

To Your Health It's A Matter of the Heart

By Stephanie DaCosta

THE TRUTH

The Word of God makes it clear that Satan desires to *steal, kill and destroy our lives*" (John 10:10a). God also shares His heart concerning His desire for us to *have life and that more abundantly* (John 10:10b).

The prevalence of Cardiovascular Disease (CVD) among Americans is staggering. Approximately one third of Americans have one or more types of cardiovascular disease. Of these individuals, 61% are under age 65. An estimated 65 million Americans have high blood pressure (HBP). HBP is defined as systolic pressure 120 mm Hg or greater and/or diastolic pressure 80 mm Hg or greater; taking an antihypertensive medication; or being told at least twice by a physician or other health professional that you have high blood pressure.

MORE TRUTH

As noted in National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES 1999-2002) and cited by the Heart Disease and Stroke Statistics (2005 Update), American Heart Association prevalence among ethnic groups is as follows:

- Among whites, 12.2 % have heart disease and 20.1% have hypertension.
- Among African Americans, 9.6 have heart disease and 26.7% have hypertension.
- Among Hispanics or Latinos, 6.1% have heart disease and 14.5% have hypertension.
- Among Asians, 5.4% have heart disease and 13.5% have hypertension.
- Among American Indians, 12.6 % have heart disease, 25.0% have hypertension.

*“True freedom is
knowing truth and how
to apply it to your life”*

Many Christians and non-Christians alike are allowing their ‘life pump’ (the heart) to be destroyed through physical inactivity, inappropriate eating habits, smoking, stress, and obesity. Unfortunately, heart disease is compounded by uncontrollable risk factors such as age, gender, race, and family history.

THE TRUTH OF THE MATTER IS...

The prevalence of high blood pressure among African Americans in the United States is among

the highest in the world.

49.70% of African American Women and 28% of African American Men are considered obese.

Cardiovascular disease accounted for 33.5% of deaths among African American men and 40.6% of deaths among African American women in 2000 (CDC and NCH).

Among African Americans age 20 and older, 36.7% of men and 36.6% of women have high blood pressure.

64.5% of all Americans over 20 years old are overweight while 77.3% of African American women and 60.7% of men are overweight.

WHAT ARE TRUE SYMPTOMS OF HEART DISEASE?

Heart disease is hard to detect unless you have extremely high blood pressure and are having your pressure checked regularly by a doctor. Many people walk around and are not aware that their heart is under stress. Symptoms of high blood pressure are:

- Severe headaches
- Fatigue
- Vision problems
- Chest pain
- Difficulty breathing
- Irregular heartbeat
- Blood in the urine
- Sweating, nausea, shortness of breath, and weakness

THE TRUTH SHOULD ENCOURAGE ME

Knowing the truth motivates one to change. Choose a healthier lifestyle and build a healthy vessel for God. Here are some building blocks. Remember one brick at a time builds the house:

- Daily devotion and prayer – Bring your eating and lifestyle habits before the Lord in prayer – He cares about your body. “You are fearfully and wonderfully made” (Ps. 139).
- Get a physical and set realistic goals with doctor concerning your health.
- Set new goals for your life – ask God about His plan for you (Jer. 29:11).
- Now, is the time to clean out the closet and do Spring cleaning. Chores around the house are great exercise. Washing windows, woodwork, cars, etc. helps to work large and small muscles. Run up and down the steps with joy!
- Go bowling or roller-skating as a family and enjoy good exercise and fun.

- Spend some time with a friend and walk around a track, a nature trail or the mall.
- Make better nutritional choices. Choose mustard over mayonnaise, wheat bread over white bread, water over soda, fish over pork or beef, fruit over potato chips. Making small healthy choices everyday will result in big changes inward and outward.

THE TRUTH IS THAT YOU ALSO NEED SUPPORT

Changing your lifestyle is not something you have to do on your own. Support is available through teaming up with a friend and working out to health and fitness videos, YMCA's, health clubs, recreation centers, taking up a new recreational hobby and faith based organizations and initiatives that promote healthy lifestyles.

Remember, "A Merry Heart & Healthy Heart Doeth Good Like A Medicine". That's the TRUTH! †

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