

The Mission of Fountaingate – Part II

Gently Offering Health

1 Thessalonians 5:23 NIV

Last week Pastor Vic shared Part one of this Series of Messages regarding our Church Mission Statement – “To Gently Offer Healing, health and Hope to a Hurting World.” He spoke on Gentleness and how we are called to gently offer healing. Today I am going to share with you what God has placed on my heart about Gently Offering Health to a hurting world.

When most people think of health, they think of a doctor. They think of a gym. They think of our physical bodies and automatically think that health means what your BODY looks like. There are many forms of health...According to Pastor Paul Marc Goulet there are 7 spheres of health as a Christian, and I agree. “Physical, Emotional, Spiritual, “Relational (Healthy Relationships), Financial, Career and Community.” Many people, especially Christians, believe that as a church we should focus solely on Spiritual Health. But **1 Thessalonians 5:23** challenges that limited view of health and freedom. ***“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.”*** This clearly shows us that God wants us to be WHOLE on every level. And each part, once healthy, will help us to be even more useful for God and His plans for our lives and our families.

Today I want to share with you how these 7 spheres relate to our church and our Mission Statement.

Most of you who attend this church and possibly even those watching on Livestream, know my Granny Eamer, also known as our Official Church Granny; or as some knew her, Lula Eamer. My Granny was a hard worker, working from sunrise to sundown. Strong in many aspects of her life. She was not a frail woman. She passed away this year, at 95 years of age, passing away on July 1, 2021. Of course, a woman like my Granny had to pass away on a day that is surrounded by celebration and ends with Fireworks. It represents her entire life. To Granny everything was a celebration. She celebrated waking every morning, and at the end of every day was sure to thank God for getting her through yet another day.

She laughed when most would cry. She clapped when most would “Boo.” She celebrated every accomplishment of her children, grandchildren, great grandchildren, great- great grandchildren. Everything in life was worth celebrating, and few things were worth crying over. As she would always say “Don’t cry over a little spilt milk.” This is interesting to me, because in a recent research study by the National Geographic Society and the National Institute on Aging, scientists interviewed some of the oldest and healthiest people on earth and observed where they live. Many of these people live healthy and active lives beyond the age of ninety, and an outrageous percentage of them are still going strong at one hundred.

Here is one of the discoveries they made: none of the people in these cultures did daily exercise. No weightlifting. No jogging. Nada! Crazy, right? You see, they lived lifestyles where movement was a part of their everyday life. They didn’t have to jog or squeeze into spandex to lift weights. They were in motion from morning till night. Their motion kept them healthy and more importantly happy.

Let’s take a closer look at the 7 spheres of health, and how they relate to Christianity, the Bible, and more importantly our Mission Statement.

I. Physical Health

This is perhaps the most common, so I’m going to quickly go over physical health and why it is important. Most of us in this place know daily exercise is good. A ½ hour walk a day is good to refresh your spirit and keeps you healthy. There are those of us who enjoy a more vigorous workout, and there are some in this room that enjoy putting people through a more vigorous workout. (Right Coach..lol) I personally have never felt more fit and healthy than when I was training at Champs Eastside Boxing Club, located right here in Cornwall. Not only was I fit and healthy, but I was disciplined. That was the most important thing. It took me a couple months to “Earn the respect” of the coaches, and make them realize I was there to train, focus on myself, and eventually I was given the opportunity to compete in a Sport I am now so passionate about. Boxing was the type of sport that literally taught me when I wasn’t focused or only put half an effort in, that my opponent would push me inside the ring, and my coach would push me outside the ring. It didn’t take long for me to step up my game and put my FULL

effort in. This is the same with life. Sometimes when it comes to our Physical health, we get hit, fall, and decide to stay there, rather than fight our way back to what is important.

Erma Bombeck gave some good advice; “Never go to a doctor whose office plants have died.” Lucky for all of you I am not a doctor, because I am no good with plants.

How do we gently offer physical health? Here at Fountaingate one of the ways we are doing that is by offering Women Only Fitness Classes – Sorry guys, we’re working on something for you too! Pastor Vic and his Overcomer Workout 😊 Chantel Ingram is a wonderful instructor passionate about helping people get healthy and more importantly STAY healthy. She wants people to be happy with themselves on every level, and therefore, the ladies will vouch that she is encouraging, loving, and GENTLE! If this is something you are interested in, make sure to let myself or Pastor Sharon know.

