

## The Prescription for Spiritual Health

October 27, 2017 Sermon by Pastor Diana J. Perkins

I recently spoke with a doctor about the benefits of certain medicines and the comment she made was this; "people come in to see me and I give them a prescription. On a return visit, they have the same complaints as they had the first time they came to the office. I ask them, 'Are you taking the medicine as prescribed?' They hem haw and finally admit that they are not faithful in administering the medicine and they wonder why they are not well or getting any results."

I thought about the conversation this week as I was studying the Bible and began to consider what changes have been made in my life and the process that I went through to overcome so many things that had me burdened down for many years. I want to share some things today with you and I pray that God will give you the desire, the courage and the perseverance to take his word seriously and follow through with his prescription for having a happy, healthy life. He said that he came that we may have life and have it more abundantly. See John 10:10.

He promised to give us peace and to fill us with the fruit of the spirit. (Galatians 5) In verse 16, he says that if we are guided by the spirit we will not obey our selfish desires.

I love the book of James. James' writing is an example of a general letter as it addresses the Christians scattered throughout the Roman Empire. Though it is called a letter, it is more appropriately considered a short book of instructions for successful daily living. It teaches us that faith is an action, not just a thought. Let's look at this book and find what God has to say to us through his servant. James is a brother of Jesus and he begins his writing by saying that he is a servant of God and of our Lord Jesus Christ. He became a believer in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, following the resurrection of Jesus.

First of all, be happy even when troubles are around you. The ability to endure trials comes to those who stand firm when their faith is tested. Learn to endure everything that comes your way in order to become mature and lacking nothing.

If you lack wisdom, ask God and he will give it to you. God is generous and won't correct you for asking this of him. When you ask, believe, for anyone who doubts is like an ocean wave tossed around in a storm. Double-minded people surely cannot be trusted. Don't expect God to give you anything if you can't make up your mind about anything.

God blesses those who refuse to give up when their faith is being put to the test. He will reward you with a glorious life just as he rewards everyone who loves him.

Don't blame God when you are tempted. God cannot be tempted by evil and he doesn't use evil to tempt others. We are tempted when we allow our own desires to drag us off and trap us. Our selfish desires cause us to sin, and when sin is finished with us, it leaves us lifeless. When I was a teenager there was a familiar phrase of "The devil made me do it." The devil can't make you do anything; he is like the bartender who places bowls of popcorn on the tables to entice you to drink. He didn't drag you into the bar; the blinking

lights and your own desires drew you into the place. He didn't force the drink down your throat. All he did was put salty popcorn or pretzels in front of you as a way to entice you to partake of his offerings.

Don't be fooled, dear friends, every good and perfect gift comes down from the Father who created all the lights in the heavens. He is always the same and never makes dark shadows by changing. He wanted us to be his own special people, and so he sent the true message to give us new birth.

Be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to get angry. Angry people cannot do the good things that God wants done. Stop doing immoral or evil things. Rather listen to the message and be humble and internalize it and accept the truth that is planted in you that will save you. Be obedient to the truth of God's word. Don't allow your own ideas or thoughts to shut out the truth that is written in God's word that is able to purify and strengthen you so you will be able to live a godly life.

You must obey God's commandments, not just listen to them. Those who hear the message and refuse to obey it are like people who stare at themselves in a mirror and forget what they look like as soon as they leave. Look at the perfect Law of God that is able to set you free. God will bless you in everything you do if you listen and obey and don't just hear and forget.

If you are going to be pleasing to God, you must learn to control your tongue. God's word is pure and spotless and we are called to become like him. Be ready to assist widows and orphans and don't conform to the evil ways of the world.

Live in the present. I have learned many lessons concerning life from the Apostle Paul. In Philippians chapter 3, Paul wrote a little bit about his life before coming to Christ. He spoke about worshipping God by the Holy Spirit and refraining from bragging about himself and what he had accomplished in his life. He briefly reflects on the fact that according to the Law of Moses, he was pretty much top notch. His zeal even caused him to make trouble for the Christians whose faith was in Jesus Christ. But Christ showed him that what he thought was valuable and acceptable to God was worthless. Nothing is as wonderful as knowing Christ Jesus our Lord. He forsook everything else and counted it worthless. He realized that it was God's mercy and grace that opened his eyes to truth.

From that encounter in Damascus, all he wanted from that point on was to follow and obey God and to know Christ and the power that raised him to life from the dead. He desired to suffer and die as he did, so that somehow he may also be raised to life. He went on to say that he hadn't reached his goal. But Christ has a hold on his life. The one thing he did was this: He forgot the past and he focused on today and for what lies ahead for him. He desired to be received up in heaven when his life on earth is over. All mature Christians should follow his example. Work today! Obey God today! Live for today! God will direct your path for the future. Hebrews 3:15 tells us that if we hear God's voice TODAY don't harden your hearts but be open to the spirit of God to direct you.

