

# The Spirit and the Stethoscope

Biblical Truths for Better Health

C. K. Bentzin, MD



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Notice: This book is intended as a reference guide, not as a medical manual, and the information is intended to help you make informed decisions about your health. It is not a substitute for treatment recommended to you by your doctor.

Scripture quotations are from the King James or Authorized Version of the Bible.

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# About the Author

**D**r. C. K. Bentzin graduated from the University of Ottawa Medical School with honors in 1967. He began practicing medicine in 1968 at Coon Rapids Clinic, the same year he was honored as an Outstanding Young Man of America. In 1973 he decided to buy a church and convert it into Riverview Medical Center, where he focused on holistic health in family practice by treating the spirit, soul and body. Doc also taught during this time, and from 1974 to 1983 was the Assistant Professor of Medicine, Family Practice, at the University of Minnesota.



Doc studied at Luther Theological Seminary before receiving his MD and taught many classes on the connection between spiritual and physical health. He was very active in the church throughout his career, and when the pastor of his church retired, Doc filled the pulpit along with the former minister's son for many months until a new pastor came.

In 1990 Doc had a brain tumor removed the size of a grapefruit. He thrived after the miraculous surgery and practiced family medicine with vigor until 1992. At this time, discouraged with the state of medicine and the insurance companies' control over treatment, Doc decided to leave general practice to work in emergency rooms, which he continued until 1999. After surgery to replace his aortic valve in 2001, from which he never recovered fully, Dr. Bentzin died in 2002.

This book, one of Doc's dreams, includes material from his popular seminars on health and spiritual wholeness.



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# Foreword

It was 1966 in Toledo, Ohio, that my wife, Arlene, and I found new friends in Clyde Bentzin and his lovely wife, Beata. Clyde (C. K.) was in medical residency at Riverside Hospital in the area of the inner city church I was serving. As two only children from the Midwest we found a kinship and brotherhood that served us both with humor and companionship for years. Because of our similar interests and backgrounds we also did some teaching together in the parish and community setting. As a pastor, I had also spent a year in clinical hospital chaplaincy training, and Clyde, before medical school, had spent a year in theological seminary training.

Our interest in the world of medicine, theology, and clinical counseling kept us connected to the time when Clyde, as a physician back at Coon Rapids Clinic in Coon Rapids, Minnesota, approached his staff of doctors with the idea of adding a chaplain to carry out counseling in their community clinic. According to the American Medical Association, it was the first program of its kind in the country. While whole person/holistic care was beginning to be expressed as a concept, Clyde was working to establish it as a grounded reality.

Ben, as I commonly called Dr. Bentzin, loved to teach. Before his sudden death by heart attack, he had wanted to publish a book of his own expression of faith and health. He would have been pleased to realize that hope, brought to fruition with the loving nurturing of Beata.

It must be said that anyone who knew Ben well knew him as very expressive, opinionated, intelligent and multi-talented. Whether it was in his tennis, his golf game, in leisure or work, he was disciplined, organized, and competitive. In reading this

book, from which most of the chapters have been gathered from teaching sessions, the reader will find much in content and in concepts that can be challenging in one's faith walk. Also woven throughout the text are the metaphors and allegories that can enrich our views of the systems of the bodies in which we live and the souls through which we love.

Richard DeForest Erickson



## CHAPTER 1

# The Prosperous Soul

**Y**our soul is the center of your life. That's why it really seems to me that we cannot prosper and be in good health unless our soul is prospering. This connection between physical health and spiritual health is at the heart of the issues that will be explored in this book. We begin by examining what it means to have a prosperous soul and how we can attain it.

The sixth chapter of Hebrews is quite a chapter. I ran across this in my study and meditation of the Word. It literally revolutionized my life by giving me the ability to think more clearly about my relationship with God and how God helps me cope in times of trouble. In 1 Corinthians 13 it says there are three things—faith, hope and love—and the greatest of these is love. God is love, and that's why the greatest of these is love. Right next to love in this passage is hope. These are keys to the prosperous soul.

I would like you to consider the statement, "It's not the boat in the water, it's the water in the boat." This makes a great deal of sense when you relate it to Christian life. It's not the Christian in the world, but it is how much of the world is in the Christian that sinks the Christian. Now, Hebrews 6 provides the answers we need to keep us from sinking into sin. We all go through battles of the mind and soul. I don't care how strong our faith is or how much we are standing on the Word, or even how much more faith we try and muster up. We still battle with sin every day. These battles of the mind are because too much of the world is inside of us. And it brings us down.

You know, there are times when you have all kinds of buoyancy. For example, when you are floating in the water. But there are other times when you feel like there is enough water coming into your boat that your buoyancy is being diminished. Remember that buoyancy is a physical property that is present because of the water. It is the weight of the water holding us up. Boats glide upon the water based upon this buoyancy. We do not sink because buoyancy is a law of God.

Now God has much to say about how to maintain buoyancy in life. The weight of life need not drag us down. God has wonderfully designed us with five physical senses. As a result of that, each of us is a self-contained biochemical, electro-chemical organism.

Let me explain that. Every cell in your body has the same type of function going on inside of it. We are in constant momentum. Our bodies act as a symphony on the inside. For example, we have brain waves. If you look at a brain wave on an electrocardiogram, you will see a P wave, a QRS wave, and a T wave. That is just how they named them. Within our body, electrical pulses travel down the nerves to the heart, allowing the heart to beat. This is an interval of perfect timing that God has set in motion in our bodies.

