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## Hello Summer

### Part 4 – To Better Love and Serve

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Today, we're continuing in our *Hello Summer* series and the title of today's message is *To Better Love and Serve*. As it stands alone, this title doesn't make much sense; it's a little ambiguous and needs some context. So, we're going to jump right in and give it context. I'm going to start out with a simple question for the Christian. What is the most important thing in the world? That's a big question.

Now, we know that for all people, the most important thing is to receive Christ, to come to a saving knowledge of Christ, receive him as Lord and come, through grace, back to a right relationship with the Father. But, after that, Christian, what's the most important thing in the world? Again, it's very profound; it's an important question. The good news is we have a straight answer because Jesus was asked this question. One of the scribes, the religious leaders of his time time asked Jesus, "What's the greatest command?"

We have our answer in Mark 12 - ***29 "The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.' I want you to notice something here. The first thing Jesus does is turn to scripture. He starts quoting Deuteronomy 6. 30 "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' 31 The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these."***

As we read that, we understand the most important thing in the world, Christian, is to love God and love people. It's really simple. As we hear that and understand that, we think of it as something spiritual. We know that coming to faith in Jesus is something spiritual as well, but then after we are saved, we hear love God and love people. That's sounds like something spiritual as well. So, that leads us then to ask the question: "How important is my physical nature then and how important is it for me to tend to the condition of my physical self?" We're hearing that the most important thing is spiritual, love God and love people, so, therefore, the physical nature must take second seat because the spiritual is more important.

The problem with that question is it frames our existence as people in the wrong way. You see, we don't exist as a spiritual being and a physical being, separable from one another. That's not how we exist. So, let's look to see how we exist so we can better understand this.

In 1 Thessalonians 5, Paul writes. ***23 May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.***



What we're seeing here is that we are three parts. Our complete, whole self is three parts. They are spirit, soul, and body, as Paul is outlining for us there. We see from this picture that this is how we exist here on earth: One being with three inseparable parts. Here are the parts that we just read about in 1 Thessalonians. Our outer part, our outer self, our physical nature is our body, that which the world can see and interact with directly.

As we go in one layer, we go into the soul. The soul contains our thoughts, our emotions, our will; some people would say the heart. So, this inner layer is our soul. Now, the soul can only interact with the outside world through the body and vice versa. You see that?

Now we go a layer farther into the very core of our being. This is where we have our spirit. As Christians, we understand that this spirit space either has Jesus or doesn't. He's either there or he ain't. That's our spirit.

So, this is how we exist. We start to understand we are not a spiritual being and a physical being; I'm one being with three parts, inseparable from one another here on earth. We start to understand that as we're asking the question: "Is it important for me to tend to the condition of my physical nature?"

To help us understand that, let's go on to some scriptures that look at this. Let's look first at James 2. ***14 What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? 15 Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. 16 If one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? And that sets us all up for this final statement in this passage. 17 In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.***

We can be saved. Ephesians 2 - ***8 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith...*** In Romans 10 - ***9 If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.*** But, after that is what we're talking about now. What is the most important thing? Our faith in Jesus without works is dead.

Let's look at the picture again. Remember our spirit and this is our faith, our faith in Jesus, as it pertains to the outside world. If it does not have works through our body, it's dead, it's simply contained. Another way to look at this is that the one and only vehicle you have through which to make your faith living is your physical self.

Let's look at the next scripture. Philippians 2 - ***3 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.***

The first thing we notice there is we should be looking to the interest of others. Notice something it doesn't say. It doesn't say "don't look your own interest at all, only look to the interests of others." There's a reason that scripture tells us look not only to our own interest, but also to the interests of others.

It's because we can get into this spiritual and physical martyrdom like "I'm just going to suffer everything on myself and serve others." The problem with is when you are unwell, when your physical self is unwell, your focus becomes inward. When you are well, you can better turn your focus outward. For us to better look to the interests of others, we must be well.

Let's look at another passage also in Philippians in Chapter 1. The context of this is Paul talking about his existence on earth. "I may be here, I may depart to be with Christ." He sums it all up, he says, **21 For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.** What that mean is for me to die is gain, which means I depart from this earth to be with my savior in heaven, leaving behind the presence of sin. So, it's gainful for me, as an individual, to go be with the Lord, but for me to live is Christ. As long as my physical being exists on this earth, Christ has me in the flesh, to be able to do the work of the Lord for the purposes of his Kingdom. For me to live is Christ and to die is gain.

