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Hey TORCH People!

How about a new you for the new millennium? How about setting aside some physical limitations and making a rebirth into everything God has for us? I think I must have prayed for most of you at one time or another. Right now I'm going to *lay hands* on my word processor and go for broke. Health is possible! Are you willing to earn it? Healing can be a gift, but health must be earned.

This may sound like a strange subject for our newsletter, but one of the current areas I'm pursuing is diet. It's been a key factor in bringing me to the place I'm at right now. I've had lifelong battles with depleted energy and made lots of progress, but right now I want more.

### ***Early Experiences***

During my teen years I realized there was a lot of physical stamina that just wasn't there and I had trouble coping. I really doubted I'd make it to see 20. Well, there were some very tough moments, but about that time a friend introduced me to Nutrilite food supplements. They made a huge difference.

A few years went by, during which time I passed that 20 mark and saw God lead and provide. But I soon discovered Nutrilite was no longer giving me the same level of support. There were two reasons for that. One was that the company had been bought out by Amway and dosages and processes changed. The other seemed to be that my nutritional needs were changing.

Next came a decline. I went from supplement to supplement. Some helped, others just cost money. I seldom felt good and despite the utmost care, my teeth were a mess. An MD tried to suggest anti-depressants. No thanks! Then I discovered a naturopathic doctor. He did a mineral analysis on my hair and began balancing out my body.

The next ten years saw at least an equilibrium. The naturopath could keep me balanced but the needs changed monthly. I had two concerns here. I was dependent upon a man who was deep into New Age, some of which involved my treatments. Secondly, that man was planning on retiring! I needed a better strategy.

### ***Fit For Life***

In 1988 I was introduced to the *Fit For Life* books by Harvey and Marilyn Diamond. This gave me something I hadn't had before—understanding of how my body wanted to be treated, and a plan and strategy to build up my health.

At the time I remember not caring whether I lived or died. No, I wasn't suicidal. It was just that life was more work than any good I was getting out of it. What was the use? I felt sure God must have something for me but all I could see and feel were the bars of my physical prison.

Using the *Fit For Life* plan I was able to move to Portland and work my way through Bible college. That would have been impossible before. I can even partially start to keep up with some of what happens in this amazing church we belong to. I'm grateful, but I want more.

I'd like to break through to a higher level of energy. I hear God's call. I want to be ready. Also, I was rear ended in a car accident last summer. My neck still has some stiffness and popping joints that are bearable now but I want to keep abreast of a calendar that tells me I'm almost 50. I've had two skin cancers removed from my face and my mother is a cancer patient right now. I want more!

### ***Principles***

In my years of searching and seeking I did come up with guidelines I've found to be trustworthy. The first is that a good diet follows good principles. It's not enough to add somebody's pill or powder supplement to whatever we happen to eat. Build the meal right to start with.

Secondly, anything dependent on a single product or caregiver is not the best. Doctors

retire and companies change hands and everything that can be shaken will be shaken. God truly has given us all things that pertain to life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3). Where's His provision?

A third point is that a good diet must be based on readily available, affordable foods. If I need to import rare and costly items to maintain my day to day existence, something's wrong. In my experience, adding to my diet fresh, wholesome items some consider *luxuries* enables me to eliminate other costly items I once viewed as necessities. Bottom line: *net savings*. That doesn't even figure in what good health can save in medical expenses.

A fourth point is that a good diet must taste good. We need to be talking about something that really satisfies and makes us feel good and gives us something to look forward to at meal times. I really believe that the Scripture, *It is God who works in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure* applies to food. While there's temptation to be resisted most good things taste good too.

Too many diets are temporary periods of denial immediately preceding a weight increase. The key to victory in other spiritual areas involves replacing bad habits with good ones. Weight is not the issue! Health and fitness is. Few people have been tormented over their weight more than myself. Nobody seems to feel any guilt over persecuting a skinny man! Weigh whatever is healthy for you, but be healthy.

## ***Lifestyle***

One thing I learned from my *Fit For Life* years is that health is a lifestyle issue. As Americans we love pills. We love expensive operations and high tech solutions. They buy us lots of sympathy and emotional gratification. But we know almost nothing about how to be healthy. Worse than that, many of us are taking pills this year to try to recover from the pills we took last year. Your doctor can kill you—but he always gets paid!

I don't want to downgrade the medical profession, but we need to keep them in their place. They heal nothing. Medical technique

can cut, kill, and make mechanical adjustments. Hopefully by that time what gave us the problem is gone and God and our body can begin the actual work of healing. A doctor can stitch up a wound but there his work ends and the healing power within the body must do the actual mending. Likewise, health is not a medical issue, but a partnership between God, ourselves, and our bodies. Some doctors can help here. Some.

