

The Disciples' Diet

**Eat Like Jesus Did
To Feel Energized, Lose Weight,
and Live a Long Life**

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Table of Contents

Introduction • pg4

What Can Jesus Teach Us About Health and Nutrition?

Chapter 1 • pg16

Why Our Modern Lifestyle is Destroying Your Health and That of Your Family

Chapter 2 • pg34

Not the Same Planet Jesus Walked

Chapter 3 • pg54

What's Wrong with the Modern Diet?

Chapter 4 • pg82

The Bread of Death

Chapter 5 • pg92

The Low-Fat Myth

Chapter 6 • pg99

The Best Way to Choose Which Foods to Eat

Chapter 7 • pg111

Why your Food Can be Making You Sick?

Chapter 8 • pg120

Eat Like Jesus Ate for Glowing Good Health

Chapter 9 • pg134

Sample Eating Plans

Chapter 10 • pg144

Disciples' Diet Action Plan Step By Step

Book Study Questions • pg152



Introduction

What Can Jesus Teach Us About Health and Nutrition?

“Then God said, ‘Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the surface of all the earth, and every tree which has fruit yielding seed; it shall be food for you.’”

Genesis 1:29 NASB

Jesus healed many people in His time on Earth, and today, we continue to pray to Him to heal our illnesses. When Jesus was alive, all people had to do was touch His cloak and believe and they were healed. Today, even though you can't touch His cloak directly, there is something just as powerful you can do to help heal yourself of your ailments and prevent them from developing in the first place. In addition to praying, there is a very powerful tool you can use to feel more energetic and healthier. That tool is called the Bible. More specifically, we're talking about the types of food mentioned in the Bible. And were talking about the non-toxic lifestyle of people living back in those days.

By following Jesus' dietary and lifestyle example, chances are good you'll notice a dramatic improvement in your health. The *Disciples' Diet* will help you discover how to eat and live like Jesus lived—and feel much better because of it. If you follow the diet

and implement all the lifestyle suggestions, you are likely to experience improved health. Science shows that by consuming a similar diet to the one Jesus and His disciples ate and observing a similar lifestyle, you can:

- Reduce your risk of modern diseases.
- Augment your vitality and energy.
- Optimize your body composition.
- Support healthy cholesterol and triglycerides levels.
- Reduce brain fog.
- Improve your mood, be happier, and reduce depression.
- Nourish a glowing complexion.
- Support a healthier you.
- Feel and look younger.

By eating like Jesus ate and living like he lived, you'll feel healthier—after all the Bible is our guide to living an elevated life, spiritually, mentally, and physically. His love and intention for us to thrive and not just survive is clear. It makes sense that he would write it down as Our Loving Heavenly Father.

Delaying Aging

How would you like to live for more than 900 years? Impossible, you say? It may be for modern man, but according to Genesis 5:27 Methuselah lived for 969 years. The Bible tells us of other patriarchs who lived to ripe old ages. Jared lived for 962 years (Genesis 5:20), Adam lived for 930 years (Genesis 5:4), Seth lived for 912 years (Genesis 5:8), Cainan for 910 years, and Enosh for 905 years (Genesis 5:11).

We don't know for certain why people lived longer prior to the flood, but we do know that during the thousand years following the flood, lifespans began to decrease. The Bible says that Abraham lived to 175 years but Moses to only 120 years—and Moses was exceptionally old compared to other people of that time. Most people in Moses' day lived to 70 or 80 years as noted in Psalm 90:10: "The days of our lives are seventy years; and if by reason of strength they are eighty years, yet their boast is only labor and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away."

It's claimed that during Jesus' time people only lived to be in their 40s. Yet, in one of His sermons, Jesus asked, "What is the life of a man? Three score and ten years or if by strength, four score." A score equals 20 years. This quote by Jesus confirms that in His time, the actual lifespan for anyone surviving into adulthood was 70 or older.

Across all eras of history, life expectancy increases once a person has made it into early adulthood. So, the reason for the belief that people didn't live long in Jesus' time is because of the high infant mortality rates. High infant mortality rate—which is taken into account when life expectancy figures are compiled—skews life expectancy numbers deceptively low. On the other hand, a decrease in infant mortality can send life expectancy upward. For example, between 1907 and 2007, the increase in life expectancy was due to a decreasing infant mortality rate. In 1907, the infant mortality rate was 9.99 percent; by 2007 it was only 0.68 percent.

