

## Message: Physical Resilience

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3 John 2-4

Resilience: The Art of Moving Forward Sermon Series

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My 10<sup>th</sup> grade teacher asked our class what was our one wish? A classmate wished everyone in her family could be healthy. At the time I thought, *“What a dumb wish!”* Someone in her family must have had health issues. I did not understand it then, but I do now. My father and sister both died at 56. Now my mom has severe memory loss. I have two degrees from ORU. Oral Roberts was a visionary. He was a leader in emphasizing the whole person—in body, mind, and spirit: *“May your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ”* (1 Thessalonians 5:23). Jesus spoke to the spirit and soul, but also healed bodies. Paul said our bodies were important: *“With full courage now as always, Christ will be honored in my body,”* and will be transformed in heaven (Philippians 1:20).

The joke is, it is called COVID “19” because since it hit, we all have gained 19 pounds. Staying physically strong is challenging but essential. Christians tend to condemn some unhealthy behaviors while ignoring others. We often overlook the stewardship of our bodies. This saying is tacky but can be true: *“He dug his grave with a knife and fork.”* The Old Testament esteemed the human body. It provided many rules and regulations to keep it healthy and safe (particularly in Leviticus 13-16). An integration of the physical and spiritual is fasting.

APPLICATION: How are you stewarding your health? What is one thing you can do to be healthier? What can you automate in your daily routine? Will you fast Thursday evening after dinner to Friday dinner as Wesley told the Methodists to do? Memorize 3 John 2 this week: *“Beloved, I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be in good health, as it goes well with your soul.”*

INTRO: This is the third of five messages on Resilience: the Art of Moving Forward. After dealing with COVID-19 for 6 months and with no end in sight, I’m convinced we must develop resilience and learn to move forward. Being stuck is such a helpless feeling.

Our bodies matter to God. **Leviticus** stresses this constantly. There are all kinds of rules and regulations governing all aspects of the human body. The body

**Luke 2:52** give us our sermon series: *And Jesus increased in wisdom (mental) and in stature (physical) and in favor with God (spiritual) and man (social)*. (This is actually from 1 Samuel 2:26)

**Paul's** occupation was a tentmaker. In 2 Corinthians 5, he refers to our bodies as being like tents that are temporary. When we die, they are taken down and become new and glorified buildings. Before we die, however, we shouldn't poke holes in the tents we are living in – we should try to take care of them. In comparison with the weight of eternal glory when we go from “tent status” on earth to a “mansion” in heaven, we should still try to be good stewards of our bodies. Paul told Timothy that bodily exercise profits some, but godliness is the main goal.

John **Wesley**, the founder of Methodism, tried to help the poor Methodists (that's mainly who the Methodist people were – dismissed by the Anglican Church). He even wrote a book called “The Primitive Physick.” It lived up to its name. It was “primitive.” He recommended a lot of old wives' tales as ways to help sickness. Cure baldness. Was fond of electric shock.

This was **Oral Roberts** “go to” text that spawned his ministry of healing.

This pastor, **John**, has affection for his “beloved” congregation. He wants them to be well in health and in soul. It's not either/or but both/and. with the physical/spiritual. They are connected. In the church, we tend to overlook, if not completely ignore the physical. I know that's true for me in preaching – I don't think I've ever preached a sermon on “good health.” Pastor John is praying for “good health.” How can we cooperate with those prayers?

### **3 John 2-4**

*Beloved, I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be in good health, as it goes well with your soul. For I rejoiced greatly when the brothers came and testified to your truth, as indeed you are walking in the truth. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.*

The first habit in Steven Covey's book, The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People, is BE PROACTIVE. That means to take charge of our lives. We are responsible. We are response-able. We're not hapless, hopeless, creatures. We can do something to make life better, improve, grow, and get better. Our health is our responsibility. It is interesting that we are going to extreme measures to avoid a virus, but most are making little to no effort to preventable diseases. Don't blame others. Nobody has a responsibility to prepare healthful food for us (i.e. fast food restaurants) We don't have to eat bad food. We can exercise. We can learn new tricks.

In 7 Habits, Covey describes two circles. The outer circle is “Concerns.” These are forces that are happening, but I can’t control (hurricane, international finance, the upcoming election). These things that are beyond my control tend to cause us anxiety. That anxiety is NOT helpful for our health. Jesus said it like this: ***And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life?*** (Matt 6:27) This is why I’ve been telling you to turn off the news. Our anxiety about Covid, politics, economy, race is affecting our lives and there is very little we can do to control these factors. The proactive person focuses on the inner circle. The reactive person focuses on the outer circle. We can control 3 things: What we think, say and do.

How can we be in good health? There are 2 components:

1.) **Knowledge** Information/facts. **RYSER video**. They got bad news. They learned. They did something about it. They took charge of their own health. We can, too.

A.) **Listen**. Don’t bury your head in the sand. Pay attention. Listen to what other people are telling you. Hear the truth. The doctor told Charlie, there’s hope but you’ve got to change. When I was in Sallisaw sometime in the early 1980’s, Bishop Hardt came to preach at Sallisaw and poked me in the belly and told me I had gained too much weight. He was not “nice,” but he was kind. He was telling me the truth, though I did not want to hear. We are afraid to tell people the truth because we don’t want to offend them, and we don’t want the inevitable pushback. I remember Brad, the tennis coach, telling me about the person he was “teaching” resisting all his advice. He finally realized he was wasting his breath. Their minds are made up. Doctors don’t want to say it, either. They’d rather be nice. Don’t lie to your doctor.

B.) **Learn**. Learn about Nutrition – Bread & Sugar. Adapt. Add and subtract. Break bad cycles.

How to do it. We all know we should exercise. What happens if we don’t? What are the results? All kinds of negative things may happen. Our immune system gets weaker. We are more susceptible to illness. We gain weight. We are sluggish. We have no energy. We must pay the price on a daily basis, or we will atrophy.

2.) Do it. Act into feelings. Physical movement – reduce screen time. Pick up a hobby. Tactile hobbies. Recreation. Feelings are awful leaders but good followers. Small actions add up for good or for bad. *Prov 24:33-34 A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest, and poverty will come upon you like a robber, and want like an armed man.*

A.) **Automate.** Charley and Sally are in a routine. They exercise a lot. They don't think about it, they just do it. I automate some things, too: Giving. Taking vitamins (organize 5 weeks at a time). Read labels – calorie count. 2 steps at a time. Push-ups. Automating decisions reduces anxiety. Automation literally saved my life – when I was 51, I took my annual physical that included a blood test. That is how I learned I had prostate cancer. I had no symptoms. I had no reason to suspect I would have cancer.

B.) **Community.** Ecclesiastes 4:9 *Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil.* Staff health bingo. Accountability.

C.) **Laugh.** It may improve the quantity of your life but will certainly improve the quality of it.

Prov 17:22 *A joyful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones.*

We need to be resilient as individuals in the church because our world needs hope. Our society needs a calm, non-anxious presence. Our society needs people with wisdom and discernment to lead the way. Our society needs light in this present darkness. Our society needs courage to carry on. We must be proactive, even if we start small. Physical practices will help us build resilience.