People who sell supplements make much of the fact that modern farming has depleted our soil and produced weak plants that don't nourish properly. There's some truth there but it's still a sales pitch. God ordained that man should live on food! That means there must be some around. If a loving God created both us and this world, provision must be here for feeding our bodies aside from anything man can process out and sell in a bottle.

What I found through *Fit For Life* is that most of us are eating the wrong things at the wrong times. Digestion is generally less than 10% efficient. If we can multiply our utilization of what we eat, wouldn't that make a difference? What if I knew how to cooperate with my body and give it what it really needed? Wouldn't that be better than a supplement? What if I could identify and avoid anti-foods that take more than they give back, could that build my health?

Ever hear of the four food groups? If someone starts to lecture me on the four groups I walk right out on them. They're a marketing ploy, taught in our schools as gospel. When I was in grade school I took a close look at one of those big, colorful charts. It was supplied by the American Dairy Council!

At the time I was impressed, thinking how generous they must be to supply such a thing for our classroom. Now that I'm older and know impressionable young minds are I'm less than thrilled. And surprise, surprise, the cow dominated not one group but two! It's not science, it's advertising!

Most of us need to start at square one in terms of learning what to eat. As a lifelong student of such matters I'll mention one pitfall in this study. Every book on diet seems to contradict every other book. One will steer you to

grapefruit as the perfect food, the next will devote a whole chapter to how harmful they are. For me it's been a long journey of finding what worked and why, also who was credible and who wasn't.

### *Strategy*

There are some points that come up consistently among sources I've learned to trust. I'll try to list a few here, but there are more and I don't have space to even mention many items.

The very highest and best nutrition is found first off in the plant kingdom, and secondly while they're still alive. One of the first things my naturopath told me over twenty years ago was to eat something alive every day. Fresh or fresh frozen is preferable to canned, raw and alive is better than cooked.

Differences in healthy diets are mainly how fully you integrate the raw live food concept into your lifestyle. How much do you need? How much change can you tolerate at any given time? I've been struggling with some traumatic issues here.

Another principle is that animal products are harmful. We like to hear about how good they are for us but invariably this line of talk is linked through the four food group teaching to commercial interests with something to sell us! The American Heart Association and the American Cancer Society usually stop short of denouncing meat and dairy but just follow their recommendations and see where they lead you! Low fat, low cholesterol, high fiber—that's veggies!

India has nothing on us for sacred cows. If you don't believe ours are sacred just talk a little about a vegetarian diet. Suddenly it becomes a major religious issue! We support our sacred cows by wrapping their meat in hamburger buns and selling their milk in bottles. And like the Indian devotees, most of us are doing our best to die for our beliefs.

Many look to fish or chicken as *healthy* alternatives. While I can't talk in depth right now, let me mention that fish swim in polluted waters and concentrate the toxins in their tissues (that's the part we eat) and chickens are

currently raised with so many hormones and additives that the poor bird isn't sure what it really is. We need better.

### *It's Possible!*

A complete, healthy diet is possible without any animal products. Those who wonder where one can get protein and calcium aside from meat would do well to look to the cow, not as a meal but an example. Where does she get them from, anyway?

In fact, we find that the heat of cooking or even pasteurization tends to fuse protein together into a form unusable by our bodies. Could a protein deficient diet mean too much milk or meat? Our bodies build protein from amino acids—abundant in the plant kingdom!

Worse than that, animal products break down into acidic residues. So, even if our body were to digest them fully (no small order), the grief is only beginning. These acids are what pulls calcium out of bones and teeth, cultivates cancer, suppresses healing, wrecks our emotional well being, and causes most of the effects of aging. You can go A to Z (arthritis to zits?) on what this does to a person. Understanding this puts the key to change right in your hand!

In days gone past, few people could afford meat with every meal. The meat dinner on Sunday was looked forward to all week. Our health has not increased with our affluence. Why not?

The diets most effective in combating degenerative diseases avoid concentrations of protein. They are low in fats and high in fiber. They keep processing, including cooking, to a minimum. They avoid fancy chemicals and other additives that have more to do with someone else's profit than my health. If carefully planned and prepared they also taste very, very good.

### *Some Scripture*

The diet I'm currently considering is known as *The Hallelujah Diet* by Dr. George Malkmus. It is based largely on Genesis 1:29 and prescribes a diet that is strictly vegetarian and largely

uncooked. I have to say I'm struggling with something that radical but I feel real good about the concepts.

In the first place, it's based on sound biblical interpretation. One of the laws of the Bible is that the first mention of anything is the most important, for in it God reveals His highest purposes for the subject in question. Further references give us illumination but everything needs to be considered in light of first mention.

