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LAWWS

8 Laws of Health

"I do not feel obliged to believe that the same God who has endowed us with sense, reason, and intellect has intended us to forgo their use." -- Galileo Galilei

Every year 1.7 million Americans die from chronic diseases. The ten leading causes of death include heart disease, cancer, strokes, lung disease, diabetes, and kidney and liver diseases, all of which are affected by diet. The remaining two leading causes of death-accident and suicide-are often effected by lifestyle choices like alcohol and drug abuse. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) admits that these major killers "are an extension of what people do, or do not do, as they go about the business of daily living. Those who practice health-damaging behaviors risk decreased quality of life and early death." iii Heart disease and cancer, the first and second killers on the list, can often be prevented by modifying high risk behaviors like tobacco use, poor nutrition, and physical inactivity. You have the power in your own hands to change the future of your health.

There are many ways of practicing the healing art; but there is only one way that Heaven approves. God's remedies are simple agencies of nature that will not tax or debilitate the system through their powerful properties. Pure air and water, cleanliness a proper diet, purity of life, and a firm trust in God, are remedies for the want of which thousands are dying; yet these remedies are going out of date because their skillful use requires work that people do not appreciate. Fresh air, exercise, pure water, and clean, sweet premises, are within the reach of all... Counsels on Diet and Foods, page 301.

Nutrition

How many times have you filled your car's tank with premium gasoline (perhaps only a memory now, with today's gas prices) or carefully fertilized your houseplants? We understand that the machine is only as good as the fuel it was given. You would never put fertilizer in our gas tank, or pour gasoline over your houseplants. You know what is best-and worst-for running each 'machine,' whether it is mechanical or natural. Yet when it comes to the human body, we treat food as merely something to fill our bellies and please the palate. When improper substances are added to the tank the machine breaks down. Anyone can understand the logic, yet it wasn't until 1988 that the Surgeon General C. Everett Koop released the Surgeon General's Report on Nutrition and Health, which was the governments first formal recognition of the role of diet in disease.

A healthy diet provides energy to every cell in our bodies; supplies essential nutrients that the body is unable to make itself; and provides the raw materials for cell maintenance and growth. If you are missing one or more essential nutrients you are malnourished. It is possible for the overnourished individual to be malnourished, which is the profile of the common human, particularly in the Western civilizations.

For hundreds of years isolated groups of people, such as American Indians and the poorer classes, did not commonly have diseases such as heart disease and cancers. Those were considered the rich man's diseases, for only the wealthier classes could afford to have meats, pastries, and other rich foods appear regularly on their table. When technological progress allowed even the poorest of people access to rich and refined foods, the incidence of heart disease skyrocketed.

According to the American Cancer Society, one third of cancer deaths are related to poor nutrition. Many medical practitioners believe the numbers to be far higher. The annual cost of cancer in the United States alone amounts to \$107 billion. Coronary artery disease results from reduced blood supply to the heart. It is known that diet is the major factor in preventing and treating heart disease, yet more than half of Americans have cholesterol levels above the recommended maximum of 200mg/dL. Cardiovascular disease is the number one killer and cost the United States \$286.5 billion in 1999.

What foods contain the nutrients essential for our growth? Not surprisingly, the perfect diet was given to us not by a government agency in the 20th century, but by God to our first parents.

"And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat." Genesis 1:29

Fruits, vegetables, legumes, and grains provide all the fuel and nutrients our bodies require for health and vitality. At least three-quarters of Americans eat less than the recommended amounts of fruits and vegetables. The average Western diet consists of meat, dairy, and highly refined foods such as white bread, and most bakery products. Vegetables and whole grains appear as afterthoughts in small portions on the plate, if they appear at all.

But doesn't my bowl of Sugar Bombs that I eat each morning contain 100% of the recommended daily allowance of vitamins and minerals? The label also says it contains wheat, isn't that good for me? Let's examine that for a moment. The little wheat kernel, packed full of nutrition, takes a trip from the farm to the mill where it is processed into soft white flour. In doing this, the parts that contain the majority of the vitamins and minerals and all the fiber—the germ and the bran—are removed. Often, these nutritious parts are sent back out to the farm where it is fed to livestock. Then, the manufacturers add a selection of cheap vitamins (that the body cannot easily absorb) so that they can now label their product as enriched. Does this sound like the height of nutrition to you?

