

Get Healthy **...for Heaven's Sake**

LISA MORRONE, P.T.



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Investing in Your Future

Making the Most of God's Gift of Life

Let this be written for a future generation, that a
people not yet created may praise the LORD.

PSALM 102:18

It was the summer before I was to begin the fifth grade. On the very same day the world lost Elvis, the king of rock 'n' roll, I lost my “second mother,” my Aunt Catherine, to breast cancer. She was only 52. And though that loss was devastating for me, God was true to His promise “to make all things work together for good, for those who love Him and are called according to His purpose.” Within the very hour of my aunt’s death, my uncle—fresh in his grief—drew me into his arms and said, “Lisa, I want you to promise me that you will always take care of your body. Make sure you keep yourself healthy.”

At ten years old, I stood there stunned. Up to that point I had always assumed that sickness or disease was something that just “happened” to people. It had never occurred to me that humans had the power to positively (or negatively) influence their future health. Having watched my aunt suffer terribly throughout my childhood, and having seen how her longing to play a vital role in the Christian community went unrealized, I determined that, as far as it depended on me, I would walk a different road and make the necessary investments to ensure that I had a healthy future.

Investments of any kind are best realized when we use some forethought. As a rule of thumb, the sooner you begin investing, the better

off you are in the future. For example, when it comes to finances, if you're like me, you may feel frustrated with yourself for not having begun saving years earlier. Sooner or later it dawns on us that in order to achieve maximal return on our investments, we need to take advantage of the principle of compounding interest. In giving advice to those who've yet to begin investing, financial gurus always recommend that *now* is the best time to begin.

The same "compounding principle" holds true of your health. In order to achieve maximum returns, you must take care to invest in the wellness of your body *today* if you expect to reap great rewards tomorrow, next year, and in the years to come. The sooner you start, the more health you can have in the future, and the less disease and disability you will have to deal with.

Healthful changes implemented today will yield fabulous returns in this life—both short-term and long-term. For example, getting a good night's sleep tonight will not only give you a better outlook tomorrow, but it will also help to prevent aging, improve brain function, and assist you in losing those stubborn extra pounds. Becoming proactive in your own health care is the very best way to preserve and protect your life. If you work at reversing the effects of neglect or abuse and then seek to maintain your physical well-being, you will be poised to do far more for the kingdom of God.

Investing in your wellness will yield great dividends for all eternity. One of God's most precious blessings to us is the physical body we each have been given. The Bible tells us that we are the only part of God's creation that was made in His image. Integral to His creation are our physical bodies, with which we worship and bring glory to Him through performing good works—or as my Southern girlfriends would say, "being Jesus with skin on." With our bodies we serve the needs of other Christians and bring the gospel message to the unsaved. We've been created to bring God glory by using our physical strength.

Switching Plans

Before the introduction of sin into the world, the Bible tells us that these bodies of ours did not see decay. Amazing, huh? No wrinkle

creams or walking canes were needed; no reading glasses or gray hair to deal with. As we age, however, we become all too aware that we aren't the same today as we were last year—or the year before, for that matter. Disease and decay are part of Satan's plan to destroy our bodies, one of God's most precious creations. The systematic breakdown of a believer's body effectively, and progressively, reduces his or her usefulness in serving Christ on this earth.

And you know what? From a strategic point of view, Satan has done well for himself. Today, the lifestyles of many of us have left us vulnerable to sickness and disability. At times we are even playing for the wrong side—helping Satan with his own game plan for our early demise. We're abusing our bodies by overeating, not getting enough sleep, or by feeding our brains a steady diet of health-depleting thoughts and food choices.

Well, this book presents a different plan, and it brings an entirely different outlook for your future! There is much that can be done to resist, reverse, and reconstruct the aging process. Getting older is irreversible—a result of the original sin—but the *way* in which we age, and the *speed* at which we deteriorate, are very much under our control. Because there's a battle raging, a spiritual one, to participate fully we need to be ready, willing, and most important...*able*. Has the lifestyle you've chosen caused you to lay down your weapon of warfare (your physical body) on the couch to rest or on a doctor's exam table? Isn't it time to get up? You and I belong on the battlefield. It's why we were created!

