

Session 12

Health and Wellness

Welcome and Prayer

Ask for a volunteer to open the session with prayer.

Sharing

Invite the group to share any insights, questions or revelations from the daily reflections from the prior week.

Introduction of Session Focus

One of our greatest challenges is our busyness. It can rob us of our health spiritually, emotionally, relationally, and physically. Spiritually, we can be so busy that there is little time spent with Jesus in his Word and in prayer. Emotionally, we can become depressed, skeptical, and negative in our approach to life. Relationally, we distance ourselves from others and our relationships become a source of stress and conflict. Physically, we gain weight, fail to exercise, and resist visiting with professionals to monitor our health.

Healthy living requires us to attend to all four of these important areas of our life: Spiritual, Emotional, Relational, and Physical. They work together to provide us with the abundant life Jesus intends for us to experience. Without this holistic approach to our health, we become increasingly vulnerable to sin that leads to self-destruction. Some may believe that it is self-centered to focus on our health, but living a healthy life is one of the most powerful ways we witness to others about the gift and joy of the life God has given us.

Time in the Word

Scripture reading — Luke 10:38-42

³⁸Now as they went on their way, Jesus entered a village. And a woman named Martha welcomed him into her house. ³⁹And she had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching. ⁴⁰But Martha was distracted with much serving. And she went up to him and said, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me." ⁴¹But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things, ⁴²but one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her."

Large Group Discussion

1. What is the context of this interaction between Jesus, Mary and Martha?
2. In light of the four areas of health what are the implications for each area in this text? (spiritually, emotionally, relationally and physically)
3. Do you see yourself more as Martha or Mary? Why?
4. How does your busyness get in the way of your health?

Small Group Break-out sessions

Gather in groups of two or three.

Discipling Conversations:

Ask if anyone is comfortable sharing where they are in regard to their health and wellness. This may include spiritual and emotional health, as well as physical. Discuss together your daily/weekly habits of exercise, eating healthy food, watching your weight, recreation, and sabbath time.

Allow your discipling conversations to arise naturally out of the sharing. Try to follow the flow of discipling conversations.

Where are you now? (Current Reality)

Where do you want to be? (Vision)

Does your vision reflect your beliefs, values & priorities? (Alignment)

How do you plan to accomplish your vision? (Action Plan)

What resources will you need?

How can I hold you accountable?

Set a time for your small group to meet and reflect on the daily devotions for between the sessions.

Large group wrap-up

Have participants share any closing thoughts, questions, insights or observations that arose from the break out groups.

Reminder

1. Continue to do the daily devotions and journal their insights and questions.
2. They should set a time during the second week of devotions to meet with one or two others for a discipleship guiding session.

Next week: "Boundaries."

Close in prayer.

Helpful Resources

The Road Less Traveled by M. Scott Peck

Praying the Psalms by Thomas Merton

Devotions: Week Sixteen & Seventeen

Weekday 1

Scripture reading — 1 Timothy 4:8

For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come.

Focus Questions

Record your thoughts from prayer and reflection.

1. Read through the Scripture a second time and highlight the word or phrase that stands out for you.

2. What is going on in your life that connects with that word or phrase?

3. In what ways is our spiritual life tied to our physical, emotional health and relational health?

4. What area needs the most attention right now?

Daily Journal

Record your thoughts from prayer and reflection.

As you begin this devotional focus area and reflect on this text, take time to rate each area of your health using a scale of 1-10 for each line. Without condemnation, what did you learn?

Spiritual Health:

- Enjoy reading the Word
- Applying the Word to my life
- Time in prayer
- Accountable to others

Emotional Health:

- Internal peace
- Optimistic outlook
- Ability to concentrate
- Problem-solving/decision-making skills

Relational Health:

- Relationship with spouse
- Relationships with children
- Relationships with friends
- Relationships with other Christian peers

Physical Health:

- Exercise
- Eating Habits
- Energy
- Check-ups and medical testing

What has caused you to think deeper?

Weekday 2

Scripture reading — 1 Corinthians 6: 19-20

“Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; ²⁰but were bought with a price. Therefore, honor God with your bodies.” (NIV)

Focus Questions

Record your thoughts from prayer and reflection.