**Proverbs 3:5 "Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he will direct your path."**

**I love the book of Proverbs. If you have not read it through recently, I encourage you to do so. Proverbs 4:20 is a godly father instructing his son. He tells him to listen carefully to everything that he tells him and don't forget a single word but think about it all. Knowing these teachings will mean true life and good health for you. Carefully guard your thoughts because they are the source of true life. Never tell lies or be deceitful in what you say. Keep looking straight ahead without turning aside. Know where you are headed, and you will stay on solid ground. Don't make a mistake by turning to the left or to the right. Never ignore the godly counsel given to you by mature Christians. You can learn a lot by listening! Watch the person's life and check it out. Is it a life that you would like to incorporate into yours? Follow the example. Paul said; Follow me as I follow Christ.**

**Paul taught concepts of the Old Testament. Use God's word for a light to your path and a lamp to your feet. Psalms 119:105,**

**Philippians 4:4 tells us to be glad because of Jesus Christ. Always be gentle with others. The Lord will soon be here. Don't worry about anything, but pray about everything. With thankful hearts offer up your prayers and requests to God. Then because you belong to Christ Jesus, God will bless you with peace that no one can completely understand. And this peace will control the way you think and feel.**

**Control your thoughts Philippians 4:8**

**Keep your minds on whatever things are true, pure, right, holy, friendly and proper. Don't ever stop thinking about what is truly worthwhile and worthy of praise. You hear the teachings of the Scripture by servants of God and you can read them for yourselves in the Holy Book. Don't just hear them; Start putting them into practice in your life and you will have the blessing of God on your life.**

**God who gives peace promises to be with you as you follow this path.**

**One of the most helpful things that I did to get control over the temptations of my life was to memorize Scriptures that pertained to me personally. Reading and memorizing Scripture give you the ammunition that you need when the temptation knocks on your door. Jesus used the word of God to overcome Satan before he started his ministry.**

**Look at Matthew chapter 3. Jesus went down to the water, was baptized by John the Baptist and the Holy Spirit came down on him in the form of a dove. A voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son and I am pleased with him." Following this wonderful experience Jesus was led into the wilderness for the purpose of facing temptation from Satan. Jesus was alone; he went without eating for forty days, so he was hungry and vulnerable. This is a good lesson for us to learn. Stay close to the family of God and watch out for Satan's schemes following some victories in your life, blessings from God, mountain top experiences, etc. Watch and beware of the workings of Satan. Sometimes he hits us when we are going through trials too. Financial problems, family disputes,**

unfair treatment by others, dishonesty that causes hardships to us. Satan uses these events to get us to stop trusting God and to depend on ourselves for answers. Beware!

Satan came to Jesus and tempted him in this manner, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to be made into bread." Jesus combatted Satan with the word of God. He said, "No one can live on bread alone, but by every word proceeding from the mouth of God." Satan then took Jesus to the holy city and had him stand on the highest part of the temple. He told him that if he was the Son of God to jump for the Scriptures say "He will command his angels concerning you and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone." Jesus answered, "It is written that you shall not tempt the Lord your God." Satan mishandled the word of God by misinterpreting it.

Again Satan took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. "All this I will give you", Satan said, "if you bow down and worship me." Jesus said, "Away with you Satan! For it is written Worship the Lord your God and serve only him." Then the devil left him and angels came and ministered to him. The three areas of temptation are the same as it was from the beginning; lust of the *eye*, lust of the flesh and the pride of life. Satan has these three that he uses and they are very effective for those who are not aware of his schemes. You should know that Satan goes about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may destroy. 1 Peter 5:8.

If you want to know the true character of Satan, read the book of Job. He took everything that he could away from Job in order to get him to turn against God, the creator. Job didn't understand why this happened to him, but he held onto his faith and wouldn't let go. Satan would have killed Job, but God would not allow it. God controls what things Satan is allowed to tempt God's children with. The word says that those who believe in Jesus will not be tempted beyond what they are able to endure. 1 Corinthians 10:13. With every temptation, God will give you a *way* to escape. He will show you the path to freedom. Look for an escape and take it! The Bible tells us to flee from evil!

Jesus overcame Satan with the word of God, which is a sword and it is the weapon that when properly used wins every battle against the enemy. See Ephesians 6:10-20.

In the book of Job, you will also learn the characteristics of our heavenly Father. He desires to bless his children and he takes pride in his followers. When the trials were over for Job, God replaced everything that he had lost and doubled it so he was very wealthy. Job testified that he had heard about God before he went through his trials and tribulations, but after he knew him and had seen him. See Job 42:5

Are you going through trials and tribulations? Put your faith in Jesus for he will see you through. When you get on the other side of your situation, you will look back and rejoice in the way that God vindicates his children. Remember, one soul is worth the whole world to God. Those who win souls are wise for souls have eternal value!