

# Sunday

## Week #3. Peace With the Body

The world's religions encourage us to consider the body as a reliable companion, as a capable mediator of our experiences, as a vehicle for transformation, and as a temple of God.

Then, the thin culture we live in starts messing up our minds. We look in the picture books on newsstands and then look in the mirror and what we see doesn't match up with the models and the celebrities' images, so we fantasize about being thinner or better proportioned, thus rejecting our own bodies for an illusion that happiness is in everybody else. Then we start worrying.

Diagnostically, your body is not the problem.

"Every mortal is troubled with many and various desires through various paths . . . by different means to attain one happiness: in a word – God."

Anicius Manlius Severinus  
Boethius

Your thoughts about your body are the problem. Your depressed spirit comes from the thoughts that you have never subjected to honest inquiry, the thoughts that you innocently believe. Thoughts such as "I am too overweight to wear the clothes I want, "my spouse does not love me enough", "my boss does not appreciate me, "I am tired all the time". Meanwhile your body simply keeps itself busy trying to live in harmony with its energy system, working efficiently, intelligently, kindly, and resourcefully, and hoping for a good meal from time to time so that it can keep going.

What are you forgetting?

Gratitude.

We are guests on the great good Earth and our every breath should be one of gratitude to the Host.

The medieval Christian mystic Meister Eckhart suggests that if the only prayer we say in our lifetime is "thank you," that would be enough.

So, why not every day put a song of praise on your lips in the early morning hours. For the breath that fills our lungs. For other bodies – our loved ones, our

family, our circle of friends. For the unexpected, bountiful blessings that other bodies bring into our lives unheralded.

There is surely enough, if you open your eyes and ears, to say, "Praise God from whom all blessings flow."

Praise puts everything into its proper place and perspective.

Consider. Your body uses its skin and ligaments and tendons to record all that goes on around you every day.

Thus, your body sitting, and lying down, and standing up are living records of life given, life taken, life hoped for, life healed.

The body is multilingual. It speaks through its color and its temperature. Thus, it flushes with recognition, glows with love, turns white with pain and fear, and expresses nonconviction through coldness.

The body is a marvel of motion. It speaks through Brownian movement, through the tiny internal dance of its energy pumps, motion that shows when we are a jitter, or trembling or swaying or leaping in heart, or falling in spirit. Motion is rising hope, the pit at the center.

To be of any mind other than grateful for the body's beauty and value and for its magnificence of design is to force the body to live without its rightful spirit, its rightful form, its right to exultation.

To believe yourself unacceptable in body because your beauty is outside the current fashion is deeply wounding to the natural joy that belongs to the adventurous nature that is ours from the Maker.

Ya gotta believe and ya gotta say, "Thank you."

# Monday

## Week 3 – Day 1

### Morning Prayer

#### Theme: Ask God to heal our families

Pray for a family member of whom you need to ask forgiveness. Ask for the healing balm of being forgiven and of forgiving others.

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### Evening Prayer

#### Theme: Changing what is, through the power of the Holy Spirit

#### The Holy Spirit As A Source of Creativity

Music.

The people of God sing. There are songs everywhere in Scripture. Through music the majesty of God is realized in exuberance. And the mercy of Jesus is gathered through century-tiered choirs of men and women and children. Moses sings. Miriam sings. Deborah sings. David sings. Mary sings. Angels sing. Jesus and His disciples sing. Paul and Silas sing. When you realize who Jesus is and what He does in your life through the Holy Spirit, you can't help but sing.

*Then I heard every creature in Heaven and Earth, in underworld and sea, join in, all voices in all places singing:*

*"To the one on the throne! To the lands!*

*The blessing, the honor, the glory, the strength,*

*For age after age after age."*

*Revelation 5:13*

### Wrapping UP

Let the day's events stream through your mind. Let them teach you. List five things you did today that were good. Thank God for each.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Make a list of six things you intend to do tomorrow. Ask the Holy Spirit for help.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

# Tuesday

## Week 3 – Day 2

### Morning Prayer

#### Theme: Pray that God will heal our work communities

Today pray for someone at work who is struggling spiritually. Ask God to give them His peace and lay conviction upon their heart.