Although many choose to take supplements, vitamins and minerals are best absorbed from food and are naturally balanced in food sources. These foods are best eaten as close as possible to how they came from nature. What could be better than a fresh juicy peach on a warm summer day or a bowl of steamed vegetable stir-fry to enliven a winter's afternoon? How many of our diseases could be prevented by eating for nutrition instead of merely satisfying the taste buds? There's a saying familiar to most dieters: a moment on the lips, a lifetime on the hips. Although not as catchy, it could be paraphrased into: a moment on the lips, a lifetime of paying for the damage.

Nutrients are required for life and health. Junk food and refined foods are poor sources of nutrition and can contribute to disease. Nature provides the ideal sources of fuel in the form of whole grains, legumes, fruits and vegetables. Think about what you are planning to have for your next meal.

Meat Eater (Carnivore)	Plant Eater (Herbivore)	Humans
Has claws	No claws	No claws
No skin pores, perspires through tongue	Perspires through skin pores	Perspires through skin pores
Sharp front teeth for tearing (fangs), no flat molar teeth for grinding	No sharp front teeth (fangs), has flat rear molars	No sharp front teeth (fangs), has flat rear molars
Intestinal tract 3 times body length so rapidly decaying meat can pass out quickly	Intestinal tract 10-12 times body length	Intestinal tract 12 times body length
Strong hydrochloric acid in stomach to digest meat	Stomach acid 20 times weaker than meat-eaters	Stomach acid 20 times weaker than meat-eaters

Exercise

Do you remember learning in school about the second law of thermodynamics, the law of entropy? Basically, entropy is the physical world's way of always moving toward states of greater disorder. Natural systems tend to move to the lowest energy state possible. Does that sound like you? Shoelaces untie, ice cream melts, and people end up on the couch.

Up to half of all American adults are sedentary. Other countries' statistics may vary, but Americans surely cannot be proud of their behavior! Life provides many distractions and excuses not to exercise. Television, computers, bringing home work from the office, and video games, are a few of the major culprits.

Why should I exercise? Think flabby muscles and failing organs. Regular exercise keeps the blood flowing. Blood is the transportation system for all the nutrients, oxygen, and water our cells need, from

our brains to our toenails. Lack of exercise weakens the circulatory system causing blood to pool, thus oxygen and nutrients cannot get to their destinations. Organs are not getting the fuel they need for proper functioning. No wonder lack of exercise contributes to heart disease, diabetes, colon cancer, high blood pressure, and obesity, to name but a few.

Exercise also helps prevent osteoporosis. The bones and joints require weight-bearing exercise to stimulate the body to make more osteocytes-bone cells. Sedentary lifestyles lead to porous, brittle bones.

With depression and anxiety major health concerns today, it is no wonder that a link between emotional well being and exercise has been found. You may have heard about endorphin, which is a substance naturally produced by the body that is hundreds of times more potent than morphine. Exercise causes your body to release endorphins and perhaps serotonin which causes an individual to feel a sense of well-being. Not to mention that having a more fit body can make anyone feel better about themselves.

Exercise not only strengthens your cardiovascular system; it reduces the amount of harmful cholesterol (LDL) in your blood and actually can help reverse atherosclerosis-- hardening of the arteries. Insufficient physical activity is a known risk factor leading to ischemic heart disease and stroke, that together account for more than 40% of deaths in the United States.

What is considered exercise? Sorry, channel surfing is not on the list. Aerobic-or oxygen providing-exercise is considered any exercise that raises the heart rate, and keeps it up, for a minimum of 30 minutes. This can include, but is not limited to, brisk walking, bicycling, swimming, and rowing. Aerobic exercise is recommended five or more times a week.

Today, obesity is not only a problem in adults for even childhood obesity is on the rise. Exercise burns off calories and when we burn more calories than we eat, we lose weight. Also, after exercising, your metabolism speeds up, making you feel more energetic and burns calories faster for the remainder of the day. Being at an ideal weight reduces the likelihood that you'll have heart disease and is very beneficial in preventing and treating diabetes.