In addition, people often confuse life expectancy with lifespan. Although life expectancy has been

rising—especially since the advent of antibiotics and other medical practices that increase the chance children will live into adulthood—lifespan has stayed constant for thousands of years.

If many people during Jesus' day really did live to 70 or 80 years, the question becomes: with no antibiotics to protect themselves against bacterial-caused diseases and no antiviral or antiparasitic drugs, why were many people able to live even as long as seven or eight decades? Diseases such as cholera, tuberculosis, pneumonia, malaria, and rabies have all been around since thousands of years before Christ walked the earth. Without antibiotics, it would seem that everyone would have remained a walking target for bacterial infections. And with no vaccines, wouldn't they have been vulnerable to viral infections?

Yet, despite the fact infectious diseases were very much a threat to health, from the time of Moses and the ancient Egyptians through Jesus' time and beyond, the diseases that kill or cripple most modern people were rare. In fact, examinations of Egyptian mummies show that cancer was practically non-existent.¹

And throughout history heart disease rates were extremely low up until the time refined sugar became an all-too-common part of the diet and until the widespread use of electricity exposed people to ever more prevalent electromagnetic fields. At the turn of the century, heart disease was responsible for no more than 10 percent of all deaths. Myocardial infarctions (MI)—the medical term for a type of heart attack—were virtually non-existent in 1910. By 1930, MIs caused only 3,000 deaths annually.

Only 30 years later—by 1960—MIs could be blamed for 500,000 deaths per year in the United States.

In the United States, the number of centenarians (people 100 years old or older) grew from 32,194 in 1980 to 71,944 in November 2010.² But just because some people are living longer, doesn't mean people are living healthier. People in their 60s, 70s, 80s, and 90s and older often suffer from heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, cancer, and many other diseases that are far more common now than they were in Jesus' time. Plus, why aren't more people living over 100?

You might think to yourself that you know someone who lived to be over 100 and he or she didn't eat organic foods later in life. But remember in the early 1900s food was often grown on local farms or in peoples' backyards without chemicals, so maybe early on in that person's developmental years he or she got a head start on a healthy life by eating organic without even trying. Since genetically modified foods (often called "FrankenFoods) have only been on store shelves for less than two decades, if you know someone who lived to be over 100, for most of that person's life they weren't eating GMOs. Later on in their lives they may have consumed whatever they wanted to eat. But how healthy were they in old age? How many pills were they on to control their cholesterol and high blood pressure? How sharp was their memory? Could they take a three-mile hike even when they were 80 years old?

Listening to interviews of centenarians, especially the ones who are healthy, you'll notice that most have stories of moderation, avoiding excess, and

maintaining a good sense of humor and a positive life perspective. So, there's more to living a long life than eating a healthy diet. Yet, a healthy diet, one that mirrors the diet of those who lived in Jesus' time, is critical to living a long, active life.

Here's another question: why is it that even with all our medical advances most people are living to the same age as they did when Jesus was alive? And why is it that they are suffering from diseases that were relatively rare from Ancient Biblical times through Jesus' crucifixion and beyond?

In the last twenty years or so alone, mental and behavioral disorders have skyrocketed by 37 percent, Parkinson's disease increased by a whopping 75 percent, Alzheimer's disease doubled, autism increased astronomically and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) increased by at least 16 percent.³⁻⁴

Modern life comes with extra stress, from excess connectivity, e-mails, texts, and deadlines galore. Not to mention what is the long-term impact of all the Wi-Fi and cellular signals our body is bombarded with each and every moment of our day.

The answer to the skyrocketing rate of diseases lies in our modern diet, our modern lifestyle, and our toxic environment. If you want to achieve glowing, good health and feel vibrant and energetic and have a healthy old age where you don't have to pop pills to minimize the symptoms of diseases you shouldn't have to begin with, you must make sure your diet, lifestyle, and environment mirror that of Jesus' time. This isn't just a blanket statement with no

scientific basis. Virtually every study in the medical literature today confirms that the way Jesus and the people of His time ate and the lifestyles that they lived are the key to good health.

Sugar and other toxic food substances are habits we need to kick. Eating this way is like a slow suicide.

Studies also paint an all-too-clear picture of the effects our modern-day toxic environment is having on your health. Jesus didn't have to worry about toxic chemicals in His food and water. But it's a reality anyone living today must face.

