I meet a lot of people in the course of my ministry. Sadly, I see too many who are not taking care of themselves. Many of them clearly feel terrible. Anyone can see this in the way they look and the way they carry themselves. You simply cannot look really great if you don’t feel great. How you feel will show up somewhere; in your body language, the dull look in your eyes, or even the color of your skin.

It is in our nature to take care of ourselves, so why don’t we? I thought about the ways that this can go wrong, and I came up with these reasons:

1. **We don’t know how to take care of our physical bodies.** Decades of bad diets, misinformation, and easy access to fast food and prepackaged food have left people amazingly confused about what a wholesome diet is and how they should eat.

2. **We have a skewed body image planted in our minds by media and advertising.** On one side we are inundated with unattainable ideals of beauty, while on the other, obesity is so prevalent that it’s almost considered the norm. We need to reset our internal picture of what a healthy person should look like.

3. **We have lost touch with exercise.** For virtually all of human existence, exercise was an integral part of our daily existence. Now we’ve invented enough conveniences that we often live completely divorced from exercise. However, it turns out a good deal of our well-being is dependent on exercise.
4. We have let ourselves slip into unworkable lives. With the incredible pressures of juggling career and parenthood, paying steep mortgages and increased fuel prices and burning the proverbial candle at both ends and everywhere in between, it is oh-so-easy to put the workout off, grab a cheeseburger on the run, cheat our sleep time in order to catch up on paperwork and let the tail wag the dog until we've cut everything out of our lives that once gave us pleasure or kept us sane. This is bad enough, because life is a gift and is meant to be joyful. It should be pleasurable and sane.

5. We have become pathologically selfless. Selflessness can be addictive. It feels so good to do for others and it makes us feel important. Yes, it is a good thing to help others and should be a major part of our life, but in my line of work, I often see people who routinely ignore their basic needs. The only thing that gives them meaning is doing things for others. This is admirable, but it can easily cross the line into mistaking suffering for virtue. Martyrs usually end up bitter. And once the body breaks down and life is no longer joyful, it becomes increasingly hard to serve anyone. Volunteers in a soup kit don’t let their pots fall apart while they ladle out one more bowl of soup. They take the time to care for the equipment they need to do their calling. And you should do the same with your most important piece of equipment—your body.

I am not suggesting that we be selfish because that renders us very unhappy and is not how God teaches us to live. We are to live sacrificially and be involved in doing good works, but we must not ignore our own basic needs in the process. Everything in life must be balanced or something breaks down and quite often it is us.

6. We have lost our support. When we don’t have a good social network or a godly foundation to keep our spirits high, it becomes easy to slip into boredom, loneliness, and depression. If we aren’t able to somehow fill that void, the devil will. You may have heard the saying “Nature abhors a vacuum.” Well, let me tell you, the devil loves one! He'll put lots of bad food within easy reach and let you mistake spiritual or emotional hunger for physical hunger. Maintaining a good support network is a terrific way to prevent the formation of bad habits.

We need to have right people around us who will speak if they see us getting out of balance. We need to spend regular time in fellowship with God and learning His principals. His Holy Spirit who works through His Word convicts us of wrongdoing and gives us the chance to make
positive changes before we break down or become ill.

7. We have forgotten our own value. This is the biggest reason we don’t take care of ourselves. If you don’t understand your own importance in the Big Plan, taking care of yourself seems pointless. Reminding you of your place in God’s plan is my first and most important task.

If you’re not sure of your value in God’s eyes, then I invite you to read this article. There’s a crucial link between our spirits and our bodies that we all need to understand.

God has a great future planned for you and you need to be ready for it! You need to look great and feel great, ready to do whatever God asks of you.

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