

# The Art of Healthy Living

Dr. Paul Tournier (1898 – 1986) was a Swiss physician and author who acquired a worldwide audience for his work on pastoral counseling. His ideas – according to *Wikipedia*, the free encyclopedia – had a significant impact on the spiritual and psychosocial aspects of routine patient care. He has been called the 20<sup>th</sup> century's most famous Christian physician.

Tournier was born in Geneva, Switzerland, the son of Pastor Louis Tournier and Alisabeth Ormond. His father, at age 70, died three months after Tournier's birth. At the age of 6, he was orphaned when his mother, then 42, died from breast cancer. Afterwards, Tournier and his 10-year-old sister were raised by his uncle and aunt.

In 1940, Tournier published his first book, *Médecine de la Personne (The Healing of Persons)*, wherein he advocated that man is more than just body and a mind; he is also a spiritual being. His conclusion: it would be impossible to know and treat man if one disregards his deepest reality. Tournier, according to *Wikipedia*, saw the need to consider not only the physical aspects of health, but also the psychological and spiritual dimensions.

Further, Tournier proclaimed that the Bible "is a book in which (a person) may learn from his Creator the art of healthy living." Tournier was not alone in such belief:

- Hymnist Fanny Crosby gave this testimony: "This Book is to me God's treasure house. It is my bread of life, the anchor of my home, my pillar of fire by night, my pillar of cloud by day. It is the lantern that lights my pathway to my paradise home."
- Missionary Amy Carmichael wrote, "Have you noticed this? Whatever need or trouble you are in, there is always something to help you in your Bible, if only you go on reading 'til you come to the word God specially has for you."

Doctors say that many lung diseases are created by shallow breathing. We don't open up our lungs and deeply inhale the life-giving oxygen God has placed in our atmosphere.

In the same way, many spiritual and emotional diseases are caused by shallow reading. We skim over favorite passages, but we don't set aside the necessary time to dig deeply into God's Word.

The Lord has given us the Bible to help us through the challenges of life. Breathe deeply of its oxygen. Feast richly on its truths. Read, study, memorize and meditate on its verses.

There you'll find the art of healthy living. For those of us in health care, this understanding is vitally important – for ourselves *and* for those we serve.

*Revive me according to Your word (Psalm 119:25 NKJV).*

– Beecher Hunter