As the saying goes: "We no longer live in Kansas." And Kansas is not what it used to be!!!

That's why The *Disciples' Diet* is more than just about what you eat—although that's important, too. It's also about how to change your lifestyle to match that of Jesus and His contemporaries. And how to protect yourself from the toxic chemicals you're exposed to virtually every waking moment . . . chemicals that were thousands of years away from being invented during Biblical times.

You may live in a relatively pristine area of the country, yet the pollution from neighboring cities and other countries know no geographical boundaries.

For these reasons, lifestyle is important. But first, let's talk about food.

Dead Food for Dying People, Live Food for Living People

Jesus and His disciples never ate Oreos. They never went to McDonalds or ate pastries, muffins, or cupcakes. Their diet was one that nourished their bodies in the same way that God's word nourished their souls.

Today, much of what we consume is dead—packaged and processed—food. Americans now spend about 95 percent of their food dollars on processed foods.⁵

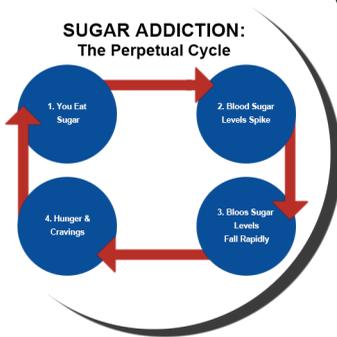
In Jesus' day, everything eaten was live, fresh food, filled with enzymes and nutrients. Olive oil, pomegranates, figs, dates, fish, honey, grapes, barley, and plenty of fruit and vegetables were often on the menu. Jesus and His contemporaries ate wheat, too, but it was by no means the same type of wheat consumed today—we'll talk more about this later in this book. Meat was a special treat because without refrigeration there was no way to store it and it had to be consumed immediately.

Processed, heated foods have had most if not all their active enzymes made inactive. That means your body has to work harder to digestive them. Not to mention all the chemicals and preservatives added to processed food. Not part of God's plan, do you think?

Where Have Our Diets Gone Wrong?

How in the world did our diets get so off target from our Biblical ancestors? Why did we trade a health-and-life-sustaining diet (*The Disciples' Diet*) for a

diet that promotes disease and ultimately shortens our lives (The Western Diet)? The partial answer to that question involves the fact that many of the foods we eat today are addictive. Sugar activates the opioid receptors in the brain—the same receptors activated by addictive drugs.⁶



We were also misled by studies that appeared in the 1950s, which indicated that fat was the villain behind all our health problems. Studies in rabbits fed cholesterol and saturated fat found increased formation of atheromas—plaques that block arteries—in the animals. But

these were rabbits, animals that were meant to consume a vegetarian diet low in saturated fat. Studies in humans did not back up these rabbit studies.

Yet, the belief that fat is the cause of heart disease led many people to start consuming low-fat food. But low-fat food is bland. Something needed to be added to make it tastier. That something was sugar. And under the United States' President Richard Nixon, things got worse. In 1971, when Nixon faced re-election, he needed to find a way to lower the cost of food. Otherwise, rising food costs could cost him the election. In order to earn the support of the farming lobby, Nixon appointed Earl Butz, who hailed from the farming state of Indiana, as Secretary of Agriculture. Butz encouraged farmers to grow corn as a way to lower the cost of food. But by the mid-1970s there was too much corn on the market.

Something had to be done. Butz had heard about an innovation in Japan called high-fructose corn syrup. He arranged to introduce this highly toxic substance into the United States, where it was incorporated into everything from pizzas to cakes to breads. (We'll talk more about the dangers of high-fructose corn syrup later in the book).

At the same time as low-fat food began taking over the refrigerators and pantries of America, food production was becoming a profitable undertaking. Once we started buying our food rather than growing it, raising it, and hunting it, food became big business. Food manufacturers had a financial incentive to entice us to eat the unhealthy processed food they produce. Commercials on TV are a siren song singing the temptations of sugary cereals, pizza, cookies, frozen dinners, ice cream, and other unhealthy foods. In many ways, it's similar to the serpent convincing Eve to eat the fruit of the forbidden tree.

It's become socially acceptable to eat unhealthily. Chances are good, before or after church services, if you attend any kind of social gathering it probably involves pastries or other sweets. We're betting that along with your coffee or tea you're not eating a fresh, green organic salad or vegetables during most church events. If you're lucky, there might be some berries or fruit to accompany the cakes and muffins served.

