

## **Taste and see that the Lord is good.**

- **Isaiah 55:2.** Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labour on what does not satisfy?



# **Taste and see that the Lord is good.**

- **Isaiah 55:1-3 & 6-9.**

Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat!

Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost.

Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labour on what does not satisfy?

Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and you will delight in the richest of fare.

**Give ear and come to me; listen, that you may live.**

**Seek the LORD while he may be found; call on him while he is near.**

Let the wicked forsake their ways and the unrighteous their thoughts. Let them turn to the LORD, and he will have mercy on them, and to our God, for he will freely pardon.

“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” declares the LORD. “As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

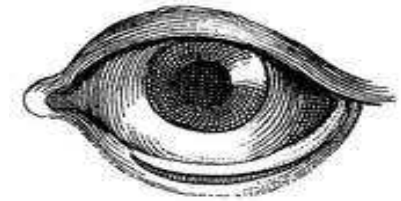
**NB:** *(We are called to listen to look to eat and to drink and we are reminded of the window of opportunity and the requirement of Repentance.)*

# Taste and see that the Lord is good.

- We have looked at hearing the Lord.



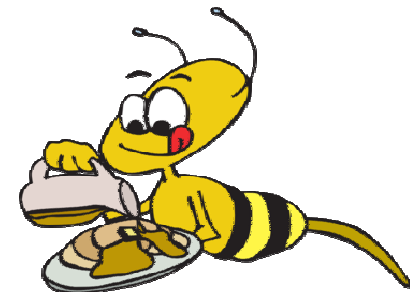
- We have looked at seeing the Lord.



- We have looked at touching the Lord.



- Today the title of my ministry is  
**“Taste and see that the Lord is good.”**



# Taste and see that the Lord is good.

- 1 John 1:1-7.

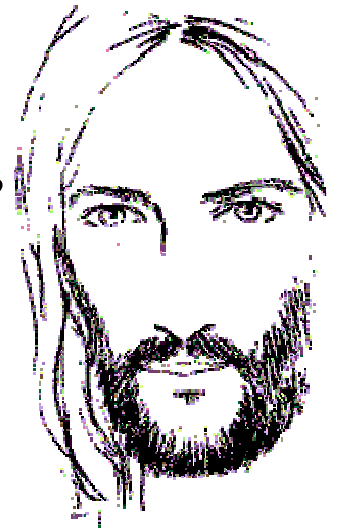
## *The Incarnation of the Word of Life*

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched this we proclaim concerning the Word of life.

The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. We write this to make our joy complete.

**This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you:**

God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. If we claim to have fellowship with him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.



# Taste and see that the Lord is good.

God's Word is sweet to those who walk in obedience.

- Psalm 119:101-107.

I have kept my feet from every evil path  
so that I might obey your word.

I have not departed from your laws,  
for you yourself have taught me.

**How sweet are your words to my  
taste,**

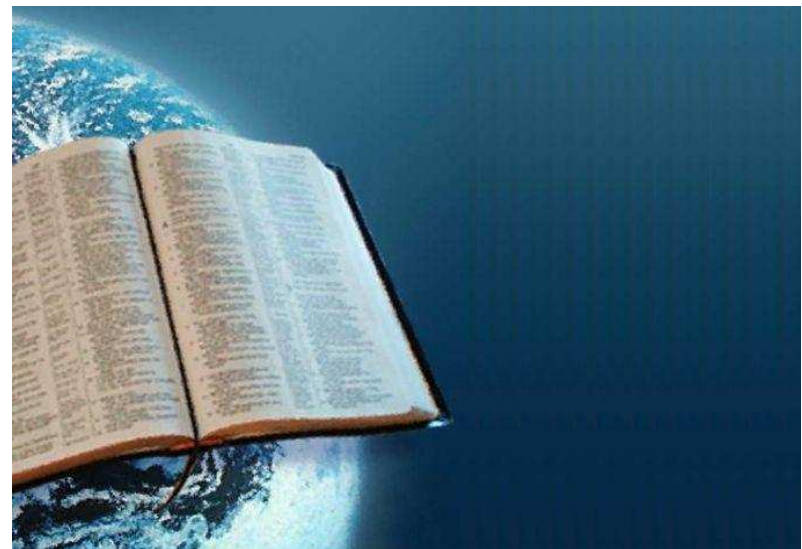
**sweeter than honey to my mouth!**

I gain understanding from your  
precepts;

therefore I hate every wrong path.

Your word is a lamp for my feet,  
a light on my path.