Water

"We never know the worth of water 'til the well is dry." -- English Proverb

It is fortunate that one of the most important substances in the human body is also one of the most abundant on earth. 60% of red blood cells, 75% of muscle tissue and 92% of blood plasma is water. It is essential for health for several reasons. Water's power as a solvent keeps your lungs moist so oxygen can dissolve and move into your blood stream. It helps break down large nutrients so the body can use them more efficiently. It serves as a lubricant to help the internal organs and joints slide over each other easily. Water is an amazing substance and its uses in your body are almost limitless. You can live without food for several weeks, but without water you will die in only a few days.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge wrote, "Water, water everywhere/Nor any drop to drink." That may be the case for one stranded in the midst of the sea, but usually not a problem for most land-dwellers. Water is one of nature's most abundant substances, yet from children we are given practically every beverage but water. Tea, coffee, cow's milk, carbonated beverages, alcoholic beverages-the list is endless. Many children learn not to like the taste of water and grow up to be adults who will drink almost anything but. Sure, all those other fluids contain water, and some of them, like natural fruit juices and herbal teas have value, but the body needs and craves pure water. Did you know that by the time you become thirsty you are already dehydrated? Caffeinated beverages such as black tea, coffee and colas act as diuretics that actually pull more water out of your body, causing you to be more dehydrated than you were to begin with. Many beverages contain an amazing amount of refined sugars that add empty calories to your diet and cause your blood sugar to soar and then drop. Milk contains saturated fat. Who wants to drink a glass of cholesterol? Milk also contains lactose, a sugar that the human body cannot digest, resulting in bloating and flatulence. The phosphorus that helps keep soda bubbly helps to break down your bone tissue and leads to osteoporosis. Let's not even get into what laboratory compounds it takes to make your drinks those bright, happy colors!

Now doesn't a glass of clean, pure water sound great? Adults should drink a minimum of 2.5 quarts per day, 2 more during and after exertion since sweating can cause you to lose more than 1.5 quarts per hour. Not surprisingly, the average American consumes nowhere near that amount. When dehydrated you will see and feel the results including thirst, dry skin, constipation, headaches, congestion, and dark, concentrated urine. That is just the tip of the iceberg in comparison to what is going on inside your organs during a water shortage. Each cell produces waste which now has nowhere to go. Toxins build up and your liver and kidneys work overtime trying to deal with these poisons. Those same toxins, with an adequate amount of pure water each day, would normally be flushed harmlessly out of the body.

What are the best sources of drinking water? Water purified by distillation is inexpensive and is the most pure, followed by filtered water, having used an adequate filter. You can find out what is in your tap water by contacting your water supplier and asking for their annual water quality report or you can have an independent laboratory test a sample of your water. Private wells should be tested annually. Bottled water is not necessarily safer than tap water since the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) uses the same water quality standards on both.

Your body requires more water than dictated by your thirst. Water is necessary for life, health and vibrancy. You have seen a plant wilt and wither without it, how much more destruction occurs in the human body with a chronic water shortage? Get yourself a tall glass of pure, crystal-clear water now.

Sunshine

With all the bad press sunshine has received in the recent years, you would think the healthiest of all creatures would be moles, cave-dwelling bats, and coal miners. Indeed, certain cultures, have spent an inordinate amount of time seeking a deep tan, that, coupled with other poor health practices, leads to premature aging of the skin and certain cancers.

Life is as dependent on sunlight as it is on water. There are multiple reasons why it is so necessary for life. All warmth on earth came from the sun's heat-producing rays, without which all life would quickly freeze and die. The sun is a mega-powerhouse of energy, a portion of which is transferred to energy in the human body. Earth receives ten times more energy from sunlight than our planet's entire supply of fossil fuels each year. Plants require specific segments of the color spectrum or they will fail and die. A portion of the same ultraviolet (UV) light that causes tanning and sunburning is also responsible for producing vitamin D in the body. Incidentally, UV light does not produce vitamin D through glass, so sitting in a bright spot in your home will not help you get your daily dose.