Yet, good disciples are meant to take care of their personal temples—their bodies. You nourish your spirit at church, so why poison your body with unhealthy food the minute the Sunday service has ended? Ultimately, when you eat, you're feeding

your microscopic cells. Each of those cells makes up your own Temple. You are the caretaker of those cells. It's up to you to nourish them in a way that honors both your Body and your Spirit.

Here's a simple perspective that Dr. Chris Meletis uses to describe this concept to his patients: the mind connects the Body and Spirit; the Body houses the Mind and Spirit; and the Spirit conditions the Mind and Body.

Just like the three legs of a stool, if one falls short so does the very foundation of our health. Your goal, as you minister to your Temple, is to do more than just survive. Rather, your goal is to THRIVE.

A Powerful Way to Take Back Your Health

Scientists have found that religious faith can be an extremely effective incentive for improving your health. For example, in one study, scientists evaluated Fine, Fit, and Fabulous (FFF), a faith-based diabetes prevention program for primarily black and Latino overweight and obese congregants at churches in low-income New York City neighborhoods. FFF encompasses nutrition education and fitness activities while incorporating Bible-based teachings that encourage healthy lifestyles.

Compared to before they were in the faith-based program, increased numbers of participants reported exercising in the past 30 days, eating fruit daily, being able to judge portion sizes, and reading food labels. What's more, a significant number of the participants reported that they ate less fast food and were less

likely to overeat. Among the churches participating in the program, the average weight loss was 4.38 pounds or 2 percent of the participants' initial body weight.⁷

Faith-Based Healthy Living

In every chapter of *The Disciples Diet*, we'll show you exactly how Jesus and His disciples lived and ate—and how you can use this knowledge to gain some dramatic improvements in your health.

In each chapter, we'll suggest easy and powerful steps you can take to put into practice the diet and lifestyle information in this book. Finally, at the end of *The Disciples' Diet*, we will give you an easy-to-follow *Disciples' Diet* eating plan and include some delicious recipes.

So, read on to discover how to have glowing good health, look and feel your best, reduce or eliminate the symptoms of your health concerns—all by following in Jesus' footsteps.



Chapter 1

Why the Modern Lifestyle Is Destroying Your Health and That of Your Family

“Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which you have received from God. You are not your own; you were bought with a price. Therefore, honor God with your bodies.”
Corinthians 6:19-20

If you want to have more energy, feel better, reduce your risk of developing a deadly disease, and possibly even reduce the symptoms of the diseases from which you suffer, what you eat is important—but your lifestyle is just as important. The sad truth is that the toxic modern lifestyle does not promote good, glowing, vibrant health. Instead, it encourages heart disease, obesity, cancer, decreased immune function, fatigue, and many other diseases.

By contrast, the way in which our Biblical ancestors lived promoted good health. Heart disease was virtually unheard of in Jesus’ day. Cancer also was rare in ancient times. As we talked about in the introduction to *The Disciples’ Diet*, in a study of hundreds of Egyptian mummies, researchers found only two cases of cancer. While it is true that cancer often develops in older people, as we established in the introduction to this book, most people in Jesus’ time did live into their 70s and 80s.

The researchers also studied literary works in both ancient Greece and ancient Egypt and found that cancer—or any disease resembling cancer—wasn't mentioned. Some people have claimed that the reason why cancer hasn't been found in mummies is because tumors might not be preserved in the deceased. But researchers have shown mummification does preserve tumors. In fact, tumors should actually be better preserved in mummies than in humans buried without mummification.

Modern scientists looking at ancient evidence had to skip forward to the 17th century before they found any descriptions of cancer such as descriptions of operations for breast and other cancers. The first reports of tumors occurred in the scientific literature less than 250 years ago. There were reports of scrotal cancer in chimney sweeps in 1775, nasal cancer in snuff users in 1761 and Hodgkin's disease in 1832.

So, what's different now? Let's take a look at how our lifestyle today differs from the Biblical lifestyle.

My Peace I Give Unto You

For starters, we're more stressed out. Or, more specifically, we suffer from a more chronic and more complicated type of stress. It's not that Jesus and people of Biblical times didn't experience stress. They had to worry about the health of their crops and whether they had enough food to eat. They fought battles and soldiers suffered from posttraumatic stress disorder. And husbands and wives probably had squabbles just like we do today.