Physical health is simple. Eat right – Try to avoid sugar. Drink lots of water – cut out soda, and sugary drinks, and alcohol. Exercise daily – whether that be a ½ hour walk, a fitness class, or weightlifting. Get plenty of sleep – sleep refreshes your body and your mind. The Bible says ***“Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own.” 1 Corinthians 6:19 NIV***

Being good stewards of our body cannot and will not prevent all trials, sicknesses, and diseases, but it can prevent many unnecessary moments or years of suffering. But God cares about your total health, not just your body. Your body is the temple, but your soul and spirit are equally important.

II. Emotional & Relational Health

a) Emotional

Emotional health is an important part of overall health. People who are emotionally healthy are in control of their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. It means you're aware of your emotions. You can deal with them, whether they're positive or negative. Depression, anxiety, stress, poor body image, grief, loss, a major change in your life such as becoming a new parent, or a

death of a close family member or friend, can all affect your mental and emotional health and day to day living. Sometimes it is hard to know if what you are experiencing is depression or sadness, worry or anxiety.

When people think about mental health, they typically picture mood disorders like schizophrenia, OCD, or bipolar. What many don't realize is that common symptoms like stress, anxiety, and depression are also tied to mental health. Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and the choices we make. Mental health is important at every stage of life, from childhood and adolescence through to adulthood. Among Christians, it's easy to dismiss these emotions as personal flaws in our moral character, but nothing could be further from the truth. For Christians, practicing emotional self-care can be extremely difficult. People feel "judged" or feel as though they are not "spiritual" because they are struggling. It's a hard place to be. It's been called "Silent Suffering," because many people are afraid to talk about it. Society is getting better, and I believe that Churches are also getting much more knowledge to allow us to GENTLY help people with their mental/emotional health.

There are 5 simple things as a Christian we can do to help improve our emotional/mental health.

1. Pray - *This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. - 1 John 5:14*

Prayer should always be our first approach to any problem. Before we set out to face our inner demons, it helps to take a moment and return our hearts to God. The Lord hears our prayers and will walk with us through any trials so we shouldn't worry about standing alone. God *knows* our fears, He *knows* our suffering, and He loves us through it all. That knowledge alone can be very encouraging.

2. **Read Your Bible** *"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."* - **John 16:33**

This one should be a no-brainer. Scripture is filled with multiple, encouraging passages for anyone going through a rough period. For starters, it helps to know several Biblical figures also struggled with depression and anxiety.

- Job was so miserable he cursed the day of his birth (**Job 3:1**).
- A dejected Elijah actually went into the wilderness and begged God to kill him (**1 Kings 19:4**)
- Even Jesus knew how it felt to suffer mental anguish (**Luke 22:44**).

If you're feeling depressed, just know you're in good company.

Thankfully, the message doesn't stop there. The Bible teaches us that God will give us strength (**Isaiah 40:31 – Rise on wings like eagles**), provide shelter (**Nahum 1:7 – A Refuge in Times of Trouble**), and walk with us through these dark times (**Psalms 23:4 – Fear no Evil for You Are with me**). His message is one of hope, grace, and ultimately, joy. Whatever this world may throw at you, remember that Christ will see you through.

3. **Journal** – *"On that night the king could not sleep. And he gave orders to bring the book of memorable deeds, the chronicles, and they were read before the king."* - **Esther 6:1**

Putting pen to paper can often help liberate your inner feelings. Don't worry about grammar or neatness, simply sit down, and write. Some Christians may find it therapeutic to write about their anxieties, while others gain encouragement by reliving old adventures. Either way, the act of journaling can serve to nourish and satisfy the mind. Studies have even found it's especially helpful for those suffering from stress-induced insomnia. Oddly enough, many in the Bible were fond of journaling. When King Xerxes couldn't sleep, he had a servant read to him from the recorded histories. David and Solomon were both experienced poets, and would frequently put their emotions into verse, which have impacted millions in the world. **Psalms 23** This scripture is often read at funerals, as a comfort to the family, and had David not written it down, none of us would ever have benefitted from it.