1. Read through the Scripture a second time and highlight the word or phrase that stands out for you.

2. What is going on in your life that connects with that word or phrase?

3. How is it contrary to our culture to assert that, "You are not your own?"

4. Considering the price that was paid, what is your value in the eyes of the Father?

5. What does this Scripture say about all four areas of your health?

Spiritual –

Emotional –

Relational –

Physical –

6. Where is the Holy Spirit inviting you to respond this week?

Daily Journal

Record your thoughts from prayer and reflection.

What have you thought about today in this focus area that you longing for?

Weekday 3

Scripture reading — 1 Corinthians 9: 25-27

[St. Paul writes,] “Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we imperishable. ²⁶So, I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. ²⁷But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.”

Focus Questions

Record your thoughts from prayer and reflection.

1. Read through the Scripture a second time and highlight the word or phrase that stands out for you.

2. What is going on in your life that connects with that word or phrase?

3. Why does an athlete have to exercise self-control in all things?

4. How do you engage in “disciplining” your body or keep it under control? How could you do better at this?

5. Where in your life do you most seem to be running aimlessly or just beating the air? What are the root causes?

6. Where is the Holy Spirit inviting you to respond this week?

Daily Journal

Record your thoughts from prayer and reflection.

What small specific step and active response can you take in the direction God's Word is leading you?

Weekday 4

Scripture reading — Romans 12:1-2

I appeal to you therefore, brothers,[a] by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. ²Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Focus Questions

Record your thoughts from prayer and reflection.

1. Read through the Scripture a second time and highlight the word or phrase that stands out for you.

2. What is going on in your life that connects with that word or phrase?

3. What does it mean to offer your body as a "living sacrifice?"

4. How can you deal with and use your body as a form of worship?

5. How would you describe the “pattern of this world” in verse 2?

6. How does transformation in the life of a disciple of Jesus happen?

7. Where is the Holy Spirit inviting you to respond this week?

Daily Journal

Record your thoughts from prayer and reflection.

How does this passage focus my attention first on Jesus, second on my identity “in Christ,” and third on my participation in the Body of Christ?

How is this passage moving me beyond myself to take a specific small step in the direction of serving my family, church, or neighbor?

Weekday 5

Scripture reading — Romans 8: 9-14

“You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. ¹⁰But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. ¹¹If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you. ¹²So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. ¹³For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. ¹⁴For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.”

Focus Questions

Record your thoughts from prayer and reflection.

1. Read through the Scripture a second time and highlight the word or phrase that stands out for you.
2. What is going on in your life that connects with that word or phrase?
3. When you think about the truth that the same Spirit who raised Jesus is at work in you, how does this impact the challenges you are facing in the four health areas spiritual, emotional, relational and physical? What are those challenges?
4. When you think of the four health areas, where can you celebrate the Spirit leading you? Where is the flesh still struggling?
5. Where is the Holy Spirit inviting you to respond this week?

Daily Journal

Reflect on this week.

Reflecting on the Scriptures this week, what theme do you see developing?

Review any action steps you have felt led to take.

Begin to write a one or two sentence statement for this week's focus area. Try to have it reflect what the verses this week have taught you about who Christ Jesus is, and his invitation to follow him in this area of life.

Saturday (before worship...preparing)

Saturdays are a day of preparation as we contemplate the coming Sabbath. Look back over the week, consider such questions as:

1. What sins will I lay before the Lord in my confession?

2. What prayers will I lift up?

3. What questions will I be seeking the answers to?

4. What burdens do I need to lay down in order to be fully open to the movement of the Holy Spirit?

5. Who might I invite to journey with me?

Sunday (after worship...pondering)

Sundays are devoted to worship and reflection. We gather together as the Body of Christ to lift our praises to God and receive what only he can give us. Later, reflect on such questions as:

1. What point of the sermon or Sunday School lesson most caught my attention? What exactly touched my heart?

2. Which song, hymn or portion of liturgy most became a prayer or conversation with God?

3. How will making my confession and hearing the absolution affect how I live this week?

4. What strength or comfort did I receive as I participated in worship today?

5. What was the gospel message I heard today and who did I share it with?

6. Who did I speak with that I can remember in prayer this week?

Weekday 6

Scripture reading — Ephesians 4:17-24

¹⁷Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. ¹⁸They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. ¹⁹They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity. ²⁰But that is not the way you learned Christ! — ²¹assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, ²²to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, ²³and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, ²⁴and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

Focus Questions

Record your thoughts from prayer and reflection.