But today we live in a fast-pasted society and are confronted with stress virtually every moment of the day. We leave our houses and get stuck in bumper-to-bumper traffic on the way to work or running errands. We get to work and we're faced with hundreds of emails. Often, we're expected to multi-task, trying to meet one deadline while also dealing with others. Even retired people often complain of too much to do and too little time to do it in. We're often racing to one appointment or another, doctors' appointments, kids' soccer games, work appointments.

Technology makes our lives simpler in some ways but far more stressful in others. Your computer gets infected with a virus or breaks down and your stress levels soar. Or your car breaks down and you miss an important event or appointment—and you worry about how you're going to pay that \$1,000 repair bill.

And if you use your iPhone or iPad in public in a big city, you have to worry that someone will hold you up at gunpoint to steal it. Airplanes allow us to travel long distances, sometimes across many time zones, putting additional stress on our circadian rhythms. We're also forced to spend more money on technological gadgets that are needed to function in today's world, causing many lower-to-middle-income people to go into debt.

What's more, we live in a world where we are constantly under pressure to move faster—and if something prevents us from doing so our stress mounts. These days, we're almost always under stress.

Short-term stress can improve your health. In fact, your body needs short-term stress. However, when it digs in its heels and won't go away, it takes a huge toll on your body. As Dr. Meletis likes to say, "De-stress before you become dis-stressed because once you are distressed you lack the state of being at ease and this leads to dis-ease."

First, psychological stress contributes to weight gain and increased body mass index.⁸ (Your body mass index is a measure of your weight based on your mass and height.) Work stress—especially feeling as if you don't have control over aspects of your job or experiencing conflict on the job—can cause your body mass index to rise.⁹⁻¹⁰

Stress isn't a friend to your heart, either. Studies show that there's a link between psychological stress and cardiovascular disease. In a study of 60 patients with coronary artery disease who were admitted to the hospital for coronary artery bypass graft surgery, researchers found that stress of varying degrees was a significant independent risk factor for coronary heart disease. Sixty percent of the patients reported experiencing high stress and 36.7 percent moderate stress.¹¹

The researchers found that psychological stress was just as much of a risk factor for heart disease as the more conventional coronary heart disease risk factors.¹¹

In addition, stress may be the reason why you come down with a cold and your office worker never even snuffles. Short-term stress, lasting for minutes or hours, enhances immune responses. It can

promote wound healing and boost the effectiveness of antibacterial and anti-tumor agents. By contrast, long-term stress suppresses immune responses and causes low-grade chronic inflammation. It also reduces the numbers of and weakens immune cells. Chronic stress may also increase susceptibility to some types of cancer.¹²

This is why people who have seasonal allergies may find their symptoms get worse when they're under stress. This was proven in a study where researchers gave patients with seasonal allergies a skin prick test both before and after the subjects were exposed to stress in the laboratory. In a skin prick test, researchers place a drop of a solution containing a possible allergen on the skin. They then make a series of scratches or needle pricks to allow the solution to enter the skin. If a red, raised itchy area (a wheal) develops on the skin, it's a sign the person is allergic to that allergen.

When the researchers gave the skin prick test to the subjects and then exposed the subjects to stress, there was a greater occurrence of allergic reactions compared to when the test was administered without exposing the subjects to stress. In fact, many of the patients who had no reactions to the allergen used in the test when they weren't stressed out, reacted to the allergen after experiencing stress.¹³

Studies have linked stress to many other diseases, too, including Alzheimer's disease.¹⁴ There's even some indication that stress may trigger gum disease.¹⁵

Disciples' Diet Action Plan: Reducing Stress the Biblical Way

When you're under pressure, here are some passages from the Bible that you can read to feel more at peace.

John 14:27 "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid."

Philippians 4:6,7. "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

1 Peter 5:6,7 "Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you."

Matthew 11:28-30 "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

Matthew 6:25-27 "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?"

In addition, set aside time each day—ideally before you get swept up in the daily chaos—to mediate. At least ten minutes per day is ideal. A half hour is better if you can find the time. Sit in a chair with your feet on the floor and as you breathe deeply keep focusing your mind on one phrase such as “God is giving me peace” or “God’s peace.” Your mind will drift but keep

bringing it back to that phrase while taking deep breaths.

