

## Lesson Two - HYDRATING

*Scriptures references will be given throughout this study.  
You are encouraged to open your Bibles and read every reference given.*

### Introduction

With Lesson One, hopefully you have worked through the rebuilding process suggested by Nehemiah, and you've spent some time assessing your current state of health and wellness. Now it's time to move into some specific areas that can have a big impact on moving toward your health and wellness goals. As we move into talking about hydration, consider how you can continue applying the steps learned in Lesson One taught us by Nehemiah. You are encouraged to review these steps often and to make use of them as you incorporate SMALL CHANGES into your life.

Ever watch the show "I Shouldn't Be Alive" on Animal Planet? This show tells the stories of individuals who survived harrowing and life-threatening situations, and most of the people should have actually died. In almost every one of these stories, water supply plays a crucial role because the individuals know they can survive for days and sometimes weeks on water alone. Without water, however, the person doesn't stand a chance beyond a couple of days.

From the beginning of time, water has played an integral role in the existence of life. In fact, Genesis 1:1-2 says that after God created the heavens and the earth, "the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters." Water was created before life existed, and as we study this life-sustaining element, we discover that water has always played an integral role in the survival, existence and presence of life.

### Water and Survival

We get an accurate picture of water's role in human survival when we look at the part it played in strategy of war. In 2 Kings 20:20, we read that King Hezekiah is remembered partly for his strategy of building a conduit from the Gihon Spring to the Pool of Saloam. The water source was outside the wall of Jerusalem, and the conduit would allow the people inside the wall a fresh water supply that could not be cut off by the Assyrian army. Hezekiah knew that one of the first strategies an attacking army would use would be to cut off its enemy's water supply because without water, the enemy would not be able to hold out within the safety of the city walls.

1. What do Genesis 21:25, Genesis 26:15 and Numbers 20:17-22 tell us about the role that water plays in strategy between enemies?

Water was, and still is, a tool for manipulation of others. In fact, many of today's major political conflicts center around water. Consider these facts from BBC News:

1. **Israel and the Palestinians:** The conflict between Israel and the Palestinians is about water as well as land. The West Bank is a major source of water for Israel. But Palestinians complain that, on average, an Israeli uses three times as much water as a West Bank Palestinian.

2. **Lebanon:** The Lebanese have long accused Israel of having designs on the waters of the River Litani, suspecting this is one reason why the Jewish state maintains a toehold in southern Lebanon. Israel denies the charge.
3. **Syria:** Syria accuses Israel of being reluctant to withdraw from the Golan Heights - the strategic plateau it captured in the Arab-Israeli war of 1967 - because of a desire to exploit the Golan's water resources.
4. **Egypt:** Cairo warned in 1991 that it was ready to use force to protect its access to the waters of the Nile. The warning was directed mainly at its neighbors Ethiopia and Sudan. Rapid growth of a population already over 60 million is putting immense pressure on Egypt's water supplies.
5. **Turkey:** Turkey's exploitation of the waters of the Euphrates has long been controversial. Since 1984 the Turks have been building a series of dams and hydropower plants in south-east Turkey, as part of an ambitious scheme known as GAP. Syria and Iraq complain the scheme is depriving them of much-needed water. Given the troubled relationship between Syria and Turkey, in particular, the issue has become politically contentious.

Water is the center of these conflicts simply because water is crucial for human survival. In fact, humans cannot physically exist without water. Water is actually the single most important nutrient in our bodies, and every part and function of our bodies needs water to exist and operate. A human being can last 5-7 weeks without food, but an average adult can last no more than 5 days without water. (See Pillar 1 in "The Seven Pillars of Health" by Dr. Don Colbert).

2. How do John 19:28 and John 4:5, 7 emphasize the human body's need for hydration?

If Jesus needed water, and He was God in flesh, who are we to think that we can live without proper hydration? Because our bodies are 70% water, dehydration can impact us in a variety of ways, not the least of which is poor decision making and the inability to see beyond our physical condition.