4. **Rest** *“By the seventh day God had finished the work He had been doing; on the seventh day He rested from all His work.” - Genesis 2:2*

This may be the hardest entry for Christians to accept. Our modern society moves at a blinding speed, and we’re constantly told to work longer, achieve higher, and contribute more often. Even on the weekends, our schedules overflow with tasks like doing laundry, cleaning the house, fixing the car, or shuffling the kids around in the family taxi. We have effectively forgotten how to rest. True relaxation is necessary for a healthy mind. If even God was willing to take a break, so should you! Spend some time reading a fun book, do a puzzle, take a nap, go see a movie, or book a massage. Self-care isn’t necessarily selfish; it just ensures you’re not burning yourself out. So, take the afternoon and treat yourself.

5. **Seek Professional Help** *“For lack of guidance a nation falls, but victory is won through many advisers.” - Proverbs 11:14*

Sometimes emotional problems can turn deadly. If you’ve reached the point where self-harm is being considered, it is ***absolutely vital*** you go see a doctor, therapist, or naturopath right away. Regular appointments with a psychologist or licensed therapist can help with these feelings, and there’s no shame in speaking with a professional about them. To put this in perspective, a Christian speaker once compared therapy to getting routine car maintenance, *“There’s nothing wrong with seeing a mechanic to make sure everything’s alright under the hood of our car, why do we think it is any different when talking about counseling?”* God loves us more than we could ever know (***John 3:16***), and he would never, ever want us to stay in a place where we would actively hurt ourselves. If you’re in a dark place, please reach out and ask for help. God put you on this world for a reason, because it’s a better place with you in it.

Using these techniques will help improve your mental/emotional health. Keep in mind that keeping our bodies exercised, fed clean and healthy, and applying the knowledge about physical health, it will also help to improve your mental/emotional health. When we feel better about ourselves, we are much happier and more fulfilled in our lives.

Fountaingate is a church that will gently walk you through your struggles, keeping in mind how Jesus helped people during His time on earth. Think about the Samaritan woman – shamed by her community, dealing with no self-worth, trying to find love in the arms of many men, Jesus didn't judge her, He LOVED her. The woman who was caught in adultery – Jesus didn't join in the attacking of her, he told her to go and sin no more. He showed her mercy. That is the God I serve. One who loves and cares about us even in our struggles.

b) Relational Health.

When our physical, emotional, and mental health are healthy, so will our relationships.

“Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends” John 15:13

“A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity” Proverbs 17:17

It's interesting to me that 6/10 Commandments from the 10 Commandments in Exodus 20 have to do with relational health.

#5. “Honor your father and your mother” (Exodus 20:12) ***Honor & Respect Others***

#6. “You shall not murder” (Exodus 20:13) ***Grant Forgiveness/do not act in anger***

#7. “You shall not commit adultery” (Exodus 20:14) ***Be Sexually Pure***

#8. “You shall not steal” (Exodus 20:15) ***Give Rather than Take***

#9. “You shall not bear false witness” (Exodus 20:16) ***Speak Truth***

#10. “You shall not covet your neighbor's house...wife...servant...ox...donkey, or anything that is your neighbor's” (Exodus 20:17)

Love God More Than Material Things

From the beginning, God wanted us to recognize that how we treat others reflects on Him. As a Christian WITHIN OUR homes, the way we treat our family (our spouse, our children, our animals) is a direct reflection of our relationship with God. No one is perfect, and God doesn't expect that, but if we try our best to respect our family, and love each other, God will bless our relationships. Tameka made a cute little project in school that we have up in our home, it says “Before you Speak Think and be Smart. It's hard to fix a wrinkled heart.”

In ***James 1:19*** it states, ***“My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry.”***

This is also important to remember out in the community. Begin to look for the “beauty” in your spouse, friends, coworkers, church family, etc., as a reflection of God’s beauty. Praise God for His beauty and the small glimpse of it that He has given to you through that person. **BROWNIE POINTS/HINT:** Make sure that you tell your partner when you see beauty in him or her! This SHOULD be daily if your relational health is where God wants it to be.