No one understands why the heart begins to beat in a little fetus inside the uterus, but it does start to beat. It is an inherent property built by God into the nerves and muscles of that

heart. At an appropriate time, integrated by God, the heart begins to beat. It continues to beat and the Bible says it should continue to beat for at least 72 years. Keep this in mind when I talk about cardiovascular disease later in this book.

Now, going back to the subject of brain waves, I find it fascinating that this particular interval between the P wave and when the heart fires off, then the S wave and T wave, is all measured in milliseconds. Our body is a constant symphony of waves. They are, again, impulses which are conducted along the nerve pathways due to perfect balance with certain salts and fluids. These are all inherently built by God.

A lack of brain waves signifies brain death, and that controversy continues to remain in the news. Advances in medical science have created artificial ways for keeping the body alive. The body can remain alive as long as blood continues to pump and it receives oxygen. But the most important part of all this is that God created and designed it so that we are self-contained with a heart that pumps along with waves and electro-chemical conduction, all in perfect order.

The body is designed by God to keep functioning, even in extraordinary circumstances. However, if there is stress applied to the body and mind, heart waves and mind waves can be altered. Therefore, it is my belief that the whole symphony of the body can be altered by our own soul.

Let's look at this stress and the impact it has on the body. Stress is defined as a force, which, when applied to an object, will alter its shape. Stress, in the physical realm, holds buildings together. It has the opposite effect on us, however. The human body changes in stressful situations. Stress bombards and alters the symphony of the very life waves of electricity that keep our body going.

Stress can cause hyperventilation. This occurs when a person begins to blow off more carbon dioxide than they should. When someone becomes nervous, anxious or stressed, they change their respiratory pattern. The normal duration of breath coming in and breath going out becomes altered. When people

hyperventilate, they blow off more carbon dioxide than usual. Among other things, this begins to interfere with heart waves and brain waves. This triggers palpitations of the heart. The person experiences a weird feeling that their heart is turning over in their chest. They get dizzy. There is a numbness of the hands and/or the feet.

You can reverse the effects of hyperventilation by breathing into a paper bag. This traps some of the carbon dioxide that is being lost too rapidly and as it is inhaled back into the system, the person is stabilized.

This is just one example of where the soul and mind can combine to produce a marked disturbance within the individual. It can produce chest pain and muscle tightening. When this occurs, a whole chain of events begin to bombard and drastically change the body function.

My point is we need to have stability within the soul. It is the key to the prosperous soul. I believe that the apostle John understood this when he said, "Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth" (3 John 2). This is why I believe we have to begin a study of the spirit, soul and body with the soul, because that is the area with which we are in contact with the world in which we live.

Scripture supports this. The Bible tells us that we battle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, powers and wickedness in high places. It is flesh and blood to the degree that it includes what a person says about us and how we feel about a person. If we meditate, study and try to understand all these connections between the body, mind and soul, we will see the importance of internal and external circumstances and how they affect the human mind. Then we will be able to clearly see what the Bible says about all this and how to combat it. It is then we can stand against it and conquer it.

The key to the prosperous soul is found in Hebrews 6:13-19: "For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself, Saying, Surely

blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee. And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife. Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil."

God has told us that he upholds all things by the power of His Word. God's Word is law and can always be trusted. He can't swear any higher than himself. If God were to withdraw the power of his Word, everything would disintegrate because all of his natural laws are now in operation. God's natural laws make a table a table, a building a building, and walls, walls. These same laws initiate the heartbeat, the brain wave and the functions of the human body. If these laws would suddenly lose their authority, chaos would occur.

You see, Satan is the god of this world for now, but God designed it and set the rules. God our Father designed this world so that you and I take the place of God in this world. God holds everything together because of the fact that on the very inside of us Jesus Christ resides along with the Spirit of God Himself. They act through our spirit to take control of our soul. It is because of this that our words and deeds are indeed God working through us to create change and keep chaos out of our lives.

You need to realize that your brain and your central nervous system are the center of your soul. Consider this question: Let's say you have something of great value. Where would you store it? You would find a safe and secure place, like a vault or safe, made with cement or steel so that your valuables would be protected from fire and thieves.

# Discussion Guide

## Chapter One: The Prosperous Soul

1. The writer says, “We still battle with sin every day. These battles of the mind are because too much of the world is inside of us.” In what ways do you agree or disagree with this?

2. When our soul is unstable, as in anxiety, we feel it in our bodies. Thinking of the events of today or yesterday, what produced stress in your life? How do you deal with your stress?

3. “On the very inside of us,” the author writes, “Jesus Christ resides along with the Spirit of God Himself. They act through our spirit to take control of our soul. It is because of this that our words and deeds are indeed God working through us to create change and keep chaos out of our lives.” In what ways is it helpful or comforting to know that God is working inside us to bring about change?

4. James 3: 4-6 talks about the power of the tongue. Share an experience when someone used the power of the tongue in a positive manner toward you. How did you feel? Think of ways you can use the tongue to build others up on a daily basis, including yourself.

The author writes, “With blessings God blesses us and with multiplying He would multiply.” What does this phrase mean to you?

5. The key to a prosperous soul is believing God’s promises for us and letting God multiply them in our lives. These are “promise vitamins.” How might you start taking these “promise vitamins” today in your own life?