3. In Exodus 17:1-7, what did the people do when they were thirsty? What did Moses do?

When a person is not properly hydrated, wisdom can deteriorate. In Exodus 17:1-7, the Israelites had gone 3 days without water, and one could almost understand the complaining. Almost... looking back, though, we remember the many wonderful things that God had recently done for the Israelites, yet they failed to believe he would provide for them again in this situation. They had just seen the ten plagues, the miracle of the Passover, the unbelievable Red Sea crossing, the bitter waters of Marah healed, and the twin miracles of meat and bread in the Wilderness. Now they had a desperate need for water in a harsh desert. Despite the people's attitudes, the Lord responds to Moses' pleas with a gracious hand, demonstrating that He is a "very present help in trouble." Yet, their lack of water and probable extreme thirst led them to "forget" these things.

4. Please read Psalm 106 to get a picture of this pattern of rebellion by the Israelites and deliverance by God. Using the 8 steps provided in Lesson One by Nehemiah, work through any similar patterns of "forgetfulness" and "rebellion" in your own life. As a reminder, the steps are as follows:

Step 1: Cry Out to the Lord (*Nehemiah 1:4*)

Step 2: Seek His Forgiveness (*Nehemiah 1:4*)

Step 3: Ask for His Empowerment (*Nehemiah 1:11*)

Step 4: Take an Honest Assessment (*Nehemiah 2:11-16*)

Step 5: Verbalize Your Commitment to Change (*Nehemiah 2:17-18*)

Step 6: Develop a Detailed Plan of Action (*Nehemiah 3*)

Step 7: Use the Buddy System (*Ecclesiastes 4:9*)

Step 8: Celebrate Your Success (*Nehemiah 6:15*)

As the Israelites demonstrated for us, lack of water can cause us to make poor decisions. But our ability to make decisions is not the only way that dehydration will affect us physically. In “The Seven Pillars of Health” by Dr. Don Colbert, we read that “Dehydration robs from certain areas of the body to keep the brain, heart, lungs, liver, and kidneys well hydrated. Many symptoms of disease are the first sign of the body needing adequate amounts of water. Some of the symptoms of inadequate water intake may include headaches, back pain, joint aches, dry skin, allergies, heartburn, constipation, and memory loss.” So instead of reaching for medication, try drinking more water.

### **Water & God’s Power**

We have just learned more about the integral part that water plays in human survival, and we will now take a look at how God uses water to show us more of what he is like. God is choosing to use something that is so essential to our survival to help us understand our greater need for Him.

During a storm, we can truly feel power that invokes fear and feelings of helplessness. This type of power gives us a glimpse of the power of God. In Isaiah 28:2, we read about a “storm of mighty overflowing waters,” which definitely is something to be feared, and thinking of this helps us realize the strength of God especially with regard to evil.

Water also reminds of the control that God has over all things. Israel rejected God and put their reliance on other countries to help them. God, through Isaiah, responds by questioning why they would do this when he has the power to deliver. His control over the waters of the earth is used as an example of this power (Isaiah 50:2)

Those who work on, near or with water have a special appreciation and respect for the wonderful power it holds. They often experience storms that others can only imagine, but they also experience sweet deliverance from those storms. Such people have much reason to rejoice for having lived through such storms. They experienced utter helplessness and complete deliverance.

5. Read Psalm 107:23-32 and consider how you might react if you were on a boat during a storm. Relate this to the storms of life, and draw wisdom from this Psalm as you realize God’s power over even the storms and waves.

One of the best ways to grasp the power of God is to realize that he controls the water and tells it where it can and cannot go on the earth.

6. Read Psalm 104:5-9. If you can, read this portion of scripture while on the shores of some body of water, the bigger the better. What storms in your life are currently raging? Use this portion of scripture to give them to God, realizing that He has complete control.

### **Water and Health**

As our study has shown thus far, water plays a crucial role in our physical survival to the point of causing nations to war against each other. Humans understand the importance of water so well that God used it to help us gain some understanding of the depth of His power. Next, let's look at how water can impact us on a more personal level. Hopefully in the process, we will gain an even deeper understanding not only of our need for water but also of how it can help us discover even more about our Creator.

Water will do more to improve your health than almost anything else you can do, including exercising and dieting. Additionally, adequate water intake will also go a long way in helping these activities to be more successful.