As we understand all of this, then we go back and ask the question again. "Is it really important for me to tend to the condition of my physical nature?" From everything we just talked about, I think we could agree that the answer is, "Yes." The question then is "Why?" There is your context: *To Better Love and Serve*. And that's what we're talking about today. The importance of attending to our physical condition to better love and serve.

Now there's a problem and it's sin. Sin is always the problem, isn't it? Our natural tendencies are sinful. Our natural tendencies, in the area of tending to our physical condition so that we can better love and serve others, is that of apathy, is that of no concern. Coupled with that, the fact that we live in the United States of America... Again, thank you veterans and service people for our freedoms. There are a lot of great things about the United States of America. The problem is our baseline lifestyle. It puts us at risk for certain health conditions where leading causes of death and unwellness are preventable. It's our lifestyle that puts us there. So, we're in this place where our tendency is unhealthy and that's a problem because of what we have just talked about, which is the importance of our health.

Knowing that, it's important for us to first set a goal. We set a goal knowing that it's important, but we're in a place where it's going to be difficult because of our sin nature and our environment. Our goal is this: **We want to live a longer life with more energy and a sharper mind.** How do we achieve this goal to live a longer life? For me to live is Christ. While I'm alive, I can continue to do the work of the Lord for the purposes of his Kingdom. More energy and a sharper mind. If I have more energy and a sharper mind, I can better look to the interest of others, making my faith alive through my works, through service, to better love and serve. So, that's our goal.

What's the purpose? To better love and serve. So, we have a goal and a purpose moving forward here. Something you didn't see in our goal and our purpose is that I can have six pack abs. Something else you didn't see is so that I can fit into a certain size dress. That's not in our goal or our purpose. For the Christian, **better health and wellness is not for the sake of looks.** That's not what pop wellness would tell us. By pop wellness, I mean the fads and the trends and commercial products and advertising. For the most part, pop wellness puts two pictures in front of you, a before and an after. "Here's what you look like and here's what you need to look like." "Here's where you are and here's where we can get you to." As a Christian, we know that better health and wellness should not be for the sake of looks.

One of the reasons is we are horrible Judges of our looks, of each other's looks and especially our own. A couple of years ago, our family was getting ready to go out to White Water for the day. If you don't know what White Water is, it's our water park, so, clearly, we're going to be in swimsuits.

My wife comes around the corner and says, "Hey, is this swimsuit okay?"

I say, "Yeah! You look good!" What does she do? She gets bashful and ducks around the corner and hides.

A few minutes later, she comes around the corner and I'm in my swimsuit and no shirt yet. She says, "Hey, speaking of looking good."

I flex my muscles and say, "I'm sorry, did you say something?"

She said, "Yeah, you look good."

I said, "I've been doing some pushups. I've been working out, you know."

That's how horrible we are at judging our own looks. We're a bad judge of our own looks and other's looks because it's based on emotions. This issue of looks is based on emotions and our emotions are a horrible sense of truth. They are a horrible source for us. That's why we talk all the time about scripture as our primary source of truth of what we understand about ourselves and the world around us. Our emotions are down here at the bottom of the list and our looks are based on emotions.

What scripture says about us is: You were created in the image of God and that you were knitted together in your mother's womb. Regardless of your outer self, this is true about you. It's true about every human being and then Christians, those who have received Christ. Beyond that, you have Galatians 2. ***20 I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.*** So, now, beyond being created in the image of God and knitted together in my mother's womb, my complete identity is in Christ. So, the fact is I don't need to be concerned about anybody's opinion of my looks. Except of course when I get dressed for the day, and I walk out, and my wife says, "You're not wearing that out are you?" We know that's not a question; that's a statement. For the Christian, better health and wellness is not for the sake of looks.

Even when we have this noble reason for better health and wellness of "to better love and serve," it's hard. Better health and wellness is hard. Any amens out there? It is hard, but there is good news. Our health habits are not like our character and our integrity. With our character and our integrity, we have to be **all good all the time**. There's no room for error. That's our goal. With our health habits, you must be **mostly good most of the time**. That's the contrast, okay? There's truth in this. We don't have to be all good all the time, but we must be mostly good most of the time.

