically, emotionally, and spiritually healthy.

Questions for thought and discussion:

- a. What are some changes you should make in your life to improve your physical health? What activities or habits are harmful to your physical health?
- b. What are some changes you should make in your life to improve your emotional health? Do you think it is a sign of weakness or wisdom to lean on God and His love for you when you are dealing with emotional issues?
- c. What changes should you make to improve your spiritual health? Have you given some serious thought to your relationship with God, and how that will affect you and your family?
- d. Who can help you make positive changes in these areas of your life?