

A Healthy Appetite

Big Idea: Being spiritually hungry and thirsty is a sign of spiritual health. To preserve that healthy appetite we must avoid spiritual “junk food” and maintain the spiritual disciplines of a wholesome diet and exercise – “right living”.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness for they shall be satisfied (Matthew 5:6). Sometimes we think of hunger and thirst as something bad (it is when it is not satisfied), but to maintain a healthy body, soul, and spirit we need a healthy appetite.

1. Our spirit, like our body, needs sustenance

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. And the tempter came and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.” But he answered, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.’” Matthew 4:1-4 (see also John 4:31-34)

We are created with three important parts: body, soul, and spirit. We tend to live our lives from that priority structure, feeding the appetites of our body and soul (emotions, intellect, personality) first, then our spirit. But Jesus showed us how to reorder our priorities and live from the inside out. If we feed our spirit first, a healthy spirituality will help us keep our body and soul healthy too (1 Thessalonians 5:23; Matthew 6:31-33).

2. Feeding our spirit “junk food” will not satisfy

All the toil of man is for his mouth, yet his appetite is not satisfied (Ecclesiastes 6:7). *Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen diligently to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food* (Isaiah 55:2).

In the same way we can diminish our appetite and harm our body with junk food, we can try and satiate the longing of our heart with spiritual “junk food” offered by the world. If we do, we’ll likely be joining the Stones in a chorus of “I can’t get no satisfaction”! Only a relationship with Jesus and the activities that enhance that relationship (righteousness) will truly satisfy the deep longing of our spirit. Identify the spiritual “junk food” you are most tempted by:

3. Only a righteous relationship with Jesus will fulfill us

It is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God. Philippians 1:9-11 (see also Ps. 63:1-8)

“Righteousness” or right living is not about doing good things in our own strength. When we are left on our own we tend to default to what we know best – sin! But when we hang out with Jesus, and do things that bring us closer together, He starts to work out His righteousness in and through us.

4. Spiritual disciplines will keep us hungry and thirsty for God

Have nothing to do with irreverent, silly myths. Rather train yourself for godliness; for while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come. The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance. 1 Timothy 4:7-9

While relationships are much more than a list of “do”s and “don’t”s, they do require work. We have to expend a lot of thought and energy in keeping a relationship fresh and dynamic, so our longing for each other actually grows stronger every day. What are the things you need to do to enhance your relationship with Jesus, to build up your spirit so you have the strength to live right, from the inside out?