

Is talking about sickness healthy?

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My friend was looking forward to sitting in the warm winter sunshine with the other mums, watching the children take part in their school sports day. She anticipated passing the time engaged in the kind of light-hearted conversation that roams happily over many pleasant subjects. Instead, she found herself listening to the details of the latest children's disease, the current "wog" or "bug" going around, and what ailment this or that child was suffering with.

Later, in thinking back over the day's events, it occurred to this mother that she used to spend a lot of time thinking and talking about sickness. This had not resulted in better health for her or her family. Such conversations had on many occasions increased her fear of a particular complaint.

The situation changed when she started reading *Science and Health* and learned from it the connection between what we think and what we experience. She now keeps her thought filled with the spiritual understanding of man's God-maintained health, or spiritual harmony, and no longer makes illness a topic of thought or conversation. As a result, she is finding that there is less fear of sickness and better health in the family.

The need to watch carefully what concepts we harbor about ourselves and others is not a new idea. There are Scriptural passages in both the Old and New Testaments that point out the importance of paying attention to what we think and say. For instance, Christ Jesus advises: "Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on. The life is more than meat, and the body is more than raiment" (Luke 12:22,23).

Jesus understood the real source of health to be God. He showed us that the more we think and live from a Christly standpoint, the more we destroy the fear of illness and keep ourselves and our families safe and well. Seen in its fuller implication, Jesus' directive "Take no thought for your life ..." shows the need to turn thought away from physicality – to refrain from contemplating disease, speculating about infection, describing corporeality, and worrying about what food we should or should not consume. Sickness has its origin in mortal belief, in the kind of mistaken notions that present man as material, disease as actual, and ill health as inevitable. Such beliefs are the opposite of spiritual truth, the understanding of which brings health. To be sound in body and mind, we need to think less about material health-theories and align our thoughts more with the Christianly scientific facts regarding God and man.

Life is not material. Life is God, Spirit, and God has made us in His image. As the image of Spirit, our true selfhood is immortal, spiritual, perfectly whole, and strong. In the universe of divine Mind's creating, all that exists is good and wholesome. There is no such thing as sickness, because God does not know, and so has not made, anything that can attack and harm His offspring. This means that as Love's treasured ones our vigor is God-sustained, our vitality preserved, and our soundness sure and certain. Holding to such spiritual ideas produces health and more robust living.

We encounter fear and bodily discord when we allow our thoughts to dwell on dietetic, physiological, and various other hygienic theories. These material hypotheses start with the premise that existence is wholly physical.

They undertake to cure the sick through the supposition that matter heals matter and that what the patient entertains in thought has little bearing on the case. Such beliefs fail to address the real cause of fleshly disorders.

Disease has its origin in thought. It often arises from mental association. We hear about a particular sickness going around and believe we are likely to catch it. This expectation, together with the mental image of sickness, is subsequently manifested on the body. This also applies to so-called communicable diseases. The contagion is not actually physical. It is engendered by the mental image of suffering and the fear that these maladies can be transmitted.

Because sickness is mental in nature, we can successfully treat it through prayer based on the divine Science of being. I proved this the day a neighbour telephoned me. During the conversation she described at some length and in graphic detail the symptoms of flu and the suffering she was experiencing. I was so alarmed and distressed by what she told me, that within minutes of hanging up the phone I began displaying the same signs – even though I had not been in physical contact with her or any other sick person.

In referring to *Science and Health*, I found this statement: "We weep because others weep, we yawn because they yawn, and we have smallpox because others have it; but mortal mind, not matter, contains and carries the infection. When this mental contagion is understood, we shall be more careful of our mental conditions, and we shall avoid loquacious tattling about disease, as we would avoid advocating crime" (p. 153). From this, I could see that I had allowed myself to be impressed by my neighbor's remarks. This mental influence had brought the fear of contagion, and now this fearful mental state was being outlined on my body.

To counter this, I turned to God in prayer and filled my thought with the spiritual truths learned from daily study of the Bible and Mary Baker Eddy's writings. I acknowledged that God, good, is omnipotent, omnipresent, supreme. God's goodness, and its expression in His creation, is all that exists. Man, the image of God, is therefore always brimming with perfect health, with the energies of Spirit, with the everlasting vitality and strength of Life.

There is no way that we as God's dear children can actually be dispossessed of spiritual understanding. Realizing this, we won't be deceived into accepting what is untrue about God and His idea, man. In truth, Spirit governs our thoughts and actions. We reflect only divine Mind's spiritual knowing. Because we live in the pure atmosphere of Mind and are imbued with Love's holy consciousness, our thoughts are alert, clear, buoyant, expressing God-given dominion.

As I held to these healing ideas, all the symptoms of flu vanished and I was completely free. While I was grateful for the immediate physical relief, I am even more grateful for the lessons I learned that day.

In the chapter "Physiology" *Science and Health* points out: "We should understand that the cause of disease obtains in the mortal human mind, and its cure comes from the immortal divine Mind. We should prevent the images of disease from taking form in thought, and we should efface the outlines of disease already formulated in the minds of mortals.

"When there are fewer prescriptions, and less thought is given to sanitary subjects, there will be better constitutions and less disease" (*Science and Health*, pp. 174-175).

The less we think about sickness, and the more we realize that God loves us – maintaining our well-being and preserving our life – the more health we have.