You'll also want to tend to the health of your adrenal glands, which produce cortisol. When you're under chronic stress, your adrenal glands at first go into overdrive, producing more and more cortisol until ultimately they burn out.

Work with a doctor who is knowledgeable about using salivary hormone tests to find out how well your adrenals are functioning. A complete adrenal function panel, which tests for cortisol levels morning, afternoon, and evening, can paint an accurate picture as to whether your adrenals are overproducing cortisol or if they have reached a state of exhaustion.

This is an easy test to do at home. Your doctor will give you vials and you will spit into the vials five times per day from morning until you go to bed at night. Some doctors might prefer to use a 24-hour urine test, because they consider that to be more accurate compared to a salivary test or a spot urine or blood test.

As Dr. Meletis likes to say, "Test, don't guess." Here is a link to a lab where you can order tests and then have them interpreted by your doctor: www.directlabs.com

If the results of the test indicate your adrenals are overproducing cortisol, you'll want to supplement with adaptogens, botanicals that are known for their role in supporting adrenal health and balancing cortisol levels. Two good choices are

ashwagandha (*Withania somnifera*) and Siberian ginseng (*Eleutherococcus senticosus*).¹⁶⁻¹⁷

If your adrenals are burned out, supplementing with adaptogenic herbs can help nurture your body. They are called “adapt-ogens” because they can help you adapt to stress. Very low doses of cortisone prescribed by a doctor on a temporary basis are another alternative to help people who have severe adrenal exhaustion. The emphasis here is on LOW doses of cortisone, since higher doses can do more harm than good.

A Surprising Modern Danger

Another way in which your lifestyle is different than your Biblical ancestors is that you’re exposed to light until late at night. Most people in Jesus’ day, before the invention of the electric light, didn’t stay up late reading, socializing, or working. During the short days of winter, some scholars and artisans may have used oil lamps to stay up late to finish projects. And Jesus was known to stay up all night praying. But most people in those days usually went to sleep pretty early. They were in bed shortly after nightfall and up with the rising sun. Except perhaps during full moon nights, their bedrooms were dark.

There were no streetlights or neighbors who left their porch lights on all night. And no TVs or computers in the bedroom to emit blue, green, or red blinking lights.

Most people these days don’t sleep in a pitch-black room. Light from streetlights or neighbors’ houses

seeps in from outside. Other family members turn on the lights in the hallway outside your door. Or you have to get up to go the bathroom at night and don't want to stumble your way around—so you flip on a switch.

You wouldn't think that something like being exposed to light at night would have major consequences for your health. But plenty of research shows that nighttime light exposure is one of the most damaging things you can do to your body. Why? Because during the night, the pituitary gland in your brain produces melatonin, a hormone important in many aspects of health, including immunity. Darkness triggers the pituitary gland to produce melatonin. Without darkness, melatonin production slows, paving the way for disease.

For starters, those late nights you've been keeping may be the reason for your extra pounds. Studies show exposure to light at night contributes to weight gain and obesity.¹⁸

In a study of 528 elderly people, compared to the subjects exposed to dim light at night (less than 3 lux), the subjects exposed to the brightest lights at night (3 or more lux) had significantly higher body weight, body mass index, waist circumference, triglyceride levels, and levels of the "bad" low-density lipoprotein cholesterol. The people exposed to the brighter light also had significantly lower levels of the "good" high-density lipoprotein cholesterol.¹⁹

Many of the symptoms you experience from being exposed to light at night match the symptoms of metabolic syndrome, a cluster of risk factors for

heart disease.¹⁹ These risk factors include low HDL, high triglycerides, and weight gain, especially visceral fat—i.e. belly fat. Many studies in mice have shown that when the animals are exposed to dim light at night, they develop metabolic syndrome. When the mice are then allowed to sleep in the dark, their metabolic syndrome symptoms go away.²⁰

One of the reasons why light-at-night exposure is related to weight gain and metabolic syndrome is because it disrupts your insulin levels. Cells in the pancreas that produce insulin—called beta cells—have their own circadian clocks. Nighttime light exposure interferes with these circadian clocks. This means the body doesn't release enough insulin after a glucose surge in the blood. These changes can ultimately lead to the development of type 2 diabetes.²¹

Shedding Light on Disease

Light exposure at night has as bad an effect on your mood as it does on your weight. Studies have confirmed the link between light-at-night exposure and depression. For example, a study of 516 elderly subjects found that the 101 people who suffered from depression were exposed to more light at night than the non-depressed group.²²