Unfortunately, not all water is good for us. Because of pollution, much of the world's clean drinking water is unsafe for human consumption. In "The 7 Pillars of Health" Dr. Colbert notes that "because tap water may contain toxins, heavy metals, pesticides, residual personal care products, bacteria and other microbes," drinking water straight from the tap is not recommended. And, unfortunately, bottled water won't necessarily take care of that problem because about a quarter of bottled water is actually tap water.

Having good drinking water is not an issue that only faces our modern world with all of its pollution.

7. Read Jeremiah 2:13. What mistake did the people make when seeking water to drink?

This verse is speaking figuratively about the people turning away from God "the fountain of living water" and toward foreign gods who are like cracked cisterns that can do nothing good for them, but the point is well taken on a literal level as well. Perhaps Jeremiah was making a point on both the physical and spiritual levels.

Springs and fountains were the centers of ancient Hebrew life. Natural springs were highly valued as is made clear by the number of towns and settlements in scripture that popped up near them. But, they were extremely rare, which is why highly populated areas were forced to find artificial sources for their water, usually taking the form of cisterns bored into rocky surfaces and having no outlet. These cisterns would connect rainwater, which the people would then use as their drinking and cooking water. A study of the Holy Land reveals a great deal of old cisterns, which attests to the fact of their extreme necessity. Cisterns were not the first choice for a water source, but they were born out of necessity and provided the best choice for the people at the time.

Choosing the right water to drink, whether physically or spiritually, is key to our overall health. Unfortunately, our most easily accessible source of water, unfiltered tap water, usually contains chlorine, which is the most dangerous element in most water supplies. It has been implicated in cancer, heart disease and other serious health problems. Fluoride may also increase cancer risk and is often put into city water systems. (Source: "The Seven Pillars of Health") So what are we to do if we want to stay adequately hydrated but also want to make sure we are drinking water that will help rather than harm us?

8. Visit [www.allaboutwater.org](http://www.allaboutwater.org) to begin educating yourself on choosing healthy drinking water.

<http://www.allaboutwater.org/>

Remember that there are bad, good, better and best choices to make. While choosing good drinking water can seem overwhelming, simply doing more than what you are doing right now, even if it's buying a water bottle with a simple filter built into it, is a start. Start asking your friends what they use to filter their water, and you'll soon discover that there are many good, inexpensive choices available.

Unfortunately, many people in the United States take the availability of clean drinking water for granted. We fail to realize how fortunate we are to have this amazing resource so easily accessible. When we consider the facts about how staying hydrated can improve virtually any health condition, we must find ways to motivate ourselves to seek out clean, drinking water.

9. Please read "A Final Note about Water." When you are finished reading this, say a prayer of thanksgiving for the clean water you have readily available, and ask God how He may want you to help make a difference for others who do not have clean drinking water.

We are truly blessed in this country to have plentiful drinking water. Although, there are times (after Hurricane Katrina for example) when clean drinking water is a problem even in developed countries such as the United States. What can we and what should we do in response to the growing demand for clean drinking water? We can begin by being good stewards of the water that we have available to us. This begins with staying hydrated. Not only are we being good stewards of the water available to us, but we are obeying God's word.

10. When we stay hydrated, how are we acting in obedience according to 1 Corinthians 6:19-20?

When we consider the following health information regarding the impact of water on our physical bodies, we realize how important of a part staying hydrated truly plays on being good stewards of our physical bodies in a way that glorifies our creator.

- Since creation, the amount of water on this planet has not changed. Every living creature depends on water to survive. A person can live for weeks without food, but only for a few days without water.
- Your body loses about two quarters of water a day through perspiration, urination, and exhalation. If you wait until you are thirsty to drink water, then you are most likely already dehydrated.

- Water plays a vital role in regulating body temperature, transporting nutrients and oxygen to cells, removing waste, cushioning joints and protecting organs and tissues.
- Water is a powerful nutrient to slow the aging process and to maintain your brain and memory. Your brain cells are mainly water – about 85% - and your brain is constantly active, even during sleep. Therefore, your brain needs to be well hydrated.
- If you eat an inordinate amount of starches, like breads or pastries, you will need more water, because these foods add little water to your body.
- A lack of water can significantly decrease work performance; in fact, a reduction of only 4-5% in body water will result in a decline of 20-30% in work performance. It can also cause constipation and can increase the risk of kidney problems and urinary tract infections.
- One expert says that “by not drinking pure enough water, many people incur excess body fat, poor muscle tone and size, decreased digestive efficiency and organ function, increased toxicity in the body, joint and muscle soreness and water retention.”
- Exercise increases the body’s need for water. In fact, drinking an extra eight ounces of water for every 20 minutes of activity is the general rule.