Let me give you a couple of practical examples to tell you what I mean. **Character and integrity** – it's not okay to look at a little bit of pornography. It's not okay to cheat on your spouse a little bit. It's not okay to harbor a little bit of bitterness and anger.

**Health habits** – Every now and then, it is okay to have chicken fried steak with mashed potatoes and gravy. Amen? How many of you, at some point in your life, thought that the meat inside a chicken fried steak was actually chicken? I did, yeah. Then one day, you see the menu item “Chicken fried chicken” and you’re like wait a minute! What’s in this stuff? Which begs the question. Does it really matter? I’m pretty sure with the right gravy, chicken fried cardboard would taste pretty good. The State Fair has proven that too, haven’t they? “Hey, you want a Twinkie?” “No, I’ve never been a big Twinkie fan.” “Hey, they’re deep fried.” “Sure, I’ll take one.”

You don’t have to be all good all the time, but we must be mostly good most of the time. I love what my friend, Dr. Jerod Hill, who also is an elder here at Woodland Hills, says. Dr. Jerod Hill is not a lawyer either, by the way. Slacker. He wrote an article in a Christian magazine a couple of years ago, speaking to how you don’t have to be all good all the time. I think he puts it very well. I’m going to read you an excerpt from the article that he wrote.

*He wrote, “It’s not like you can never have a piece of cake again. Moderation is the key. I look at it like budgeting money. For example, it’s not bad to spend money to go on vacation with your family and create great memories. But, it is bad if you do it more than you can afford and get overdrawn at the bank. You body is like the bank. How many deposits are you making compared to how many withdraws are you making?”*

I think that’s a great analogy because it gives us this picture of a spectrum from all good all the time to complete apathy and nothing. What we’re learning is we need to be towards this end. We need to be mostly good most of the time to have that strong bank account as we seek to better love and serve. When we are well, we can better seek the interests of others.

I want to give you some numbers to emphasize what I’m talking about on the spectrum line. One of them is that one meal is 0.00001% of your lifetime meals. So, that chicken fried steak with mashed potatoes and gravy really doesn’t make a dent in these numbers of what we’re talking about with lifetime meals. As far as where we are on this spectrum, really one meal doesn’t make a whole lot of difference and that’s good, but the opposite is true that one healthy meal that we eat really doesn’t make a whole lot of difference in and of itself either. You see?

Let’s look at what 30 days is. Thirty days is .001% of your lifetime. We tend to like to grab onto things and go all good all the time with something for 30 days, or for however many days. In this example we’ll go with 30 days. That’s great and I’m not coming against that and I’m saying it’s good to do these things. I have no problem. The problem I do have is when we substitute that for the other 99.999% of our life. It’s where we are in our bank balance, where we are on this spectrum to be mostly good most of the time, that we tend to our day to day, week to week, month to month, and year to year. You don’t have to be all good all the time, but you must be mostly good most of the time. Your current health depends on your bank balance.

We’re going to talk about a couple of specific things, but first we are going to start with food. With food, there are two aspects that we’re going to talk about. It is quantity and quality. Those are two aspects of our food that obviously we can’t separate. Our food is our food. The first thing we’re going to talk

about is the **quantity of our food determines our weight**. The quantity, as measured in calories, determines our weight. I know some of you are anxious to discuss and debate macronutrient percentages, paleo, ketogenesis, or you might want to talk about low carb/no carb or maybe carb cycling. Let's talk about volumetrics. Let's talk about organic. Let's talk about clean. Let's talk about these characteristics of our food and how they have an effect on our weight.

But, what I'm boiling everything down to is the simple, biological, physiological fact that quantity, as measured in calories, is weight. It's very simple. Why is that important? There is something called the BMI. BMI is Body Mass Index. Our body mass index is a number. You have a number. Where you are right now, you have a number and it's a vital sign. It's a vital sign like your blood pressure, your heart rate, your respiratory rate, your temperature. Healthy care providers use it as a measure of what's going on in your body and the health conditions that you may be at risk for. It's a vital sign; very objective.