1. Read through the Scripture a second time and highlight the word or phrase that stands out for you.

2. What is going on in your life that connects with that word or phrase?

3. We can see the old sinful nature at work when we have closed minds and we harden our hearts. How can you “throw off” the old nature?

4. How does Christ making you a new person provide for spiritual renewal of your thoughts and attitudes in each health area?

Spiritual —

Emotional —

Relational —

Physical —

5. Where is the Holy Spirit inviting you to respond this week?

Daily Journal

Record your thoughts from prayer and reflection.

What has caused you to think deeper?

Weekday 7

Scripture reading — James 1:12-16

Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him. 13Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God," for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself

tempts no one. 14But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. 15Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death. 16Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers.”

Focus Questions

Record your thoughts from prayer and reflection.

1. Read through the Scripture a second time and highlight the word or phrase that stands out for you.

2. What is going on in your life that connects with that word or phrase?

3. If you were to encourage someone who was facing temptation, what would you advise them to do?

4. What does James contend is the root cause of temptation? What area of your life would benefit most by going through a realignment of desire?

5. Where is the Holy Spirit inviting you to respond this week?

Daily Journal

Record your thoughts from prayer and reflection.

What have you thought about today in this focus area that you are longing for?

Weekday 8

Scripture reading — Luke 9:28-36

“Now about eight days after these sayings Jesus took with him Peter and John and James and went up on the mountain to pray. ²⁹And while he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became dazzling white. ³⁰Suddenly they saw two men, Moses and Elijah, talking to him. ³¹They appeared in glory and were speaking of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. ³²Now Peter and his companions were weighed down with sleep; but since they had stayed awake, they saw his glory and the two men who stood with him. ³³Just as they were leaving him, Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah" - not knowing what he said. ³⁴While he was saying this, a cloud came and overshadowed them; and they were terrified as they entered the cloud. ³⁵Then from the cloud came a voice that said, "This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!" ³⁶When the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. And they kept silent and, in those days, told no one any of the things they had seen.” (NRSV)

Focus Questions

Record your thoughts from prayer and reflection.

1. Read through the Scripture a second time and highlight the word or phrase that stands out for you.
2. What is going on in your life that connects with that word or phrase?
3. As you look at this transfiguration text, reflect on what might be key to transformation in your own life.
4. What is the place of solitude, silence, and prayer in this text? What place do you make for them in your life?
5. What area of your health you would like to see transformed but have been unwilling for it to be changed?

6. Where is the Holy Spirit inviting you to respond this week?

Daily Journal

Record your thoughts from prayer and reflection.

What small specific step and active response can you take in the direction God's Word is leading you?

Weekday 9

Scripture reading — John 4: 19-26

The woman said to him, "Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet. ²⁰Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship." ²¹Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. ²²You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. ²³But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. ²⁴God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth." ²⁵The woman said to him, "I know that Messiah is coming (he who is called Christ). When he comes, he will tell us all things." ²⁶Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am he."

Focus Questions

Record your thoughts from prayer and reflection.

1. Read through the Scripture a second time and highlight the word or phrase that stands out for you.

2. What is going on in your life that connects with that word or phrase?

3. What are your patterns for worship? For study?

4. When was a recent time when your participation in worship moved you spiritually or gave you a deeper awareness of truth? Describe when and how you were moved.

5. Where is the Holy Spirit inviting you to respond this week?

Daily Journal

Record your thoughts from prayer and reflection.

How does this passage focus my attention first on Jesus, second on my identity “in Christ,” and third on my participation in the Body of Christ?

How is this passage moving me beyond myself to take a specific small step in the direction of serving my family, church, or neighbor?

Weekday 10

Scripture reading — 2 Corinthians 3:17-18

¹⁷Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. ¹⁸And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

Focus Questions

Record your thoughts from prayer and reflection.

1. Read through the Scripture a second time and highlight the word or phrase that stands out for you.
2. What is going on in your life that connects with that word or phrase?
3. The steps of faith are often small, one degree at a time. Think of a time a small change happened which had a long lasting influence in your life.
4. How do you see God at work in your life, transforming you into the image of Christ?
5. Where is the Holy Spirit inviting you to respond this week?

Daily Journal

Reflect on this week.

Reflecting on the Scriptures this week, what theme do you see developing?

Review any action steps you have felt led to take.

Review and update the statement you wrote last week. What are several steps you could take to move in the direction God is leading you? Which step do you choose?

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