Nighttime light exposure also is linked to cancer. For example, studies have shown female night-shift workers may have an increased risk of breast cancer.²³

If you're a woman who works nights, your risk of breast cancer could be as much as 36 to 60

percent higher compared to women who don't work nights.²⁴⁻²⁵

The risk doesn't end with breast cancer. Nighttime light exposure is linked to other cancers as well. One human study found that low levels of melatonin—such as those that occur when a person is exposed to light at night—occurred more often in subjects with basal cell and squamous cell skin cancer compared to subjects who didn't have skin cancer.²⁶

In a mouse study, uterine cancer developed more often in the animals exposed to light at night.²⁷

Scientists also have found an increased risk of colon cancer in female night shift workers.²⁸ In men, exposure to light at night may increase the risk of prostate cancer.²⁹

There's enough evidence mounting to cause the International Agency for Research on Cancer to classify night shift work as a probable carcinogen, based on limited evidence from human studies and adequate evidence from animal experiments.³⁰

Light at night also is linked to Alzheimer's disease, cardiovascular disease, gastrointestinal disorders, and miscarriages.³¹⁻³³

God created a natural solar cycle based on the rising and setting of the sun. But we're no longer paying attention to that natural cycle. Instead, we're arranging our lives around social and work schedules that are dependent on artificial lighting. And our health is paying the consequences.

Disciples' Diet Action Plan: Reducing The Effects of Light Exposure at Night

If you're exposed to light at night, exercise may help. In animals exposed to dim light at night, voluntary exercise served as a buffer against the weight gain caused by the nighttime light.³⁵

If you suffer from insomnia or are exposed to light at night, you can supplement with melatonin to replenish your body's stores. It's also best not to drink coffee after 11 a.m. It takes some people 12 hours to metabolize caffeine, and if you're one of those people, drinking it after noon may keep you tossing and turning.

And be sure to have your doctor test you for sleep apnea, especially if you snore, if you suffer from hypertension—which is strongly linked to sleep apnea—or if you habitually can't sleep at night.

Remember, RESToration is a time to RESTore your body to a healthy balance, so put a high priority on getting enough sleep.

Also, be mindful of the difference between red and blue light. It's blue light that causes melatonin levels to plummet—or more specifically to stop your body from producing it in the first place. Computers, televisions, iPads, cell phones, Kindles, and even CFL light bulbs all emit blue light. Red light, on the other hand, has only a small effect on melatonin production.

Computers, cell phones, and other devices often have a nighttime setting to automatically change the

screen from emitting blue light to a color that doesn't dramatically lower melatonin levels.

Your best bet is to avoid using electronic devices after 9 p.m. If you have insomnia and get up in the middle of the night, don't watch TV. Consider reading a paper book instead. And replace the CFL bulb on your reading lamp with a red L.E.D light. Use a red L.E.D. nightlight in your bathroom, too. You can find red nightlights online. Or your local photography store may have red bulbs. Menards hardware store in the Midwest also reportedly sells them.

Remove all electronic devices from your bedroom. Also, block out outside sources of light in the bedroom by using black out curtains.

If you work night shifts, try to sneak in a short nap on one of your breaks. One of the reasons why exposure to light at night may contribute to breast cancer risk is because when melatonin levels are suppressed, it increases the levels of circulating estrogens, and estrogen can fuel the growth of some breast tumors. A study in nurses working night shifts found that taking a short nap increased melatonin levels and resulted in more balanced estrogen levels compared to nurses who didn't nap during their shifts.³⁴

Nature-Deficit Disorder

Our Biblical ancestors spent a lot of time outdoors. They didn't spend most of their days inside a home or office like we do today. They were more connected to nature. And as people who spent a lot of time outdoors, their bodies were nourished with vitamin

D, since the skin converts sunlight to this vitamin essential to so many areas of health, including heart, brain, immune, and bone health.

If you're like a lot of modern-day humans, you are likely suffering from what one group of researchers called "nature-deficit disorder."