Why is that important? Well we need to measure it to know, first of all, what our number is, like any other vital sign. It's calculated with your height and weight. You can go on any app or website somewhere. Don't do it right now, but you can do it at some point. Check your height and your weight and you'll get your number. And you have this number that is your gauge of health risk factors. The importance of that number is there are certain health risks that come along with a number that is out of the range of normal, 18 – 25. I also want to mention there is such thing of out of the range under normal, which we don't think about a lot, but there is a healthy range of BMI.

Out of the range of normal. Why is it important for certain healthy risk factors? Let's start with the first one, which is just life expectancy. If your BMI is outside of the normal range to a degree up to five units then you increase your risk of death between the ages of 50 – 70 by 50% just for being out of that range. If we go another five units then it triples. It's an increased risk of death between the ages of 50 – 70 by having a BMI that high out of range.

Other risk factors. Elevated BMI puts us at risk for diabetes, arthritis, sleep apnea. Remember what we're talking about. Longer life, more energy, a sharper mind to better love and serve. Now something we don't think about a lot with our BMI elevated is cancer. The cancer risk goes up. Having an elevated BMI puts you at a higher risk of colon cancer, kidney, liver, and even breast cancer. So, you see there are health risk factors that come along with this vital sign that we have, a measure of our height and weight. Quantity is weight, as it pertains to calories.

**Quality is nutrition.** We basically all know what good nutrition is. We know what's healthy. An apple versus French fries. Grilled chicken versus a cheese burger. For the most part, we know what's healthy and we all know that dessert has no nutritional value. Sugary sweet desserts have no nutritional value. Does that break anyone else's heart? I love dessert? Does anyone else love dessert? If you didn't raise your hand, I don't understand you.

The only thing I don't understand more than people who don't like dessert are people that want to share my dessert. There's something you should know about me. I don't share dessert. You can call me unchristian, but it's covered by the blood and I'm just going to stay there.

I don't share dessert and I don't get the "Let's get one dessert and four spoons." Why do we need four spoons; I only have two hands. I love dessert.

When your sitting at dinner and they say, "Come on, let's just get a couple of desserts. We'll put them in the middle and we can all share them," I'm like, "If you don't mind, I would really like my own." Then they're like, "Oh, come on. It'll be fun; well try some different things." I laugh and say, "No. This is mine and I'm going to have my own dessert."

I don't even share dessert with my wife that I share everything in life with. So, when I'm ordering dessert, I ask her if she wants anything. She says, "Just get a size bigger and I'll take a couple bites of yours."

"We've been married 20 years and you don't know this. I tell you what, I'll get a bigger size just because you insist, but I'm still going to eat it all. I'll buy you your own. You can take a bite and throw it away; I'm good with that, but this is my dessert."

Quality is our nutrition. So, we understand though, being on the spectrum, we can get carried away sometimes, but can food be sinful? As we're talking about dessert, that's often what we go to. As we think of food being sinful, we can get this angel versus devil mentality. Do I choose the cake or do I choose the fruit? We say words like *decadent*. I had to look it up. It means abandoning all morality. So, can that really be our food? Can our food be sinful?

Let's look to the scripture as our primary source of truth to understand what we know to be true about this. Look at 1 Corinthians 10 where Paul does a lot of discussion about what's legal, what's not, what's lawful, and what's not, according to Old Testament law and food. He sums it up with this. **25 Eat anything sold in the meat market without raising questions of conscience...** And everybody said... Amen.

We read here that an item of food is not sinful. Let's read what Jesus said in Matthew 15. **11 "What goes into someone's mouth does not defile them, but what comes out of their mouth, that is what defiles them."**

**17 "Don't you see that whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and is expelled?"** You know what Jesus meant by expelled. **18 "But the things that come out of a person's mouth come from the heart, and these defile them."**

What Jesus is saying is what goes into the mouth just comes out as stuff. It can't defile you because it just comes out as stuff. But what comes out of the mouth... We know that some people, sometimes, when they open their mouth, all that comes out is a lot of that same stuff. Get it?

