

Headaches

In our last couple of lessons we've dealt with some fairly deep and somewhat technical matters, so I thought we'd consider some hopefully helpful but "easier to chew/digest" material today. **Who has headaches from time to time?** Just about everyone right?

What causes headaches? Well, it could be that *our hat is too small or our head is too big*, but it might also be:

1. **Sinus Problems-** An irritant or allergen gets past our *primary filtration system* and irritates and affects our nasal passages (causing our noses to run and possibly our feet to smell), eyes (causing them to water, matt-up, and/or blur), and if these *secondary defenses* don't eliminate or neutralize the problem, then ultimately our sinuses to be become infected and our heads feel like someone hit us in the face with a shovel.
2. **Eye Strain-** Simply put, either our eyes are not seeing/focusing correctly, or we're spending too much time looking at problematic things like phone and/or computer screens.
3. **Stress-** Stress comes from either too many things going on (tossing a ball into the air and then catching it isn't that difficult, but the pressure increases dramatically each time you add a ball!), or too much concern/emphasis being placed on keeping all the "balls" of our lives in the air, without "dropping" one.
4. **High Blood Pressure-** High blood pressure/circulation problems are often caused by blocked or restricted arteries, which in turn come from consuming the wrong things and/or too much of them.
5. **Thumps/Bumps-** When I was little, some (certainly not all but more than a few) of the knots and bumps on my head came from misbehaving in church. My father could thump my noggin' so hard it sounded like someone dropped a golf ball on a bongo drum! Many of my other headaches *might have* also been related to me doing stupid things and paying the natural consequence price for them even though he wasn't there to witness them, or laugh and say, "It'll feel better when it quits hurting."

And what do we do when we have a headache? Take a pain reliever, right?

Now here's an important question: **Do *pain relievers* eliminate allergens/infections, improve our vision or its content, eradicate stress-inducers, clear clogged arteries, or prevent accidental bumps or correct thump-inducing behaviors?** No, *pain relievers* only treat the symptom, but do nothing to eliminate or correct the *cause*. Oh. I see... 1) the "pain" of my/our headache is actually an indicator of a potentially larger problem; and, 2) to actually "get better" rather than just "feel better" I need to treat the "cause" rather than just the "symptom"... which may require more than just taking a couple of "pills." I'm not knocking Aspirin or Tylenol- no one likes headaches and everyone wants to feel better, but treating symptoms rather than correcting causes is "chewing on the hind leg" of the problem here. Frequent "headaches" are the body's way of telling us there is a problem that needs attention and address.

We have “spiritual headaches” too, don’t we? And we often “treat” them the same way(s) we do our physical ones, don’t we? We take a “spiritual pain reliever” that makes us feel better at the time, but really doesn’t do anything to address the real cause/issue.

If you think about it (and I hope you will), “spiritual headaches” are *caused* by the same kinds of things as their physical counterparts:

1. **Allergens and Filtration, Heb.5:14.** Our noses are designed to get the “good stuff in” and keep “the bad stuff out.” Our *spiritual noses*- with the right *nutrition* from the *milk* and *meat of the Word* and some practice, learn to *smell* or *discern* the differences between the *good* and the *bad*. So, **eat right** and **exercise!**
2. **Eye Strain, Matt.6:22-23.** Vv.22-23 are somewhat the “centerpiece” of vv.19-34 in that both the location and condition *heart* of vv.19-21 and relative anxiety or ease of life in vv.25-34 are both linked to and are derived from our *eyes*- not only how well they “see” (cf. Matt.13:13ff) but also the things on which they *focus*, Heb.12:2.
3. **Stress, Heb.12:1-2; Col.3:1-11.** Obviously, life not only can be but most often is “stressful.” Not all of these *stresses* can simply be eliminated. But why not eliminate those that can be? Let go of them. Give them to God in prayer (Phil.4:6-7) and trust Him enough to **let them go!** What about those that can’t be jettisoned altogether? Learn to deal with them by keeping them in their proper *place*, cf. Matt.6:34. If you can’t *control* or *influence* it, why worry about it? Do you best, let God take care of the rest.
4. **High Blood Pressure / Circulation, Prov.4:23.** “*Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life.*” When we constantly fill our hearts with *pollutants* and *bad stuff*, our “spiritual arteries” that are supposed to supply our spiritual body with the oxygen and nutrients they need get clogged and restricted...and our spiritual blood pressure goes up...and we get “spiritual headaches” (remember those *encumbrances* and *entanglements* of Heb.12:1?). Use God’s word as a “spiritual roto-rooter” to clean out those arteries so the heart can do its job well and efficiently!
5. **Thumps/Bumps, Heb.12:3-13; Gal.6:7-8.** I firmly believe that many (if not most) of my “spiritual headaches” are self-inflicted in that I’ve *sown to my flesh* and *reaped a harvest* of headaches from it! If that’s also true for you, let’s STOP DOING THAT! The rest are probably from God telling me that there’s something wrong, and *poking* and *prodding* me in the right, and ultimately *less painful*, directions.

This has been a simple lesson born of simple things, but I believe it has profound possibilities for not only ridding ourselves of many of our “spiritual headaches” but helping us to reach the land of eternal health where there is no *pain*, Rev.21:4.

Now, are you willing to actually “treat” the *causes* of your spiritual headaches, or just keep taking a “pill” to feel better temporarily?