Here at Fountaingate, Pastor Brad, Pastor Sharon and Pastor Vic are here to help your family with Gentle guidance on ways to improve your relationships. Seek God for direction, and don’t be afraid to reach out for a helping hand, or a gentle reassurance.

III. Financial Health

Financial health is straightforward. Money is not evil; it is a tool given by God for our flourishing. The possession of money is not in and of itself a bad thing. Paul's word to Timothy about money in **1 Timothy 6:10** “*The Love of Money is the root of all evil.*” was not an indictment of money, but a warning about the danger of worshipping money. In fact, it was Paul who often collected money to care for impoverished Christians. Money is the reward for hard work. Both Jesus and Paul affirmed the idea that hard work should be rewarded by a fair wage. God is glorified when we apply our gifts and talents to the marketplace and are rewarded with money. In fact, the Bible teaches that an entitlement mindset that looks for money without work is a sinful lifestyle as spoke of in **2 Thessalonians 3:10** “*If a man does not work, nor should he eat.*” We should encourage our kids to work hard and find reward. Of course, money is not the only reason to work; we work to glorify God. When we work, we image a God who works and creates. Teaching our children about hard work, and doing it to feel good about ourselves, and to provide for our families is admirable. I don’t believe in paying for Chores, but in our home, as the children were growing up, we paid “Commission” for the jobs they completed. Just like at a work site, if you don’t work and complete your task, you don’t get paid. Teaching them an important lesson they will need to succeed.

Our culture likes to divide people by class, the rich against the poor. God breaks down the walls of class prejudice, uniting us from various socioeconomic

backgrounds. Christians should not evaluate people based on their economic status rather based on their status as humans created in God's image.

“Command those who are rich in this world’s goods not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment.” 1 Timothy 6:17

You may have inwardly laughed thinking, well I’m not rich, so this doesn’t apply to me. However, consider this: “If you made \$1500 last year, you’re in the top 20% of the world’s income earners. If you have sufficient food, decent clothes, live in a house or apartment, and have a reasonably reliable means of transportation, you are among the top 15% of the world’s wealthy. If you earn more than \$50,000 annually, you are in the top 1% of the world’s income earners.”

Each of us live in different financial situations, and God knows them all. No one is better than another, and no one should ever feel less than someone else. Here at Fountaingate we believe that every person and family is equally important. Everyone plays a role. Keeping your family financially healthy is something that we can help you with and can give you guidance with helping with a budget, or snowballing your debt to help your family become debt free!

IV. Career/Community Health

- 1. Career Health Jeremiah 29:11 “For I know the plans that I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope.”***

The most important thing to remember about your career is that everything we do should Honor God. Also making sure that you are doing a job that you enjoy, is important for your physical, mental, emotional, and financial health. It’s also important to make sure that where you work, spending 40-60 hours a week, is doing something that would make God proud of you. Being a good representative of God at your workplace is important. Remember, most people don’t READ a Bible, so YOU are their WALKING BIBLE. If you claim to be a Christian and don’t represent that at work, then why should they be interested in attending church, or getting to know this “God” who doesn’t require anything different of you than them. Be a walking example of who Christ is. The world sees you on the first mile, they see God in the second mile. Always go the second mile.

2. Community Health: “Share each other’s burdens, and in this way obey the law of Christ.”

Galatians 6:2-12

Never be embarrassed to share your struggles with other Christians. Church was designed by God to be a place where fellow believers can nurture, protect, and inspire one another while pursuing Christ. In recent years though, too many congregations have become obsessed with outward appearances. They put on a showy display of being happy, wholesome individuals when inside they’re barely holding together. This type of thinking is neither healthy nor holy. If you’re feeling overwhelmed, it’s ok to reach out to your community for help. Find someone within the congregation whom you trust and let them know what’s happening. No Christian was meant to go through life alone. So instead of toughing it out, lean on your fellow believers and remember we’re all strongest when we work together.

V. Spiritual Health

This is where we bring the whole message together. Spiritual wellness acknowledges our search for the deeper meaning in life. When we're spiritually healthy, we feel more connected not only to God, but to those around us. We have more clarity when it comes to making everyday choices, and our actions become more consistent with our beliefs and values.

