

featured articles

Cleansing your body inside and out

By April Barr

While perspiring – no, I must confess, sweating profusely – as I progressed through the most intense portion of my recent cardio workout, I noticed a personal trainer approach the woman on the machine beside me. They began discussing a detox program that the woman had recently begun. My curiosity increased as they spoke of curbing sugar cravings and eating more fruits and vegetables to increase energy and obtain greater health. As I left the gym, I wondered if I would benefit from this inner cleansing.

Cleansing our bodies

While researching detoxing, I discovered how our bodies are affected by numerous harmful chemicals from our environment. Like hazardous chemicals marked by the skull and bones, the choices we make – in the food we consume, smoking, or excessive drinking – contribute to the increase of toxins that pollute and damage our bodies. In a body considered highly toxic, organs like the liver, lungs, colon, skin, blood, and kidneys do not operate at their maximum efficiencies.

Detoxing allows your body to experience ultimate physical cleansing by removing harmful substances that prevent optimal long-term health. Through inner cleansing, our bodies can benefit from increased energy, greater digestion, less bloating, clearer skin, shinier hair, clearer thinking, better moods, improved sleep, and weight loss.

Where do I sign up? I know at times I battle with loss of energy and inconsistent sleep. With the busy lives we live, we could all use more energy!

Cleansing our hearts

God cares about our hearts growing in character. Just as physical cleansing can lead to optimal health, cleansing ourselves spiritually helps us live balanced and vibrant lives.

While washing my face, I am reminded that my mind, spirit, and soul also can benefit from a deep cleansing. If I skipped a few days of washing my face, dirt and oil would build up and clog my pores. The result: unwanted, at times painful,

unattractive blemishes that I hope will quickly disappear!

If you want your spiritual heart to stay clean, you should spend time reading the Bible daily, April Barr says. But God wants us to take care of our physical bodies too! To learn more about how to cleanse your body internally, April suggests that you visit a local natural foods, vitamin, or nutrition store. The workers there should be able to suggest a detox program that's right for you.

Similarly, if I do not daily cleanse my heart, the sins of being human will build up, causing heart blemishes like negative attitudes, bitterness, resentment, envy, comparisons, jealousy, criticism, rejection, and destructive words – to name a few.

The good news is the ultimate spiritual cleanser is God's son, Jesus Christ! God created us to have communion and peace with him. However, sin – or not choosing to walk in God's protective, loving, and wise guidelines – separates us from God. Sinning can be as seemingly harmless as saying unkind words or as damaging as sleeping with another woman's husband. The Bible says that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. The price for sin is death. (Rom. 3:23; 6:23)

Because of God's sacrificial love, Jesus came to earth as a man to pay our penalty for death. (John 3:16) While enduring all temptations known to man, Jesus led a clean, pure, sinless life. He endured the greatest humiliation by dying a brutal death on the cross so that we could have a growing, personal, passionate relationship with God. Not only did God create you, but he loves you so much that he sent Jesus to die so you could live!

Salvation – being completely cleansed through Jesus – is a free gift; you do not have a list of requirements to pass in order to earn it! You receive this gift when you believe in Jesus and accept him as your Savior. He washes you from your past, present, and future sins; you can be free from guilt, shame, fear, and any area that you battle. The benefit is experiencing abundant life on earth and your spirit living in eternity with God. Thus, salvation through Jesus is the ULTIMATE CLEANSER.

Daily cleanser

How do we make it through each day without having the "dirt and oil" of life build up in our hearts? Just as we daily cleanse our faces, we can choose to daily cleanse our hearts. God's Word, the Bible, is the daily spiritual cleanser. God's Word is alive and active, powerful for whatever you are experiencing. As you spend time in God's love letter to you, he will teach you wisdom, giving you counsel and instruction on how to deal with life's circumstances.

Ladies have said to me: "I would like to know how to live a life that honors God and learn how to me make wise choices, but I am intimidated by the Bible. Where do I begin?"

I encourage you to start with 10 minutes reading the Bible each day. Look for a Bible version like the [New Living Translation](#), [The Message](#), or [Becoming](#), a Biblezine written in the New Century Translation (I'm thankful to be featured on the cover!). They use contemporary language that is easy to understand.

Begin by asking God to speak to you. You might start by reading in the Gospel of John in the New Testament to learn more about the life of Jesus. Learn about morals, mouth, and money in Proverbs, the book of wisdom. There are 31 chapters, so you can read one chapter a day. For example, if today is the 24th, then you would read Proverbs 24.

Psalms is a book that teaches us how to praise God and how to handle the emotional ups and downs of life. As women, we can relate to having days on the emotional roller coaster of life!

A few days ago, I was reading Psalm 119, which happens to be the longest Psalm and longest chapter in the Bible. The writer declares that the key to keeping an individual's life pure and clean is to live according to God's Word. (Psalm 119:9 NIV) Repeated at least eight times throughout the chapter, you will see the phrase "preserve my life." By allowing God to daily cleanse your heart by reading the Bible, you can find security and avoid drowning in a sea of impurity!

You may say you are too busy to spend time in God's Word. As a friend of mine likes to say, "If you are too busy for God, then you are busier than he wants you to be." We all have the same amount of time; it is up to us to prioritize our time. I can look at my schedule and quickly determine where I gain the greatest return on my investment of time.

I have learned that spending time cleansing my heart is the best investment for my day. We are the ones who benefit from the daily cleansing. When I read the Bible, I am refreshed and renewed; I experience peace, love, and joy while being others-focused. Unsurprisingly, if I skip time with God, some of the results can include easily giving into worry, fear, and anxiety; I can be impatient and destructive with my words.

Consistently spending time developing a relationship with God, who extravagantly loves and delights in you, will transform and cleanse your life. He is a good God who desires to lead, guide, and counsel us so we can live in the purposes that he has planned for us. God desires you to live a life of victory. Will you choose to trust your life to Jesus, the ultimate cleanser? Will you daily meet with God to experience an inner cleansing for your spirit? He is patiently waiting for you to get

to know him.

About April Barr



Modeling and acting internationally and throughout the United States, April Barr has appeared in magazines like *Glamour*, *Vogue*, *Seventeen*, and *Modern Bride*. Recently, April has graced the three covers of *Becoming*, a magazine format of the Bible.

Throughout her experiences in the fashion industry, April has realized that true beauty is found only in a growing, vibrant, personal relationship with Jesus. April is the founder of Queen Esther's Court, her platform for encouraging and equipping women of all ages. As April inspires and challenges audiences throughout the country, she provides practical tips and insights from God's Word for developing internal character that creates true, lasting outer beauty. If you are interested in April speaking at your next event, please visit www.aprilbarr.com or call (888) 471-9927.