UV rays from the sun change a chemical in your skin into an inactive form of vitamin D, which is then converted in the liver and kidneys to an active form of vitamin D. You need it because it is an essential nutrient that helps your body absorb calcium from the food you eat. In this way, the vitamin aids in maintaining healthy bones and muscles. The vitamin is also available through supplementation, but as with other nutrients, vitamin D is best when received from the most natural of sources, in the case, the sun.

This is not an excuse to throw caution to the wind, however. Doctors Dail and Thomas recommend a daily sunbath of no more than 30 minutes, which is sufficient for production of vitamin D. Healthy sun exposure takes into account time of day (never during midday), temperature, weather, altitude, time of year and your skin's sensitivity to being burnt. Use common sense. It is always a good idea to discuss your plans with your doctor, especially if you are taking medications. If you are not accustomed to sun exposure, and particularly if you are light-skinned, it is a good idea to start slowly, as little as three minutes a day until you are able to increase to the thirty minute maximum. Always keep the above factors in mind and keep your eyes closed during the sunbath.

Astronaut John Glenn once said, "I don't know what you could say about a day in which you have seen four beautiful sunsets." Not many of us will get to have such an experience in this finite life, but in the meantime we can enjoy a bit of sunlight every day knowing that, with a little caution, we are doing good things for our bodies.

Temperance

"Hear thou, my son, and be wise, and guide thine heart in the way. Be not among winebibbers; among riotous eaters of flesh: For the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty: and drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags.." Proverbs 23:19-21

What exactly is temperance? The Oxford Dictionary defines it as moderation or self-restraint, especially in relation to eating and drinking but also in advocating abstinence. Temperance covers virtually every aspect of human life, relating to moderation in necessary functions such as eating and our interactions with others, and in abstinence in areas like smoking, alcohol and drug use.

Temperance is a word more commonly used a century ago, and it and its concept have become unfashionable today. Pop psychology, media, and entertainment have encouraged people to give into their impulses and whims with the justification that self-restraint might lead to emotional distress and damage. For example, the idea is suggested that anger must be released or else it will be suppressed which is destructive to self. No hint is given regarding other options, such as to exercising self-control, letting the anger dissolve, and creating a character that is not quick to anger. Let's examine other areas where temperance should be employed.

It doesn't take a genius to know that food is required for life, yet many people go way beyond the need for nutrients and a satisfied appetite. More than 50% of Americans are overweight, men more than women, according to reported height and weight. Excess weight is linked to cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes, and other chronic diseases.

Alcohol is classified as a central nervous system depressant and is the most widespread drug abuse problem in the United States. Besides causing severe and often fatal health problems including liver disease and cancer, it is a leading precipitating factor in domestic and non-domestic violence and in traffic fatalities. There is no safe alcohol level when operating a vehicle or other machinery. Chronic alcohol use or periodic binge drinking also causes central nervous system damage, impotence, malnutrition, and memory loss. In 1997, 39% of all United States traffic fatalities were related to alcohol, and each year there are over 120 million episodes of impaired driving. Alcohol related accidents cost \$45 billion in the U.S. in 1994 alone.

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) considers tobacco use "the single most preventable cause of death and disease in the United States." It is estimated that cigarette smoking is responsible for one of every five deaths in the U.S. Nicotine is the addictive, poisonous drug in cigarettes, cigars, pipe and chewing tobaccos and is known to cause cancer, lung disease, heart disease, high blood pressure, and stroke, among many other health problems. Cigarettes contain 4,000 other chemicals that also interfere with health and tobacco is usually the first drug used by young people who use alcohol, marijuana, and other drugs.

Other drugs from which people need to abstain include marijuana, steroids and depressants (such as Valium and Quaaludes), stimulants (such as cocaine and amphetamines), hallucinogens (like LSD and PCP), and narcotics (including heroin and morphine). All are highly addictive and cause a wide range of health and social problems ranging from heart disease, impotence, mental illness and stroke, to inability to cope with activities of daily living and responsibilities to self and family. Certain drugs such as narcotics and steroids may be prescribed by doctors for short-term treatment of certain disorders, but cause harm when misused.

