Sermon theme = The stewardship of our health is an essential area of growth in life.

Introduction

- Open Bibles (Luke 2)
- Mystery of Christmas = celebration of Jesus’ birth
- 252 Series – Growing in Wisdom
- 252 Series – Growing in Stature
- Testimony – Karen Simpson

Exegesis

- What is stature?
  - Luke 2:52
    52 And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.
    ✓ “grew” = to change one’s state for the better by advancing and making progress
    ✓ “stature” = Greek helikia; Meaning – the period of time a person is alive, span of life, lifetime, maturity
      o Jesus grew, progressed or advanced, in the span of His life – not just that He got older but that He gained in the reality of that span of life = health
    27 Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?
    ✓ “single hour” = KJV and NASB “cubit”
    ✓ “his life” = KJV “stature”; NASB “life’s span”
      o Literally, these verses are saying that you cannot add length to your life – it’s a gift from God
      o But, like wisdom, you can hinder the gift, life and health in this case, that God gives
• **John 9:21, 23**
  21 *But how he can see now, or who opened his eyes, we don't know. Ask him. He is of age; he will speak for himself.*
  ✓ “age” = maturity not height
  o He has legal standing because of his maturity

• **Ephesians 4:13**
  13 *until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.*
  ✓ “whole measure” = KJV and NASB “measure of the stature”
  o We are striving for the maturity and not the height of Jesus (which was probably about 5’ foot 6” inches)

• **Luke 19:3**
  3 *He wanted to see who Jesus was, but being a short man he could not, because of the crowd.*
  ✓ “short man” = KJV “little of stature”; NASB “small in stature”
  o May be the only time the word is used of height instead of maturity or span of life or quality (health) of life

❖ Jesus grew in stature meaning He made progress in physical life – what we call “good health”

➢ **Command to stewardship of our health**
  • **At Creation**
    o Genesis 1:28-30
      28 *God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.”*
      29 *Then God said, "I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food.*
      30 *And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air and all the creatures that move on the ground-- everything that has the breath of life in it-- I give every green plant for food." And it was so.
✓ “fruitful and multiply” = Command to live our physical life in such a way (health) that humanity grows

✓ “for food” = Original diet limited to fruits and vegetables
  o God wants us to be His managers on earth and has given us the earth as blessing for our health

• Following the Flood
  o Genesis 9:1-4
    1. Then God blessed Noah and his sons, saying to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the earth.
    2. The fear and dread of you will fall upon all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air, upon every creature that moves along the ground, and upon all the fish of the sea; they are given into your hands.
    3. Everything that lives and moves will be food for you. Just as I gave you the green plants, I now give you everything.
    4. But you must not eat meat that has its lifeblood still in it.
      ✓ “fruitful and increase” = Repeat of command for humanity to increase
      ✓ “everything” = Adjustment of original diet to include animals (land, sky, water)
  o God gives us the blessing of food for health and strength to serve Him

• In the Law
  o Leviticus 11 (cp. Deuteronomy 14)
    2. Say to the Israelites: ‘Of all the animals that live on land, these are the ones you may eat:
      ✓ “may eat” = God restricts the diet of His people (Israel) to include some animals and not others
  o God gives He people a new diet – in concern for health and in distinction of His people

• Following the Cross
  o Acts 10
    13. Then a voice told him, "Get up, Peter. Kill and eat."
    15. The voice spoke to him a second time, "Do not call anything impure that God has made clean."
  o Vision is to teach the lesson regarding people but in consideration of Acts 15 it also seems to apply (at least to non-Jews) to diet
Acts 15

29 You are to abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality. You will do well to avoid these things. Farewell.

The distinction of Israel from the nations was changed from dietary matters to spiritual and relational matters

<Key Point>
Dietary concerns have been a part of God’s revelation to His people in how they are to live to be able to carry out His commands

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**Biblical principles of stewardship of our health**

- **The principle of beneficial not only permissible**
  - 1 Corinthians 6:12
  
    12 “Everything is permissible for me"-- but not everything is beneficial. "Everything is permissible for me"-- but I will not be mastered by anything.
  