First mention of food is vegetarian. The herb of the field and the fruit of the trees. That was it, that was all. In later years we find that meat was considered allowable. However, *first mention* tells me that it is not the highest or the best for us. *Fit For Life II: Living Health* has an excellent discussion of this point.

Isaiah 65:25 gives us something else to consider. In the new heavens and earth God promised us, carnivorous animals get a new diet, *The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock*. Could this tell us more about ultimate purpose and design? As Nebuchadnezzar said, *Maybe a few greens would help me with this headache!*

### ***Wisdom and Strongholds***

Yes, the New Testament does warn us not to judge others on issues like this, or expect that diet can win us brownie points for salvation. But just take a moment and look in the mirror. If you're TORCH age you're not a kid anymore. We don't have the natural energy of youth we once had. Some of us never had it. But we should be gaining a bit of wisdom.

Worldly wisdom tells us everything that tastes good hurts us and infers that God made it that way just for spite. But that doesn't sound like the Creator I serve. Could my cravings for all the wrong things be a stronghold that can be broken? Could 21 little banquets a week really add up to health? Seems to me that's how it should be for a man redeemed from sin and death.

As I look around TORCH I see something that may or may not be my business. I see a whole lot of people who could do more for the

Kingdom of God if they just felt better. I know what bad days do for one's availability. I know what it means to rejoin the human race after being sidelined for years. I can't believe that anyone really wants to be sick and tired all the time. But how badly do we want to change?

### ***Where to Start?***

The place I recommend would be the two *Fit for Life* books by Harvey and Marilyn Diamond. The reason is that they talk a great deal about how the body works in the area of nutrition and digestion. That will give you a foundation to make better decisions for the rest of your life. The books are very commonly available including Fred Meyer Nutrition Centers and most major thrift stores. They also include recipes that are delicious!

If you're facing a severe physical problem I would recommend also checking out Dr. Malkmus' material. It's a much more radical application of the same basic principles and seems to produce amazing results for many. I just finished reading one of their smallest books, *Why Christians Get Sick*. It's the most reasoned and biblical approach to physical stewardship I've ever read. You can reach them online at [www.hacres.com](http://www.hacres.com).

### ***The Bottom Line***

In closing, I really don't know how much or how far I should go on this dietary emphasis. I feel a little self conscious bringing it up at all in relation to our church based single's group here. But let me say this. If you're sidelined with no energy or because your back hurts or your knees hurt or you're facing some other major physical problem, you're not going to do much for God.

You won't do much for the church 'cause you aint got it to give. But that's not God's plan. Maybe you will get a miracle sometime. If I meet you in the prayer line I'll give it my best shot. Some of my steps of physical deliverance involved miraculous answers to specific prayers. But many of my answers came through lifestyle changes too. The apostle Paul made sure his body was under submission so that nothing would hinder his effectiveness for Christ. Could part of that be diet?

There's much I don't know but I've walked a ways down the road and can share some of what I've found. God bless you, whoever reads this. I've shared part of my life here, may it build some new hope and vision for you too.

## Events-

Well, having survived Y2K we're ready for some more activities. Since the weather has created problems on our annual Mount Everest ascent and rescue patrol we decided on an equally dangerous undertaking- a thrift store safari.

This actually became mandatory when we realized that we had some of the most dedicated scroungers in town just waiting to lead the expedition into uncharted and possibly dangerous territory. Meet at Elmers on Sandy at 9:30 AM. Bring a fistful of money (pocket change will do) and a straight jacket if you tend to get carried away.

The remarkable thing about such an undertaking is that few people can tell you what it is they're actually looking for—but they recognize it the moment that they spot it. Try not to spend everything at once for we plan on hitting a restaurant about lunch time. See you there, bring a friend...

Promise Keepers is chapter 5 this month, a man and his church. Let's not forget our rules, either. Bring your book, have your lesson read and be ready to talk about it, bring \$5 to help cover dinner costs, and be on time. As we've been taking God's plan seriously he's been meeting us and a new spirit of hope and faith is coming upon us.

"We need to be able to pray more," was a statement heard at our last planning meeting. Do you know, only a few people have been showing up at our Monday evening prayer meetings but God has been giving us his best. We've been praying one for another and seeing good things happen. There are a lot of intercessors in the group, some functioning and others who need a bit of encouragement.

It's hard to emphasize this enough, for prayer is what it will take to make TORCH the group it needs to be. There's nothing we can offer other people that compares to having the presence of God working in our lives. It's the cure for the woundings and losses of life and is our link to life on a higher dimension. Come ready to meet God. Leave your *laundry list* at home, but bring your real needs for a living God.

On the 12th, another Friendship party is planned for Valentine's Day at M-'s in Camas.

Next month I'm thinking of talking more on the purpose and vision of TORCH. We are here because God has a purpose for us to be here. What is it? Stay posted....

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