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### Evening Prayer

#### Theme: Changing what is, through the power of the Holy Spirit

### The Holy Spirit As A Source of Creativity

#### The Art of Words

Words are a gift. The Bible says that words are born in the heart, not the head. The Spirit of God has the habit of taking the words of Jesus out of their spiritual setting and transferring them into the setting of our personal lives. There, words have the power to enslave us through the way we talk to ourselves, or, they have the power to set us free. The secret is in our skill of usage. So, as in the case of other gifts, the art of words takes practice. The payoff is huge. You can make your own heart sing within you. So, become a professional in the use of words. A world of sick and lonely and feeble people, on street corners, in work places, in schools, is dying to hear from you.

*When they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God with boldness.*

*Acts 4:31*

Pray for the Holy Spirit to give you the word of God and the power to speak it with boldness.

### Wrapping UP

Let the day's events stream through your mind.  
Let them teach you.

List five things you did today that were good.

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- 4.
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Make a list of six things you intend doing tomorrow. Ask the Holy Spirit's help.

- 1.
- 2.
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- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

# Wednesday

## Week 3 – Day 3

### Morning Prayer

#### Theme: Pray for the healing of our living communities

Today pray for a sense of reverence in your community. Pray that all of your neighbors, irrespective of their differences, will respect one another and bring Gods' Peace to the community.

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### Evening Prayer

#### Theme: Changing what is, through the power of the Holy Spirit

#### The Holy Spirit As A Source of Creativity

Work.

When at work, assume that every move you make has a meaning, a plan, and a purpose, in the light of eternity. God puts us where God needs us. If you think this way, your job may not seem any grander, but now you are centered, focused, clear.

"So this is where I'm supposed to be," you might think, "But I always assumed I was supposed to be somewhere else, doing something else, being someone else."

Check your assumptions. For right now – this moment – you are where God wants you. Otherwise you would be somewhere else. So, put your hands on today's work and shape it like you would clay. Thus you invest it with divine reality.

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# Thursday

## Week 3 – Day 4

### Morning Prayer

**Theme: Pray for the healing of our nation**

Today pray for a sense of hope in our nation.

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### Evening Prayer

**Theme: Changing what is, through the power of the Holy Spirit**

**The Holy Spirit As A Source of Discernment**

Lies of the World

They are everywhere, the lies of the world. They tell us it is OK to behave badly, OK to over indulge, OK to eat things that we know are bad for us.

Here are a few examples from fast food restaurant advertisements:

Wendy's – Do what tastes right

McDonald's – I'm loving it

Hardee's – Life is short, Eat thick

Burger King - Give yourself the gift of beef

- Feed your inner Champion (You are a BK champion. The MVP of the hour. EVERY hour. Bacon and jalapenos make up your team, and the game can't start without you. Armchair. Lawn chair. It doesn't matter. You taste victory with every bite. You know the score. You eat like a champion.)

Are we truly foolish enough to believe that eating a BK burger with bacon equates to "eating like a champion"? Does eating at McDonald's have anything to do with our idea of love? Is it ok to do what tastes or feels right, even if it does harm to our body (God's Temple)? Is life so short and meaningless that our health does not matter?

As Christians we must look at these statements in light of God's words. We are called to be an example of restraint in an out of control world. Look around you and find your own lies of the world. Pray for the Holy Spirit to give you eyes to see and ears to hear.

### Wrapping UP

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Let them teach you.

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# Friday

## Week 3 – Day 5

### Morning Prayer

#### Theme: Pray for healing of the world

Today pray for the children of the world. Pray for the orphaned, the poor, the sick, the forgotten. Ask God to give them healing and peace.

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### Evening Prayer

#### Fundamental Friday(A review of the Spiritual Foundations of Change)

**Principle #3** - You must replace the love of food with God's love.  
(Philippians 3:19, John 6:35, Romans 14:13-23)

In John 6:35 Jesus says, "I am the bread of life." What could He have meant? Are these just pretty words? Consider this:

Bread sustains life. Without it life can't go on. But, what is life? Is it just feeding our faces? Hardly!

Spiritually, real life is a real relationship with God – a relationship of trust, of obedience, of love, and of thought – a relationship made possible only through Jesus.

The meal eaten without Jesus at the table is a meal eaten for existence but not for life.

If Jesus is the essence of life, He is the Bread of Life.

Our hunger is ended when we know Jesus and through Him know God.

Thus, the restless soul is at rest. The hungry heart is satisfied.