For most of human history, we have lived off the land and turned to nature for basic survival needs as well as for pleasure and physical activity. We may be genetically designed to be hunter-gatherers in the great outdoors. Yet, as we sit in front of our computers or deprive ourselves of contact with nature, we're not stimulated physically or mentally in the same way as our ancestors.³⁶

Spending time in nature reduces depression and boosts mood. It also causes your stress to melt away and your mental fatigue to disappear. After spending time in nature, you're also more alert, perform better on cognitive tasks and are more creative and are able to find more creative solutions to problems.³⁷⁻³⁸

Children who spend lots of time outdoors have less of a risk of developing nearsightedness.³⁹

Quite simply, researchers have found that people are healthier overall when surrounded by green space.³⁶

But it's not just about spending time in nature. Your body can reap even more rewards by becoming more connected to nature by a concept known as grounding. Today, we usually walk around in rubber-soled shoes that insulate us from the ground on which we walk. In Jesus' day, people walked in shoes made from

animal hides or went around barefoot. They also slept on the ground more often. Since many people were farmers or grew their own food, their hands touched the soil more. They were more grounded to the earth than we are today.

This is important because touching the earth has a surprising number of benefits. Studies have shown that the earth might actually be the ultimate free radical fighter. When your skin comes in contact with the ground, it causes you to produce antioxidants. Studies have shown grounding—either by walking barefoot on the earth or by sleeping or sitting on a grounding pad—can reduce the thickness of the blood, which is a major factor in cardiovascular disease.⁴⁰⁻⁴¹

You can find a grounding mat at <https://shop.mercola.com/product/1969/grounded-standing-floor-mat>

Motivation to Get Moving

Our Biblical ancestors didn't spend their days sitting in front of a computer or their evenings in front of the TV. They worked on farms or were carpenters or had other jobs that usually required a fair amount of standing. To get from one place to another, they walked. They couldn't jump into a car like we can today. Some people had horses or camels, but for the most part, people did a lot of walking.

Sitting all day at our desks has some sobering effects on our health. And exercising in the evening after work doesn't necessarily prevent the harmful effects of sitting all day.

Dying To Watch That Show

In a study published in the journal *Circulation*, researchers examined 8,800 adults 25 years of age or older. The researchers found that each extra hour of television watching per day was linked to an 18 percent increase in deaths from heart disease and an 11 percent increase in overall mortality.

For people who watched TV for at least four hours a day the statistics were even more alarming. These people were 80 percent more likely to die of cardiovascular disease than people who watched two hours or less—and 46 percent more likely to die of any cause.⁴²

The study was a real eye opener because the increase in heart and mortality risk occurred even in people who exercised. And people who ate healthy also suffered the same increased mortality and heart risk when they watched too much TV.

But that's not the only study showing the more we sit, the greater our risk of dying. Another trial showed there is a link between how much a person sits and high levels of blood glucose and blood lipids as well as weight gain—even in people who performed moderate to vigorous exercise several times each week.⁴³

Another study of Japanese men and women showed an increase in death from all causes in men who reported sitting for eight hours per day or more compared to those reporting sitting for less than three hours per day.⁴⁴

Use It or Lose It

Of course, exercise helps keep your weight down. But it also keeps you from becoming frail as you age. It prevents the decrease in strength and reduced endurance and motor coordination that occurs in people who don't exercise.⁴⁵

Exercise also helps maintain your cognitive health as you age. It improves blood flow to the brain and increases oxygenation, ensuring your brain has the tools it needs to remember where you put those car keys.⁴⁶

In addition, exercise reduces the risk of heart disease. So it's not surprising that our more physically active Biblical ancestors almost never developed heart disease.⁴⁷

Exercise also strengthens the bones⁴⁸ and slows aging. It extends longevity by up to two years and reduces the risk of a wide range of chronic disorders. Most importantly, studies show that if you exercise, you're more likely to remain independent long into old age.⁴⁹

Our bodies are designed to move. Thumbs were not designed for texting!

One study found that people 65 years old and older who participate in lower intensity exercise (walking) have a 30 percent longer disease-free life.⁵⁰

In Biblical times, people exercised more as part of the natural course of their day so they needed more calories. Ironically, today, we exercise less and we eat more calories. What's wrong with this picture?

Disciples' Diet Action Plan: How To Get More Exercise

To squeeze in more exercise, try setting up a stand-up desk at your workstation and stand up as much as possible during the workday. Visit <https://www.varidesk.com/products/standing-deskpro-> to purchase a stand up work station.

Conduct meetings and hold phone conversations while standing. Take a walk during your lunch hour and then again in the evening.

To remind yourself to exercise throughout the day, set the timer on your cell phone or put a sticky note on your computer.