    ✓ “beneficial” = advantageous, profitable (NASB) or helpful
  
- Not all things that I can do (including my activities and my eating) are truly helpful or beneficial for me

- **Examples / Contrast Average American**
  
    ✓ America’s bounty of food = 34% of adults are obese and 34% are overweight; 18% of young people (12-19) are obese and a similar amount are overweight
  
    ✓ Obesity = 400,000 deaths a year in US
  
    ✓ America’s bounty of food = If all Americans would give up meat, the grain, already grown (it takes 5 lbs of grain to produce 1 lb of meat), would feed the 1 billion people of Africa
  
    ✓ TV = Americans spend 9x as much time (170 minutes a day) watching TV as being active or exercising (19 minutes)

- I may be permitted to eat all that I am able but it is not beneficial to me

- I may be permitted to spend my time in many different ways but not all are beneficial to me

- **The principle of mastered not only permissible**
  
  - 1 Corinthians 6:12
  
    12 “Everything is permissible for me"-- but not everything is beneficial. "Everything is permissible for me"-- but I will not be mastered by anything.
  
    ✓ “mastered” = to rule or reign by exercising authority over
Not all things that I can do (including my activities and my eating) are good for me if they take control in my life

Examples / Contrast Average American

✓ Food = 1 in 4 Americans “try” a diet every year
✓ Exercise = 1 in 5 Americans have a gym membership (but 80% rarely/never use)
✓ Work = Average American worker puts in 44+ hours per week with 70% of two-couple families having both parents working
✓ Addictions = 1 in 3 Americans are addicted to tobacco
✓ Addictions = 1 in 11 Americans are addicted to drugs
✓ Addictions = 1 in 14 Americans are addicted to alcohol
✓ Addictions = 1 in 30 has an eating disorder

I may be permitted to partake in many things or activities but I am not to be controlled by anything

- The principle of ownership

1 Corinthians 6:13-20

13 "Food for the stomach and the stomach for food"-- but God will destroy them both. The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.

15 Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ himself? Shall I then take the members of Christ and unite them with a prostitute? Never!

19 Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own;

20 you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.

✓ “for the Lord” = Ownership
✓ “members of Christ” = Ownership
✓ “temple of the Holy Spirit” = Ownership
✓ “not your own; you were bought” = Ownership

I am permitted to do with my body and regarding my health only what God would do with my body – because it is His

I am given a body to manage as a blessing and gift from God – my gift may be different from your gift and so my care may be different but in the end I must acknowledge and reflect God’s ownership of that gift
• The principle of honor
  o 1 Corinthians 6:13-20
    20  you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.
    ✓ “honor” = KJV and NASB “glorify”; Meaning – praise, honor, magnify, clothe in splendor
  o I am called to honor God through my body – through my health and care of His gift
  o Difficult topic to preach on – but honor makes it necessary
  o Examples / Contrast Average American
    ✓ Two-thirds of all adults in America are overweight
    ✓ Article, “What’s the big Deal about being a Fat Pastor?”
    ✓ The obesity rate among those in ministry is 10% than those who are not in ministry
    ✓ 2010 SBC = 73% of those screened were overweight or obese
  o I am not allowed to dishonor God with my body

✓ I have been given a great gift (my body and health) and great freedom with that gift but I must pursue what is beneficial, what does not master, what demonstrates God’s ownership and what brings Him honor

➤ Wisdom in stewardship of our health
• Doctors
  o See a doctor about your health
  o Go to the doctor regularly – routine maintenance on an automobile

• Balanced approach to food
  o Diets don’t work – discipline does
  o Mark Haub = Twinkies 27lbs in 10 weeks
  o BMI / Body Fat / BMR (basal metabolic rate)
  o Less meat – more fruits and vegetables
  o Less processed – more natural

• Exercise
  o See a doctor first or be under regular care
  o Start simple
  o Set reasonable goals – but set some

• Limit your risk

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• Wear your seat belt
• Have fun but don’t be foolish

• **Live responsibly**
  o Take your medicine if you need it
  o Ask for help – don’t do it yourself
  o It is mastering you – you don’t need it
  o TK Cholesterol (260 w/o medicine; 190-210 with medicine; 160 with exercise)
  o Give blood – for you and for someone else

• **Accountability Partner**
  o First Step 4 Health
  o More likely to exercise with a partner

**Response**

• **As disciples of Jesus Christ, we need to follow His example of growing in stature.**
  ✓ Observers = Come to Jesus
  ✓ Disciples = Follow Jesus