
WHAT ARE YOU FEEDING?

Imagine a farmer who decides to experiment because feed prices are so high. He takes 20 calves, separating them into two pens with ten calves in each. The first set of calves he consistently feeds with high-quality feed. The second set of calves is not fed. You don't need to be a farmer to know the result. One group of calves will grow and thrive while the other set will weaken and die.

If a farmer tried this, we would say he is foolish. But I'm ashamed to report how many times I have tried this same experiment in my life. It isn't with calves or something of little value, but with something far more critical, my spiritual life.

Solomon was a man with everything going for him. He had a father who was a man after God's own heart. He had God's special endowment of wisdom, giving him unprecedented discernment; but he had a problem. He brought wicked women into his life. He fed a relationship with them instead of his relationship with God, which eventually ruined him. He also fed his desire for all things of earthly pleasure; later in life, he admitted that it was all vanity and vexation of spirit.

King Saul was another man that started well. He was small in his own eyes and followed God. After he was king, the children of Belial despised him, but he held his peace (1Sa 10:27). However, years later, he stopped feeding his confidence in, and relationship with God; instead, feeding his jealousy and hatred of God's chosen replacement king. It destroyed his peace and, eventually, his life and the lives of many others around him.

King David brings inspiration to many through the many Psalms that he wrote. But he isn't without some scars on his reputation. He fed the wrong thing in his life several times, leading him to failure. But praise the Lord, he repented and turned back to God. The Psalms give us a peek inside David's heart. I have often been blessed by David's practice of turning to God when in difficulty. He was guaranteed freedom from his mental distress because of what he fed his heart with. *Yet the LORD will command his lovingkindness in the daytime, and in the night his song shall be with me, and my prayer unto the God of my life. I will say unto God my rock, Why hast thou forgotten me? Why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy? As with a sword in my bones, mine enemies reproach me; while they say daily unto me, Where is thy God? Why art thou cast down, O my soul? And why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God* (Psa 42:8-11). David frequently talks about his distress and troubles, but invariably he would turn his focus away from his problems, praising God for Who He is and placing his hope in Him.

Too many times in life, we wonder why we are struggling. We wonder why our spiritual life is apathetic. Look at what we are feeding, the answer might be simple. You can't feed your carnal man while starving your spiritual man and expect your spiritual man to be strong and healthy. *But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof* (Rom 13:14).

You can't shorten your personal devotions while reading the news and wasting time on your phone and expect your spiritual life not to show the results. You can't feed on carnal music all week long and expect to be inspired by congregational music in church on Sunday. You can't dwell on your fears about the future while avoiding God's promises and expect to have a healthy emotional life. You can't continually focus on the flat spots of your spouse and children and expect to keep treating them kindly.

For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. (Rom 8:13). The more we starve our flesh and feed our spiritual man, the stronger our spiritual man will grow and the weaker our flesh will become. As we spend time reading God's Word, meditating on it, and talking with God, we can expect spiritual growth. The serious question for all of us is, what are we feeding in our lives?

~Llewellyn Martin