Today is your annual physical. Your doctor checks your blood pressure, reflexes, and asks you all kinds of questions about your daily habits, nutrition, and exercise. She probably orders tests to check your sugar, cholesterol, and other things. In the end, you get a diagnosis: you’re in great health! Or perhaps the diagnosis isn’t good. She orders more tests. A disease is lurking and needs to be eradicated. As human beings made in the image of God, we have spiritual health as well as physical. And since the Fall, it’s also important to get regular spiritual checkups. As Christians, we have a Great Physician who can heal our spiritual illnesses. Instead of checking your blood pressure, He may check your love level. He may examine your attitude instead of your reflexes. He may “test” your obedience, contentment, and patience. What would be the diagnosis? Would it be good news? Or is the disease of sin lurking?

How can you—with the Holy Spirit—diagnose your spiritual health? One way is to pray through some Scripture passages like **1 Corinthians 13**—how many of us could say we have a clean bill of health on love? If we substituted our name where we find the word “love” in verses 4-8, how many of us could say with integrity that we are patient? What about when you’re driving? How many of us could say we don’t keep a record of wrongs? How about with your spouse, children, or friends?

Or try another passage: **Colossians 3. Do you “set your minds on things above”? (Verse 2) Do you “forgive as the Lord forgave you”? (Verse 13)** That’s a tough one sometimes, isn’t it? Perhaps you could start simply with the prayer from **Psalms 139:23, “Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me and lead me in the way everlasting.”**

What might the Spirit be revealing to you, even as you read that?

Examining your spiritual health is not meant to be a guilt trip. It is an exercise to see yourself humbly and truthfully as God sees you. As sinners, none of us will have a clean bill of health this side of heaven.

Fountaingate Christian Assembly has made its mission to Cornwall, to gently offer healing, health, and hope! Part of that gentle offering is offering a place to come every Sunday to socialize, worship and be with your church family. This is an important part of maintaining good spiritual health as it provides a sense of structure and offers a group of people to connect with over similar beliefs. Interestingly, research suggests that religiosity reduces suicide rates, alcoholism, and drug use. Why, because when God is involved, you see lives being changed. A proper, supportive, GENTLE Church family will provide structure, regularity, and predictability. Belonging to a Bible-believing church family provides guidelines to live by, including loving your neighbour as yourself. Spirituality also incorporates healthy practices for the mind and body, which positively influences mental health and emotional wellbeing. Spirituality combined with religion, can impact your life.

In closing, I want to share an important testament of God working within an individual’s life to help them maintain a healthy aspect of everything I spoke about today, and I have asked for his permission to share his story with you.

Many of you at Fountaingate know Joshua Grant. This young man had a teenage life with trials and struggles, and at the age of 18, showed up at our front door, begging for help. Although we are not his biological family, we were and still are his spiritual family. Many times, during his struggles I had told him that we would be here to help him when he was ready, and that day God spoke to him and reminded him of that. Fountaingate Christian Assembly stepped up helping him with the initial steps of registering, and the rest was up to him. The church helped to register him at Teen Challenge in London, Ontario, and in the 4 weeks before his admission, he was provided with a safe home, food, clothes, and even a job to keep busy, under the watchful eye of the Pastor. The day he was admitted was bittersweet, realizing that he now had to do the work. He came home for a visit and each time he came home, we had seen more and more improvement in his health, as a whole – physical, mental, emotional, relational, financial, spiritual, career and community!

Joshua has since graduated from the Teen Challenge Program. He completed 1 year of the Rehabilitation and Detox, completed an additional year to help him cope in the community, including helping him find employment, an apartment, etc. He is currently enrolled at Emmanuel Bible College. He completed his 1st year in the Spring of 2021, and just began his 2nd year, working towards his Bachelor of Theology. Together with God, his church Family, and the support of community, Josh found his calling and place in the world. Josh is happily engaged to the beautiful young lady in this picture, Abigail, holding a job, and serving in his local church, and we are very proud of him. ALL the glory goes to God! Without the Holy Spirit drawing Josh to make a change, it never would have happened. Without Josh WANTING to make a change, it never would have happened.

Spiritual health is important as it allows us to make the changes God requires of us. When we have a good relationship with God, He can speak to us and guide us with His Holy Spirit and give our lives direction.

Closing Song: