

Health and Healing ***The Water of Life***

Lesson #4 for April 24, 2010

Scriptures: Genesis 2:10; Isaiah 40:31; Matthew 9:2-7; Mark 2:1-12; John 4:1-26; 9:1-11; Romans 6:1-6.

1. This lesson focuses on the many and varied uses of water to promote life and health. Water is essential for life as we know it. Is that why we are spending millions of dollars searching for water on Mars and on the moon? Our bodies are 60 to 70% water. Our brains are 85% water. Even bones—despite Ezekiel’s vision of the “dry bones” (Ezekiel 37)—are 10 to 15% water! How can we make better use of water to promote life and health? A lot of the water is actually connected by weak bonds to body chemicals so those body chemicals can work properly.
2. Read John 4:1-26. Jesus took the unusual step of traveling through Samaria to get to Galilee. This very familiar story took place at the well near Sychar in Samaria and led to Jesus being invited into a Samaritan village to stay with them and preach the gospel for several days. For the most part, Palestine is a marginal rainfall area. Water is very precious there. People spent a great deal of time and a lot of effort trying to get enough water for their very basic needs. This lady was probably at the well in the middle of the day because she was uncomfortable around the other women of the city who usually came to the well later in the day.
3. What was Jesus offering that Samaritan woman when He offered Life-giving Water? (John 4:10) She was thinking of physical water; He, spiritual Water. Elsewhere, Jesus described Himself as the Bread of Life. (John 6:35-58) Why do you think Jesus chose water in this situation? Physically, we need water frequently. The only substance we need more frequently than water is air. Is that why Jesus chose water as a symbol in this case? Or, was it just a convenient symbol because the woman was searching for water? Why did Jesus describe the Living Water as a “well of water springing up into eternal life.” (John 4:14, *NASB*) Why did Jesus tell this woman that He was the Messiah? He did not even tell the Jews that! (But, compare John 8:24,28,58) Was Jesus comparing Himself to the Rock that provided water to the children of Israel as they traveled through the wilderness of Sinai? What is the significance of Jesus calling Himself a spiritual Rock from which the water flowed? (1 Corinthians 10:1-4)
4. We never pay for the air we breathe. In developed countries pure drinking water is also available free in almost all situations. Food, by contrast, is almost always purchased. The woman who came to the well was not paying for the water which she drew. What is the significance of Jesus saying the living Water is free? She was used to “free” water.
5. Think of all the different beverages that humans use around the world. Why do so many people in developed countries prefer tea, coffee, Coca-Cola, or other soft drinks instead of water? Why do some people even drink alcohol instead of water?
6. When someone mentions water, what do you think of first? What does water mean to you?
7. Water is essential for the normal function of the human body for drinking, washing, even therapy. It has many very significant symbolic meanings and uses as well, such as in baptism. Which of those uses do you think Jesus was thinking about while speaking to the woman of Samaria?

8. Whether we like to admit it or not, we are totally dependent upon water for survival. Consider some of the uses of water.
9. As God's creatures, we need water in order to survive. In fact, every body cell, tissue, and organ needs water to function. Water helps to regulate body temperature, transports nutrients and oxygen to the cells, removes waste, prevents constipation, moistens tissues, cushions joints, and keeps blood flowing throughout the body. We need to drink more water than our thirst demands. Many liquids, such as water, milk, and fruit and vegetable juices, contribute to hydration; however, alcohol and caffeinated beverages may paradoxically increase fluid loss, which may be harmful.

Pure water is superior to many other drinks. Start your day with one or two glasses of water and continue drinking water between meals to make sure you are well hydrated.

Water has other healthful functions, as well. Hand washing may reduce transmission of many infectious agents from person to person. A large percentage of infectious disease would be eliminated by hand washing, especially before eating. Daily bathing removes accumulated dirt, which can lead to disease, as well. (*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*, Tuesday, April 20)
10. Do we wash our hands enough? Some of us work in the field of healthcare. It is estimated that more than 100,000 people die in hospitals in America every year because healthcare workers do not keep their hands adequately clean! This is a clear example of how a lack of the use of water (and soap!) can lead to death!
11. A dramatic demonstration of the importance of water in our physiology was illustrated by Dr. Pitts at Harvard University. Athletes walking on treadmills at 3½ mph in a hot environment and consuming as much water as they lost were able to continue walking for more than seven hours. The same athletes not given water reached their point of exhaustion in less than half that time. Endurance athletes recognize that taking in adequate supplies of water and electrolyte is absolutely essential for their sports.
12. In general, it is sufficient to drink 6 to 8 glasses of water per day (8 ounces or 240 ml. per glass). But, if we are involved in aerobic exercise or working in a hot environment, we must take extra water to replace what we have lost.
13. Can you think of a time when you became dehydrated? What happened to your energy level and your sense of well-being? There are few things that are more satisfying than a cool drink of water when one is really thirsty, even dehydrated.
14. What did Jesus have in mind when He said, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness"? (Matthew 5:6) The *Good News Translation* says, "Happy are those whose greatest desire is to do what God requires." Does this describe us?
15. What words would you use to describe the feeling of thirst? Or hunger? Do we have those same kinds of desires and longings for the truth about God?
16. What spiritual conditions might parallel the physical notion of dehydration? What happens to us when we go for lengthy periods of time without communion with the Holy Spirit and with God? Do we recognize our spiritual hunger and thirst?