Staying hydrated is certainly important for our physical bodies, and knowing this helps us relate to the importance of hydration for our spirits. Just like we should not deprive our bodies of water, we should not deprive our souls of it either. The Living Word, Jesus Christ, and the Written Word, the Bible, can satisfy our hungry and thirsty souls much like whole foods and quality water satisfies our physical bodies.

### **Living Water**

Because water plays and has always played such an integral role in survival, existence and presence of life, people in the New Testament through today understand the analogies in the Bible about living water. This was especially true for the Israelites, who were certainly familiar with deserts and with the need for clean water. Without question, they would understand scripture that relates water and thirst to spiritual truths.

11. What different aspects of our Christian walk has water represented in scripture? See Psalm 1:3, 23:2 & 124:4-5; and Isaiah 11:9, 43:2, 55:1, & 141:17-20.

To name just a few of the applications, water is used in scripture as being figurative of spiritual growth, peace, afflictions, persecution, the gospel and salvation. Even related terms and conditions such as thirst and dryness are ones to which we can relate both physically and spiritually.

12. Why did God see fit to use water and thirst as analogies to help us understand spiritual truths?

God used water analogies throughout the Bible because everyone can relate to what it’s like to be thirsty and to have that thirst quenched. We can identify with that feeling, and it helps us to identify the need in our spirits as well.

13. Read the short article "[Desert Life](#)." In what ways are you leaning toward a "desert" existence, and what can you do today to "drink deeply" to avoid an "arid existence" spiritually?

Perhaps one of the most famous stories about living water is found in John 4:5-15. The woman whom Jesus meets at the well initially thought they were discussing literal water, but she soon discovered that Jesus was referring to a very different kind of water. The woman wanted the water that Jesus offered because it would make her life easier. She would certainly have extra time in her day if she didn't have to come and get water from the well. At first especially, she certainly did not understand the tremendous significance of the water that Jesus was offering her.

14. Read John 4:5-15. Why is this analogy that Jesus makes with water such an effective one not only for Biblical times but also for us today?

Reflecting on the analogy of Jesus as living water helps us understand that only Jesus can quench our thirst for God. Jesus Christ is the water of life. Water for our physical bodies sustains us for survival in our temporal bodies this side of heaven, but the Water of Life sustains our spirits for eternity. In "Health Care You Can Live With," Dr. Scott Morris notes this about Jesus offering himself as "living water":

"Notice that Jesus did not present himself as a quiet, placid stream that might lull you into an afternoon snooze. Neither is he still water that turns brackish over time. He is a vigorous, robust, gushing fountain that would carry the woman to God. Abundant life – that's what Jesus was talking about. It's the whole reason he came to share our body-and-spirit humanity. Jesus was willing to forgive the woman for everything she had ever done if she was willing now to look for a life that embraced the goodness and richness of the path he set before her." (p. 82)

Jesus was making a point about the importance of the kind of water that we take in and encouraging the woman and us to make "living water" a priority for our souls. This brings to mind the importance of the quality of water, whether figurative or literal, in which we partake. Fresh and clean water in our world today is becoming more and more costly, yet we often take it for granted in the United States. Even more unfortunate is the fact that we also often take the Jesus, the Living Water, for granted as well.

15. What, according to Revelation 22:17 and Isaiah 55:1, is the cost for the Living Water that Christ offers us?

The Water of Life – our salvation – through believing in Christ as Savior is free, and it never becomes polluted or dangerous for us to drink. We need this Living Water more than our physical bodies need water for survival, for one day we will have new bodies that will never perish and do not need water to live. Yet, the fact that we need water for physical survival now helps us understand our greater need for God.

