

Messenger Of Truth

"Holding forth the Word of Life" (Phil. 2:16).

September 19, 2011

Issue No. 8 Mark Aites, Editor

Diet And Exercise

In a National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, taken in 2007-2008, about 68 percent of U.S. adults were estimated to be either overweight or obese. In 2002, it was estimated that some 92.6 billion dollars was spent battling obesity.

The former Surgeon General, C. Everett Koop, stated that weight related deaths are the 2nd leading cause of death, with some 300 thousand preventable deaths each year. He also noted that a moderate daily exercise regimen could significantly reduce a number of diseases, including heart disease and cancer. Through the years some have taken the need for diet and exercise seriously, and others have paid a heavy price (pardon the pun).

There were those in Scripture who were obese. The Bible speaks of Eglon, king of Moab, who was referred to as a "very fat man" (Judg. 3:17). And there are also passages which address gluttony. The Proverb writer warns that you can eat honey to the point that it will make you sick (Prov. 25:16). We have the biblical example of the children of Israel who very greedily crammed their mouths full of food, and God smote them with a great plague (Num. 11:33). We even have Paul's statement of those who were worldly, whose god was their belly or appetite (Phil. 3:19).

There is no doubt that obesity is a serious problem. But Scripture makes us aware of an even greater problem. "But reject profane and old wives' fables, and exercise yourself toward godliness. For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come" (1 Tim. 4:7-8). We note with interest that Paul did NOT say bodily exercise is of no value. It does profit a person, but obviously that which is spiritual far "outweighs" the physical (pardon the pun again).

We can diet and exercise all we want and keep in tip top physical shape, but we still know that eventually we will die (Heb. 9:27). And the Psalmist declared that some will make it to 70 years of age, and the stronger even to 80. With our great technology we will go well beyond that, but death is still inevitable.

Exercising ourselves unto godliness, and being cautious in our spiritual diet, i.e. what we read or see is of greater importance than what we eat or our physical bodies in this life. It is not only to our benefit, but even to the nation in which we live. "Righteousness exalts a nation" (Prov. 14:34).