17. Water is commonly known in three different forms: steam, liquid water, and ice. Does the Holy Spirit come to us in different forms?
18. I had the privilege of attending Johns Hopkins University School of Hygiene and Public Health for the purpose of obtaining an MPH—Master of Public Health—degree. In one of my classes, the professor was an engineer whose specialty was water systems for cities, etc. One day, he entered class and stood before us and stated, “If you will give me the ability to put hot and cold running water into the home of any family in the world, it will do more for their health than all the medicines and treatments that you doctors and nurses have ever come up with.” And he was right! Are we using water to maximum benefit internally and externally, physically and spiritually?
19. In the last few years in the United States of America and many other countries of the world, beverage companies have begun marketing water. They have convinced many people that the water coming from the faucet or tap is not good enough for their needs. Thus, billions of dollars are being spent for water—with perhaps some vitamins or a little flavor added—that in most cases is not superior in any way to the water that flows out of the tap. Often, in supermarkets in North America, some of these new versions of water are more expensive than soft drinks or gasoline! While we would all agree that water is essential for our use, the standards for water purity in the United States are such that it is very seldom that bottled water is better for us than what we can get from the faucet.
20. Are we getting enough of this wonderful, life-giving substance? Even though water is freely available to people in countries like the United States, many of us do not drink enough of it. The fact that we think we need to buy it in bottles may be part of the problem. The average American, at least in Southern California, drinks about half as much water as he should. Think of the challenges of getting enough water in Africa, for instance! Women spend hours every morning getting water for the family and carrying it home on their heads.
21. Read Acts 8:35-39. The Ethiopian eunuch was on his way home after being in Jerusalem for some time seeking to learn more about the Jewish religion. We do not know all that he did while he was there. But, before leaving for home, he had managed to obtain at least a portion of the writings of Isaiah. God recognized that this man who held a very influential position in the Ethiopian government was searching for truth. So, he sent Philip on a fairly lengthy journey to meet this man on the road to Gaza. As the story reports, Philip joined the man in his chariot and went on to explain to him the meaning of Isaiah’s prophecy. This searcher for truth realized that he was receiving life-giving Water. More than that, he wanted to be baptized as a Christian. A short time later, seeing water beside the road, he asked Philip to baptize him. Was Philip too hasty in baptizing this man? Today, we take months to educate people before baptizing them. Did he understand all the principles of Christianity? Also, remember that the Philippian jailer and his family were baptized the same night as their first contact with Paul and Silas. (Acts 16:25-34) The story of the Ethiopian is important for those who believe in baptism by immersion because the Bible clearly states that they went down into the water. The Greek word *baptizo* means to immerse. This story of the Ethiopian helps to prove that God knows every detail of our lives.
22. Read John 9:1-11. In this story Jesus used saliva—which the people of that time believed had healing properties—to produce mud and asked the recipient to go and wash in the pool of Siloam. (This pool was at the end of Hezekiah’s tunnel.) According to their Sabbath rules, it was against the law to apply medicine above the neck on the Sabbath! What do

you think the spiritual significance of those actions was?

23. Read Romans 6:1-6. Paul made a very clear parallel between the symbolic baptism—that he recommended for Christians—and the spiritual death to sin and resurrection to a new life that is supposed to precede the physical baptism.
24. There are many passages in Scripture referring to baptism. We are to be baptized into union with Christ and thus, be clothed with the life of Christ. (Acts 2:38) We are to be baptized into the body of the church. (Galatians 3:26,27; 1 Corinthians 12:13) This baptism is supposed to represent the inner spiritual cleansing and spiritual rebirth. (Ephesians 5:25,26; John 3:5) But, can water actually wash away sins? What was Jesus trying to tell us? Mark 16:16 suggests that faith and baptism go together and are necessary for salvation. What does it mean to be “washed by the word”? (Ephesians 5:25,26)
25. Read Genesis 2:10. Is this a description of the River of Life in the Garden of Eden? Did all of the water needed for the animals and plants in the garden come from that one river?
26. It is known that hydrotherapy can be used very effectively on the outside of the body to limit disease and promote health. Many diseases causing vomiting or diarrhea can be a severe threat to health especially of small children because of dehydration.
27. God expects us to know about and, when necessary, how to correctly use water in all of the ways that have been discussed for physical and spiritual health.
28. In the days before antibiotics became widely available, the Seventh-day Adventist White Memorial Hospital in Los Angeles became famous for the fact that by careful and excellent hydrotherapy, they were able to save the lives of hundreds of patients. The death rate from diseases such as pneumonia was much lower there than it was in the county hospital which was nearby.
29. Only a very small percentage of the water in our world is fresh and safe to drink and to use for such purposes. We should not waste this precious resource.
30. Read Leviticus 11:40; 13:6,34,53,54; 15:1-13. These are just some of the verses in the books of Moses talking about the importance of cleansing in many of the sanctuary services. Were those just ritualistic cleansing? Or did they have real health benefits?
31. One of the very wonderful types of projects that ADRA—the Adventist Development and Relief Agency—carries out in many countries is the digging of wells. Those wells—correctly installed and protected—prevent many diseases for those people who use them. Those wells not only preserve health but save hours every day for the women of Africa.
32. Are we using water in all the right ways and in the right quantities? Are we taking advantage of the spiritual resource known as the Living Water? How can we not only benefit from the use of this amazing resource but also share it with others?

© 2010, Kenneth Hart, MD, MA, MPH. Permission is hereby granted for any noncommercial use of these materials. Free distribution is encouraged. It is our goal to see them spread as widely and freely as possible. If you would like to use them for your class or even make copies of portions of them, feel free to do so. We always enjoy hearing about how you might be using the materials, and we might even want to share good ideas with others, so let us know.

Info@theox.org

Last Modified: March 1, 2010

C:\Documents and Settings\Myra\Desktop\SS-4-Health-2010_04_24-2010_02_27-Fin.wpd