16. Imagine a time when you were almost desperately thirsty for water, maybe after exercising or when you were so busy you forgot to drink enough water. Now, go and get a glass of water and drink it while you read Psalm 42:1 & 63:1, John 6:35 and Revelation 7:16.

## Small Changes

If you'll recall, the focus of this summer's Bible Study is SMALL CHANGES over time to make a big difference. Hopefully, you completed either the Wellness Assessment or Wellness Assessment 2 (maybe both?) while working through Lesson 1. If not, please go back and do that now. Once you've made a personal assessment, you are ready to move on to some SMALL CHANGES that can help you change results that are not where you know they should or could be. The following is a list of possible changes that you can begin to incorporate into your life. Don't become overwhelmed by this list and think that you have to do all of them at once. Just pick one and focus there. You can always come back to this list at a later time and work on another small change.

Remember that big differences are often made through SMALL CHANGES over time. If we're all honest with ourselves, we realize that most situations, both good and bad, in which we find ourselves did not happen overnight. Chances are, SMALL CHANGES over time got us to the place in which we now find ourselves. If you can only handle one SMALL CHANGE now, realize that it's one step toward a big difference. Making one SMALL CHANGE is something you're not doing now, so it is a positive step forward.

1. Instead of reaching for a soft drink or tea when you are thirsty, try reaching for a glass of clean water. Do this at least once a day.
2. As you now know, the Bible speaks a lot about water, both for physical and spiritual needs. For a printable summary of "Water in the Bible" to keep in your Bible to read often, click here. [http://www.africanwater.org/religion\\_bible.htm](http://www.africanwater.org/religion_bible.htm)
3. Start looking for a home water filter system. If you are on a limited budget, start with a pitcher filter or a faucet-mounted filter.
4. If you are suffering from a health condition such as headaches, back pain, joint aches, dry skin, allergies, heartburn, constipation and memory loss, gradually increase the amount of water you drink each day, and eventually these symptoms may start to subside.
5. Increase your intake of salads, vegetables, and fruits since they all contain a high percentage of water. Even just one piece of fruit a day can make a difference!
6. To figure out how much water you should drink daily, take your weight in pounds and divide it by two. The results show how many ounces of water you should drink daily. If you're not even close to drinking this amount every day, simply start by drinking more than you did yesterday, even if it's only a glass more.
7. Don't let the need to drink water take the fun out of life; you don't want to become a slave to water. While water is the most important beverage you should drink, coffee (regular and decaffeinated) and green tea actually provide much-needed antioxidants. Too much of these beverages are not substitutes for water, but there are enough benefits to allow yourself to enjoy them in moderation. In other words, you should still be drinking way more water than any other beverage.
8. Drinking water is a powerful weight-loss tool. New research shows that being dehydrated actually may cause your body's fat deposits to increase. Also, drinking water reduces your

appetite by giving you a full feeling. So, before trying a new fad diet, work on the goal of drinking your body's water requirement, which you figured out in #6 above.

9. Buy a water bottle – glass ones are the best – and always have it nearby. Every time you take a drink of water, take a moment to connect with the Water of Life. You will be nourishing your body and your spirit at the same time.
10. If you get bored with plain water, don't stop drinking it altogether; instead, add a bit of lemon for a touch of flavor. There are also some good brands of flavored water available as well as packets of flavoring to add to your clean, filtered water. Just be careful of adding extra calories and unneeded sugar.

In "7 Pillars of Health," Dr. Don Colbert offers a prayer to end the Pillar 1, which focuses on water. A modified version of this prayer is how we will end our Lesson Two study. Please get another glass of clean drinking water, and then read this prayer as you enjoy nourishing your body.

*Dear Lord, thank you for my clean, healing water. Mark 16:18 says that if I drink any deadly thing it shall not harm me. By faith, I thank You for cleansing this water and for protecting me supernaturally from any harm. I bless the water according to Exodus 23:25, which says that God shall bless my water and take any sickness away from the midst of me. I drink this water with thanksgiving. Because God loves me and desires me to be healthy, I receive this water with gratitude and rejoice as it goes to every cell in my body. As I drink this water, my cells, tissues, and organs are cleansed, strengthened, and renewed like the eagle. I see myself healed, and I keep this vision before my eyes. In the name of Jesus, amen.*