

Godly Living and Long Life

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Several recent studies identified a correlation between church attendance and longevity. A Duke University study found that 60% of those who attended at least once a week had stronger immune systems than those who did not worship regularly.

Further, a twenty-eight year study of over 5000 residents of Alameda County, California concluded that devoutly religious people had lower death rates than others.

Such studies will come as no surprise to those familiar with the Scriptures:

*“My son, do not forget my law, but let your heart keep my commands;
for length of days and long life and peace they will add to you.”*

✎ Proverbs 3:1-2

*“Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord and depart from evil.
It will be health to your flesh, and strength to your bones.”*

✎ Proverbs 3:7-8

Other similar proverbial statements could be cited, but the bottom line is that living according to the will of God results in a better quality and length of life *here*, not just in eternity.

Why is this? Is it some kind of direct payback from God? It is a guarantee that righteous people will *necessarily* live longer? No, for the Bible also tells of faithful servants of God who died in the prime of life (viz. Josiah, John the Baptist, etc.).

What the proverbs say, and what medical research confirms, is that *generally speaking*:

1) God's people do not engage in high risk, self-destructive behavior that often leads to premature death. Violent death often comes by sin: drug-dealing, robbery, adultery, etc. Drug abuse, alcoholism, illicit sex and other sinful habits take a toll on the human body. In short, the Christian's chosen lifestyle leads out of harm's way.

2) God's people are emotionally healthier because of their support groups, prayer, self-control, etc. Christians do not see themselves as victims but *victors*. They are not powerless but “*strong in the Lord and in the power of His might*” (Eph 6:10). Their marriages are stronger, their aged are cared for, their weak are supported. Emotional stability fosters physical health.

3) God's people have a sense of purpose that results in focused, productive living. We are not broken-masted schooners aimlessly adrift in an ocean of uncertainty. A sense of clear objective keeps our rigging taut and our sails from dry-rotting.

While our ultimate goal is *eternal* life, an added benefit of an obedient life is a better existence in the meantime. **Ω**