Whatever the vice, whether using drugs, anger, or overeating, people do not exercise self-restraint for many reasons. Reasons may include the desire to escape reality by having a few moments of perceived pleasure that they believe will help them relax, reduce depression and stress. Others engage in self-destructive behavior to forget about physical or emotional traumas, and numb feelings of guilt, shame, or loneliness. These are false hopes, for intemperance not only is a pseudo-solution but in turn causes its own often catastrophic effects. Only in God is there found true escape from the stresses and nightmares of life.

Air

"Thus saith the Lord GOD unto these bones; Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live." Ezekiel 37:5

Is there anything like going out to the countryside and inhaling a lung-full of fresh clean air? You can feel the oxygen coursing through your blood and invigorating your body and mind. Breathing is something we take for granted, but we cannot go for long without oxygen. In 1976, French diver Jacques Mayol made the free diving record of 325 feet (99 meters), holding his breath for three minutes, thirty-nine seconds. This was done only after years of training and is by far the exception of the limit of the human body, rather than the rule. Most people lose consciousness after only one or two minutes and without oxygen will die a few minutes later.

Every cell in your body requires a continuous supply of oxygen. Your respiratory and cardiovascular systems work in tandem to provide each cell with oxygen and eliminate excess carbon dioxide. The body was perfectly designed to perform this function and failure by either system causes death. Through the normal process of quiet breathing we inhale about 500 ml (half a quart) of air. When we deep breathe we can increase this amount by about 3100 ml (3+ quarts).

Yet the air we breathe often contains far more than the elements we require for life. The Industrial Revolution, which began in the late 18th century, changed our air forever, and not in a positive way. Not until the late 20th century did governments start to regulate air pollution, which has helped reduce toxins in our atmosphere, but so far it hasn't been enough. In 1990, United States industry alone emitted more than 2.4 billion pounds of toxic pollutants into the air. What does this mean to our health? 50,000 to 120,000 premature deaths in the U.S. have been related to exposure to air pollutants. Air pollution is not limited to the out-of-doors but also occurs indoors with exposure to paint fumes, housecleaning solvents, fumes from carpeting, etc.

What can you do to limit your exposure to pollutants and get as much life-giving pure air as possible? One major change that is highly encouraged is a move to the country where air is often significantly cleaner and less saturated with toxins than city air. Where moving is not a possibility, individuals and families should retreat to the country as often as they can.

Let several families living in a city or village unite and leave the occupations which have taxed them physically and mentally, and make an excursion into the country, to the side of a fine lake, or to a nice grove where the scenery of nature is beautiful. They should provide themselves with plain, hygienic food, the very best fruits and grains, and spread their table under the shade of some tree or under the canopy of heaven. The ride, the exercise, and the scenery will quicken the appetite, and they can enjoy a repast which kings might envy. Adventist Home, page 502.

Also important for air health is making sure you reduce the amount of chemicals used in your home and workshop and maintain adequate ventilation whenever chemicals are used. Open your home to the outside air whenever possible, especially in the bedroom when you sleep. Invest in a high-quality air purifier, and if the air is dry in your area, a humidifier would also be recommended.

Practice breathing exercises. In a relaxing environment, preferably in fresh outside air, take several breaths, inspiring as deeply as possible. Hold for a few seconds then slowly release. Think about your posture. Breathing power should come from your diaphragm and abdominal muscles. Poor posture contributes to less effective muscle contractions and the lungs cannot reach their optimum capacity.

Pure air is necessary to life and must be pursued for optimal health. Think about your environment and how you can improve your chances of breathing pure, clean air and energize your body and mind.

Rest

"I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou, LORD, only makest me dwell in safety."
Psalms 4:8

The modern world strives to make laborsaving devices, to provide recreation and entertainment, and to increase speed and efficiency at home and work. So why aren't we rested? Why are we weary and stressed? Back in the eras we consider primitive, people had no such resources. Folks worked very hard and when the light of day waned-they went to bed. Today the activities often start before the sky brightens and continues long after the last ray has disappeared.