But that's what Jesus is saying. That's the point. According to Proverbs 4: 23, the things that come out of our mouth come from our heart and that's what defiles us. So, we understand the items of food are not sinful. That's why it's okay for us, on Father's Day, to have a bacon bar with maple and bacon donuts. Wouldn't you like to meet the genius that combined sweet, savory, and salty in a maple bacon

donut? It's good and it's not sinful. That item is not sinful. But, here is where we have to be careful because we can take something God has given us as a blessing, use it out of the context he intended, and turn it into a sin.

There are many things that are like this. For instance, wine. God gives us wine to be enjoyed as a blessing. When used out of his intended context, it can be sinful. God gives us sex to be enjoyed in a marriage relationship between a man and a woman. When used out of context, it can be sinful. God give us work to provide and when used out of context, because of a love of money, can become sinful. God gives us rest to enjoy and when used out of his intended context, we can become slothful, which can be sinful.

So, we have to be careful because our food can be this way too. How is that? Let's look back at Verse 23 in 1 Corinthians 10. ***All things are lawful, but not all things are helpful. All things are lawful, but not all things build up.*** So, just because a single item is okay, it doesn't mean we should be partaking of it all the time. And we recall that we don't have to be all good all the time, but we must be mostly good most of the time.

So, we understand this as we realize that no single item is sinful and therefore, your food is not sinful, but your diet might be. Does that make sense? In other words, your diet, which is the sum of everything that you eat, can be sinful, if it moves us on that spectrum to apathy, to not paying any attention and away from the mostly good most of the time. And we understand that quality is our nutrition.

Now, let's look at exercise. The first response that some of you give is "I'm not a workout person. It's not my thing. I don't enjoy working out. It's not something I like. I'm not an athlete." The response then is exercise is not for athletic people; it's for people, it's for everyone. It's known that 80% of Americans don't get the recommended physical activity necessary to maintain good health. What is that recommendation? 150 minutes per week of moderately intense physical activity. I did the simple math for you. It's 25 minutes a day for 6 days a week. What is moderately intense physical activity? It's physical activity that causes you to have difficulty carrying on a conversation. It raises your heart rate, your blood pressure. Again, exercise is for everybody. Why? Because we start to look to the benefits of it as we remember that we're looking for longer life, more energy, sharper mind to better love and serve.

The benefits of exercise start with this:

**Reduced risk of colon and breast cancer.** It's been shown that 7% of colon cancers and 10% of breast cancer cases can be attributed solely to physical inactivity. In other words, if everybody got their physical activity colon cancer would go down in incidents by 7% and breast cancer would go down by 10%. Isn't that interesting with exercise?

**Stress, anxiety, and depression.** More energy with a sharper mind. What we know is that exercise reduces stress, anxiety, and depression. People that exercise will tell you that people don't exercise

because they have energy; they have energy because they exercise, making me well, better able to turn my focus on the interest of others.

**Immunity.** Believe it or not, exercise busts your immunity, so you are less likely to get any kind of infection when you get your regular physical activity, even the common cold. Remember that when we are unwell, our focus becomes inward and we all know what it's like to have a cold or the flu. Your focus becomes inward and you can't really deal with anything else at that time. When we're well, we can better turn our focus outward.

**Cognitive function.** Exercise literally makes you smarter. To the senior adults, one of your greatest concerns, if not your greatest concern, if we polled you all, would be diminished cognitive function in your aging years. The thing you are most concerned about is losing your memory and not able to participate with your mind as you get older. What we know is that exercise in this way reduces the incidents of cognitive failure, of dementia and Alzheimer's.

As we look at this list, we realize that there is no pill, no supplement, no other product in the entire world that gives us this same benefit right here. Twenty-five minutes a day for six days a week.

What do you think then is the most common reason people give for not exercising? It's because they don't have enough time. I would say in the same way that my soul does not have time for me to not spend time in prayer and meditating on the word of God, my body does not have time for me to not exercise because of these benefits. You see, I don't have time for this to impair my ability to better love and serve. So, we understand the importance of exercise.

Now, let's move on to some practical points about how. As we've talked about the importance and we've talked about some specifics, it's important to talk about how. Generally, what happens is we like to make sudden, drastic changes to our lifestyle. That's usually how we do things with our health and wellness. We recognize a place where we may be farther down on this end of the spectrum and we want to quickly move up to this end, more toward the mostly good most of the time.

