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Keeping a Proper Focus When it Comes to Health

The naturalistic perspective:

The human body is an awesome work of art. (*I am fearfully and wonderfully made- Psalm 139:14.*) Generally speaking, if food, water and suitable environment is provided, the body will be sustained in good health. It is even equipped with an immune system to fight off invasions of viruses and bacteria. From a naturalistic perspective, all we have to do to maintain good health is make sure food, water and a suitable environment is provided and then let the body do its thing.

Before the fall of man, the human body, with its miraculous design, could live forever. But when sin entered the world, that all changed. Sickness and death are now common to all human beings. Though the body is designed to fight off many illnesses, infections from some viruses and bacteria tend to cause death. Cancer also tends to result in death.

Knowing this cause and effect principle, knowledgeable humans take steps to protect themselves as best they can. For example, if there is an Ebola outbreak in some part of the world, most humans would try to avoid going there.

Since so many illnesses exist, we cannot protect ourselves perfectly. In fact, we cannot know from one day to the next whether or not we will suddenly experience a deadly illness. In general, all we can do in our own power to help our bodies remain in good health is provide for them in such a way that they receive what they need to remain healthy.

To hopefully achieve this outcome, some humans expend more energy and resources than others. For example, some people take supplements to hopefully guarantee that their body is receiving all the nutrients necessary for good health. Some people exercise more than others in order to maintain good body strength and cardiovascular health. But no matter how much effort or resources are expended, illness and death can and will occur at some point. Humans can take steps to live a healthy lifestyle but good health is not guaranteed .

The biblical perspective:

We have briefly discussed the naturalistic approach to maintaining good health. But how should the Christian view this subject? The Christian might take steps to maintain a healthy lifestyle, but he does so while armed with a biblical mindset as opposed to a merely natural mindset. Most notably, the Christian is more at peace than unbelieving humans because he knows that even if he gets sick and dies, he will live forever. Sickness and even death may be painful, but not horrific as it is to the unbeliever. (*"O Death, where is your sting?" – I Corinthians 15:55.*)

In addition, the Christian has the assurance that God is sovereign over all sickness and death. (*"We know that for those who love God, those who are called according to His purpose, He is working all things together for good" – Romans 8:28.*) But to what extent does God's sovereignty play in our day to day health? After all, since He created the body with the ability to be relatively self-sustaining, when does He exert influence over its operation?

We know that nothing is impossible for God. So, we know that if we are sick, He is fully able to completely heal us. But what role, if any, does God play in sickness and death since He is sovereign over all things? I suspect that it might not be possible for us to know all the details involved, but the Bible does provide some insight.

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I maintain that God is actively at work every single moment to keep every part of our body functioning properly. You might be wondering why that would be necessary since the body is designed to be basically self-sustaining. It is because the body is not merely subject to the physical laws of nature. Though many people do not believe it, there are very powerful spiritual forces constantly at work impacting the world, including the health of human beings.

In Luke 13:11-16, Jesus healed a woman who had a spirit of infirmity for 18 years. She was bent over and could not stand up. The Bible does not provide all the details. but Jesus said that Satan (the ruler of the evil spirits) was the one who caused this infirmity. Though the Bible does not provide the specifics, it is probable that a spirit under Satan's authority was directly involved. (The text does specify that she had "a spirit" of infirmity.)

The Bible contains many accounts of powerful angels that caused sickness, destruction and death. One instantly killed 185,000 Assyrian soldiers. (See Isaiah 37:36.) Another caused a plague that instantly killed 70,000 people of Israel. (See I Chronicles 21:14-30.) Since the Bible only uses the word "angel" in these cases, I cannot dogmatically insist that they were fallen angels (demons). But it makes sense that they were of the fallen angel category since it is in their nature to destroy and kill. We know that they are aligned with Satan to carry out his desires. If God permitted it, Satan and his forces would gladly and instantly kill everything that breathes. (See John 10:10.)

The opening chapters of Job indicate that Satan and his powerful fallen angels are able to cause not only sickness (Job's boils), they are even able to cause tornados and cause fire to fall down out of heaven. This same account gives us valuable insight into God's involvement in such calamities. Though the destruction in the Job account is attributed directly to Satan and his forces, God was actively involved in restraining Satan's efforts. Satan could do nothing without God's permission.

Based upon the Bible's teaching about the great power of Satan and his forces, and their utterly evil nature that always desires to destroy, I conclude that there is only one reason why my body is not utterly filled with a multitude of sicknesses. If God gave him permission, Satan and his forces would give me (and you) cancer immediately. He certainly has this power. And he certainly has such hate for us. God is actively restraining Satan and his forces every **moment**.¹

So, if it is your desire to take supplements and exercise, do so. But don't assume that such efforts are the chief means for maintaining health. Know that it is really God Himself that determines whether you will remain healthy or get sick. Thank Him always for your current health and ask Him constantly to keep sickness, etc. away.

Lastly, let us reject Satan's accusations of God. He wants us to think that God is not actively involved at every moment exercising His loving care for us. Yes, God is high and lifted up. Yet, He is involved constantly in our lives for our good. His constant care for us is proof of His great love for us as individuals. So, instead of assuming that God does not care about our failing health, let us thank Him for the measure of health we possess at this moment. If our eyesight is failing, let us be thankful for all of the bodily functions that still work. And let us remember that He has good purposes for our failing eyesight.

¹ I suggest that because of the spiritual dynamics involved in sicknesses, AI will fail to provide all the answers necessary in the development of cures. AI is not directly tied into the spiritual realm and therefore cannot take into account the very important data involving the influence of spiritual forces on sicknesses. Therefore, since it cannot ever know all the data, its conclusions will be estimations rather than precise outcomes. Those who have very high expectations that AI will help in the discovery of cures are probably people who view health merely from a naturalistic viewpoint. They probably don't understand the significant role that the spiritual forces play in health.