Our minds and bodies operate on a fairly constant 24-hour rhythm called the circadian rhythm, with alternating periods of arousal and sleep. Much is known regarding sleep cycles and the factors, including natural body chemistry, that regulate sleep. We know that sleep is necessary, but still do not know exactly why. Yes, it allows the body time and quiet to repair itself, but there is much more to it than that. Humans and animals with more complex brains, like cats, sleep more than small animals with smaller cortexes. Dreams occur during REM (rapid-eye movement) sleep, and during REM a person goes into complete muscle relaxation which may lead to increased restoration of muscle tissues. Blood flow and temperature of the brain increase during the REM cycle of sleep.

Sleep deprivation causes memory loss, emotional instability, and affects one's analytical abilities, perception, motivation and motor control. Lack of sleep also impairs our immune systems and our ability to learn as well as our creativity and productivity.

Resting is also important. Your normal waking, thinking wave is the beta wave which looks short and spiky. During rest, when a person lies still, closes their eyes, and stills their mind, EEG (electroencephalogram) testing indicates that their brains go into an alpha wave pattern. Alpha waves are flowing and synchronous. Rest appears to invigorate the body and make the brain more able to function optimally.

What are some ways you can get better sleep? No late suppers, for one thing. Since our metabolisms slow at night, food tends to digest very slowly and one gets the sensation of food "just sitting there," which is exactly what it is doing. The body must send blood to the stomach to facilitate digestion, pulling blood away from the brain which vitally needs it for sleep processing. The evening meal should be light and eaten several hours before bedtime.

Try to get eight hours of sleep each night and exercise regularly. Avoid the use of drugs and alcohol because although they can sometimes make you drowsy, they actually reduce or eliminate important REM sleep. Keep your bedroom dark and free from stimuli. Absolutely no television watching in bed. Practice breathing deeply and taper to smooth regular respirations. Eliminate caffeine from your diet and keep to a regular bedtime. Exposing yourself to sunlight will help keep your circadian rhythm on track.

Many of us are not getting enough sleep even though it is as necessary to health as is nutrition and water. Many disorders, both physical and mental, can be attributed to sleep deprivation. Even with all our technology and laborsaving devices, all we have accomplished is making more time available for even more activities. We must re-learn to give our bodies and minds the rest needed for healing.

Trust in God

"How excellent is thy lovingkindness, O God! Therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings." Psalms 36:7

If you believe that Divine Power created us, then you can and must believe that same power can make us whole. If God made the earth, the seas, the stars, and each intricate particle of living creatures, then how much more simple for Him to cure illness, if He wills it?

Not until recently have there been any formal studies on the power of divine intervention. Certainly, any study is by definition limited, for how can one pretend to qualify and quantify God's power? The fact that man feels he must do studies in order to prove or disprove God's power says a lot about the condition of the modern human mind. The studies themselves should not be used as a basis for faith, but provide interesting anecdotal evidence.

One study showed that prayer reduced the amount of complications of coronary patients. Other studies have revealed that individuals who attend church have better medical outcomes. Those who believe in God and pray during their illness fare better in addition to reducing stress. Prayer has been shown to affect self-esteem, anxiety and depression.

Religion and medicine used to be intrinsically linked but during the Renaissance Era we began to make large strides in scientific discovery. This led to a change in how people viewed the world. This change, beginning much, much earlier, did not become prevalent until the advent of the printing press made knowledge more available to the common person. Before, most people believed in God; after, they became enamored with their own powers of reasoning and began to seek out ways to deny God. Truth does not require believers to remain truth. If God maintains our every breath, who better to seek for help when the body fails? Better yet, seek Him before it fails.

Faith, however, does not supplant our own ability to care for ourselves and others.

Those who seek healing by prayer should not neglect to make use of the remedial agencies within their reach. It is not a denial of faith to use such remedies as God has provided to alleviate pain and to aid nature in her work of restoration...God has put in our power to obtain a knowledge of the laws of life. This knowledge has been placed within our reach for use. We should employ every facility for the restoration of health, taking every advantage possible, working in harmony with natural laws. When we have prayed for the recovery of the sick, we can work with all the more energy, thanking God that we have the privilege of cooperating with Him and asking His blessing on the means which He Himself has provided. Conflict and Courage, page 240.

God has given us the faculties for caring for ourselves, but without faith that He will do the best for us-even if we don't always understand His methods-we miss out on the power of His grace, which is the ultimate cure.