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# Saturday Eating Realities

## Week 3

### Congratulations!

You completed the first week of The Reduce Diet.

Surprise, you did not starve to death!

Your daily food intake has averaged 1200-1500 calories/day, made up of foods high in protein and fiber, and low in fat. Most Americans eat more than 2500 calories/day made up of low fiber, high fat foods. Your body needs at most 2000 calories/day so the excess is stored in fat cells, building up over time. Reducing your daily food intake to a reasonable level lets your body use the calories as energy with little left over to store. Eating smaller meals several times a day with snacks in between should wipe out your hunger.

**KEEP IT UP!**

Go shopping for Diet #2 items.

Start Diet #2 on Monday

Remember to chart your weight daily.

# Saturday's Message

## Week 3

### "A Challenge to Christians"

#### Galatians 6:9

I never cease to be amazed by the fact that the Bible, the word of God, speaks to us at the very point of our personal need. One of our great needs today is remaining faithful to Almighty God and to the work which Christ gave us as His disciples. We are constantly tempted by discouragement and weariness in accomplishing our God-given mission in our communities and in the world.

The Apostle Paul speaks to this need in Galatians 6:9 where the Apostle is inspired to write: "Let us not be weary in well-doing for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not." I have studied this verse in the Greek and in four or five translations. Any way your read it, Galatians 6:9 has two major parts.

1. First, there is a command, "Let us not be weary in well-doing."
2. Second, there is a promise, "For in due season we shall reap, if we faint not."

Let's look at the command. It is a strong one which says, "Let us not be weary in well-doing." All of us know what it means to be tired physically. Who among us has not come to midday finding his energy well spent and wishing the day's end was nearer. Jesus Christ Himself, during the days of His earthly ministry, knew the experience of being physically tired. In John 4:6, we read, "Now Jacob's well was there; Jesus therefore, being wearied with His journey sat there on the well...."

We all grow weary physically. But Galatians 6:9 is not speaking about physical weariness. The verse refers to spiritual weariness. The first part of Galatians 6:9 is God's command for His people not to give in to the disease of spiritual weariness. Jesus never gave in to spiritual weariness. No doubt, there were times when He was tempted to, but it was said of Him that He went about doing good. And in our text we are commanded to follow His great example. We are to go about doing good and not ever give in to the strong pressures to stop doing good. This command may be easy to hear but more difficult to heed. Let's look then at the promise.

The second part of Galatians 6:9 says, "For in due season, we shall reap if we faint not." This is one of those glorious promises found in the Word of God. The promise is that of ultimate victory for those who labor faithfully in Christ's

name. "We shall reap" is the promise. Our labors of love, our witnessing activity, and our good deeds are not all in vain as we are often tempted to believe. "We shall reap."

Two truths about the promise must be considered.

1. First, the harvest, the time of reaping, will come not in our own time but in God's own time. The harvest and the harvest time are in God's hands. We are to work diligently as the Holy Spirit leads us and then leave the harvest time to God.

During the early days of one of my pastorates, I met a man who had many problems which kept him from making use of the talents he had. He came to church occasionally. He had never made a profession of faith and did not mind making it clear that he never planned to do so. He enjoyed baseball and loved to fish and hunt. I started going to games and hunting and fishing with him. This fellowship gave us time for some serious discussions about life. We became close friends but this man resisted making a personal decision for Christ. I must confess that I became weary in well-doing, tired of trying to encourage this man to realize that he needed Christ in his life. This went on for about five years and the man became more regular in his church attendance. One Sunday morning when the invitation was extended, he made his way to the altar and made one the most sincere professions of faith I have ever witnessed. He was serious about that decision and the quality and degree of that personal profession of faith was revealed in his life. His life was transformed.

During those five years, there were many times when I was tempted to give up, tempted to give in to that spiritual disease called "Weariness in well-doing." I was impatient, forgetting that the harvest and the time of the harvest are in God's hands. He planned it that way.

2. Second, the promise is conditional. "In due season we shall reap, **IF** we faint not." What a challenge not to give in to weariness in well-doing! Almighty God is counting on us!

When we are tempted to become weary in well-doing we need to stir ourselves - or better still let the Holy Spirit stir us - and always remember to faithfully heed the challenge to Christians found in Galatians 6:9, "Let us not be weary in well-doing for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not." AMEN.

Reverend Phillip R. Morrow Sr.