I'm going to suggest something that is a bit counter-cultural. Again, pop wellness wouldn't agree, but research and scripture agree that slow and steady wins when it comes to how and to change. The reason is that sudden bursts of high effort statistically lead to burnout and regression. This is a fact. We know this to be true. We've observed it. Ninety-five percent of New Year's resolutions fail by Valentine's Day. Why is that? It's because these sudden, drastic changes are too overwhelming for our deeply engrained system of habits and behaviors that we've developed over years and even decades. So, these sudden bursts tend to lead to burnout and regression.

Two studies in 2012 looked at this. Basically, researchers said, "We've observed this. It seems like this is true, but let's study it." Two separate large studies that looked at this, particularly with people that were focused on body weight that made sudden, drastic changes in order to lose body weight. What they found was that with the people that used these sudden, drastic measures not only most did of them gain back to where they were before shortly after the loss or within a couple of years, most of them

were at risk to gain even more than they did before. So, you see that this method of sudden, drastic changes can actually be detrimental, long term, to what we're trying to accomplish.

Let's look at what scriptures says. Proverbs 21 says, **5 The plans of the diligent lead to profit as surely as haste leads to poverty.** We know this not just about this, but also in business, haste leads to poverty. Slow and steady... We know this about money, about stabilizing your finances that slow and steady wins. That haste comes to poverty. We know this about ministry and trying to grow ministries. If you get hasty and don't take your time and be diligent, they come to poverty. So, you see this applies in what we're talking about.

Knowing that, let's talk about a couple of things, particularly food and exercise, as we talk about how to change. With food, generally what we do with sudden, drastic change is "I'm going to find a diet that generally has a name, and I'm going to change my whole lifestyle in my food to this." We understand that can lead to poverty, that it can lead to burnout and regression. So, making these sudden, drastic changes generally aren't successful.

So, what we do is we make small changes, small change being diligent over time to where we make little, healthy changes in what we eat so that we're moving down that line becoming mostly good most of the time with the nutrition, with the quality and the quantity of the food that we get.

For exercise, start small and increase gradually. The tendency is for us to sign up at the gym and go spend 1 ½ hours a day, six days a week there. The problem with that is you're either going to get injured or you're just going to burnout anyway. So, start small, increase gradually. If you're doing nothing, start with five minutes a day. A brisk walk, walking in place. Sometimes walking in place will be enough to make it difficult to carry on a conversation. If that's you, start there. Then make it ten minutes once that becomes more comfortable, increasing time and intensity as you go along.

With all of this, though, we know that what's healthy, we know what healthy food is. We know this and it's hard. Does anybody agree being healthy is hard? Why is it so hard when we know the right thing to do? I think Paul express it well in his letter to the Romans. Romans 7 - **14 We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin. 15 I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do.** We are dealing with issues of behaviors. In everything in our life, things that deal with issues of behaviors, we know that there are spiritual forces at work. We know that the enemy is prowling around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. We're not just battling the flesh, and so it's hard. That's why it's important for us to take on responsibility, number one, but also look to the Lord and call upon the Holy Spirit to work in us to help us to do hard things.

I want to close with one more thought that as we acknowledge that the most important thing in the world is to love God and love people. Christians, the most important thing is to love God and to love people. We exist as a three part being: body, soul, and spirit. They cannot be separated, therefore, it's important for our faith to be living through works. It's important for us to look not only to our own interests, but also to the interest of others and that when we're well, we can do a better job of that. We remember to live is Christ and to die is gain.

So, we set the goal for a longer life with more energy and a sharper mind. Why? To better love and serve. Keeping all of that in mind, we understand that we do not have any promise for our outer self, our physical nature. We are not given any promises or guarantees in scriptures except for that we know sickness may come, we know that death will come. So, Christians, the hope that we have is that some day, when our inner self departs from our outer self, we'll be with our savior in heaven, apart from the presence of any unwellness whatsoever.

Paul said it well in 2 Corinthians 4: **16 Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. 17 For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. 18 So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.**

That, Christians, is the hope that we have and that is what we keep in mind as we remember Philippians 1: 21 **For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.** Knowing that here on earth, I can continue to do the work of the Lord for the purposes of his Kingdom, keeping one eye on heaven knowing the hope that I have in my eternity.