The Essential Components of Wellness

From the knowledge I've gained during my 20-plus years of patient care in the medical field (and my 40-some years of personal and spiritual life experience as a born-again believer), I see *six essential components of wellness* a person needs to pursue, restore, and maintain optimal physical health.

- The first area to address is *sleep*—that is, the lack of it.
Sleep is not simply downtime; it is repair and rejuvenation

time for your body and your brain. Seventy-four percent of people report regularly getting less than seven hours of sleep per night, which places them (or you) at increased risk for early brain aging, muscle and joint breakdown—and even becoming overweight. (I'll bet you never thought your weight problem could be related to your lack of sleep!)

- The next two essential health components are the related issues of *diet* and *nutrition*. Two-thirds of our nation's adult population is overweight or obese, and even though we don't look like it from the outside, many are actually malnourished—living primarily on “empty calories.” Most every common disease is somehow related to your food intake and weight distribution—so it is critically important that you know the best way to care for yourself in these areas.
- The fourth and fifth areas address your body's bone and muscle health, as these body parts are primarily responsible for moving you around in this life. Acquiring proper *posture* and possessing adequate *strength and flexibility* are crucial if you are to recover from, or avoid, many orthopedic-type physical disabilities, such as herniated discs, arthritis, and tendonitis.
- Finally, you need to know how to maximize your *brain health* so you can guard against premature brain aging. I'm sure you want your mind to remain sharp and clear for as long as you live, just like I do. Research shows that brain deterioration actually begins after your thirtieth birthday!

According to studies conducted at Rush Medical Center in Chicago, roughly *50 percent* of people who reach 85 will develop dementia. Yet here is the reason to have hope: There are many lifestyle changes you and I can make that are proven to support the health of our brains and positively impact our memory and ability to think analytically long into our golden years. Remember, Moses was 120 years old

and he was still governing the nation of Israel. (And if you think that happened only in biblical times, my husband's grandmother is still as sharp as a tack—and she's 100.)

Making a Start

If we all could compare notes, we would find that each one of us struggles with different areas of our health—and to different degrees. Someone might need a simple tune-up, while another might require a major health overhaul. Many of you would admit that you could use some help in *all six* of these health components.

If you are in this latter group, determine not to become overwhelmed by trying to make adjustments in every area of your life all at the same time. To be successful over the long haul, you must view wellness as a *journey*, not a destination. And no one's expecting you to turn into an Olympic athlete. Instead, this book is filled with straightforward, easy-to-apply health “nuggets,” which when put into practice, promise to make big changes in your health today, tomorrow, and throughout your lifetime.

In part 2 you'll find these six wellness areas laid out smorgasbord style. This way you can pick and choose, digging in to the specific areas you wish to improve. As you make gains in one area, turn your attention to working on another component of your self-health care plan. And if an area where you've made progress begins to slide (as regular exercise does with me), simply begin again. Past failures do not predict future ones. Truthfully, failure can actually teach you what method doesn't work for you. Let's agree right here to not give up on our pursuit of better health!



Are you ready to invest in your future, my friend? Can you be described by the well-known phrase: “sick and tired of being sick and tired”? Or do you want to ensure that—as far as it depends on you—you'll do everything you can to not become worn out as the years progress? If you are concerned that declining health, a depleted energy level,

or a foggy brain might stand between you and what you believe God wants you to do, then take this invitation from me to rebuild and protect your health. I'll be with you on the journey.

But before we get down to the actual business of rebuilding, let's first get our firm foundation poured directly from Scripture. This way we can make sure our hearts, minds, and souls are rightly aligned with God's will for our wellness.

LET'S REVIEW

1. Investing in your wellness will yield great dividends not only in this life, but for all eternity.
2. We are called Christ's ambassadors here on earth.
3. Yet the church has become indistinguishable from the world when it comes to obesity, disability, and disease-by-choice.
4. The systematic breakdown of a believer's body effectively, and progressively, reduces his or her usefulness in serving as Christ on this earth.
5. There is much that you can do to resist, reverse, and reconstruct the aging process.
6. Past failures in improving your health do not predict future ones.
7. Are you ready to start taking better care of the wonderful gift God has given you—your body? If so...let's go!