I have taken an oath and confirmed it,  
that I will follow your righteous laws



# **Taste and see that the Lord is good.**

- **Psalm 19:7-10.**

The law of the LORD is perfect,  
refreshing the soul.

The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy,  
making wise the simple.

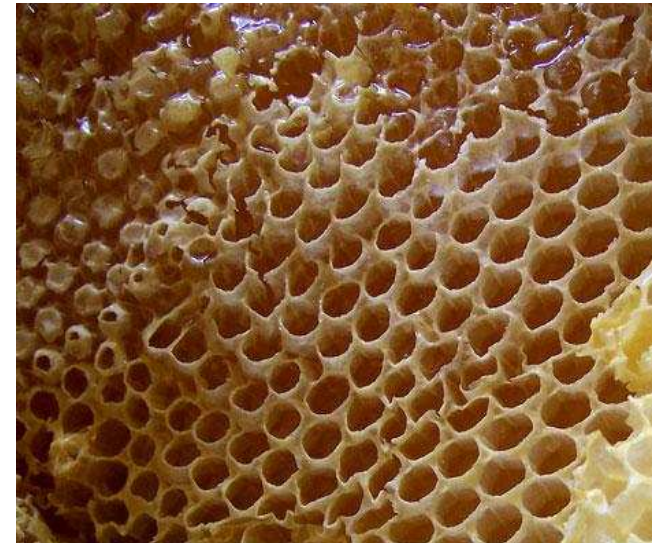
The precepts of the LORD are right,  
giving joy to the heart.

The commands of the LORD are radiant,  
giving light to the eyes.

The fear of the LORD is pure,  
enduring forever.

**The decrees of the LORD are firm,  
and all of them are righteous.**

**They are more precious than gold,  
than much pure gold;  
they are sweeter than honey,  
than honey from the honeycomb.**





# Taste and see that the Lord is good.

## Testimony from the web.

- *Annisa* said

Your study helped me with a children's sermon for today. Last night, a bear broke into my beehives in my backyard. It was dark and I couldn't see him, but I could hear him tasting that the honey was good. He moaned and groaned in pure delight. Oh, that we would love the Lord so fully! All night, I kept thinking of this verse and how I want to share the Good News with the kids that they can know the Lord intimately. "Taste and See that the Lord is Good."

# **Taste and see that the Lord is good.**

## **We must taste and see that the LORD is good.**

- Jonathan Edwards taught, we must not only have an abstract sense of the taste of Gods holiness and beauty, but we must have knowledge of it for ourselves by the Holy Spirit.
- Edwards said that as we may have an understanding that honey is sweet, it is much different to have an experience of actually tasting the honey and knowing first hand and experientially that the honey is sweet.
- *(You can hear and see from a distance, but to touch and taste you have to be close up, intimate)*
- **Psalm 34:8.**

**Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good! Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him!**



## **Taste and see that the Lord is good.**

### **Edwards wrote:**

- A true love to God must begin with a delight in his holiness.
- By this all men may test their affections, and particularly the authenticity of their love and joy from God. Various kinds of creatures show the difference of their natures, very much in the different things they relish (one delighting in that which another abhors).
- Such is the difference between true saints, and natural [unregenerate] men. Unregenerate men have no sense of the goodness and excellency of holy things at least for their holiness; they have no taste for that kind of good, the divine good [or holiness] is hid from them.

## **Taste and see that the Lord is good.**

**An appetite for the Lord and His Word is evident in the true convert who determines to set his heart on god.**

### **1 Peter 2:1-3.**

Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind.

**Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.**

*A.W. Towzer said that Christians don't need a change of menu, but a change of appetite.*

# Taste and see that the Lord is good.

- Psalm 63.

You, God, are my God, earnestly I seek you;  
I thirst for you, my whole being longs for you,  
in a dry and parched land where there is no water.

I have seen you in the sanctuary  
and beheld your power and your glory.

Because your love is better than life, my lips will glorify you.

I will praise you as long as I live, and in your name I will lift up my hands.

I will be fully satisfied as with the richest of foods;  
with singing lips my mouth will praise you.

On my bed I remember you; I think of you through the watches of the night.

Because you are my help, I sing in the shadow of your wings.

I cling to you; your right hand upholds me.

# Taste and see that the Lord is good.

- Song of Songs 2:1-3.

*She*

I am a rose of Sharon,  
a lily of the valleys.

*He*

Like a lily among thorns  
is my darling among the young women.

*She*

Like an apple tree among the trees of the forest  
is my beloved among the young men.  
I delight to sit in his shade,  
and his fruit is sweet to my taste.



# **Taste and see that the Lord is good.**

## **From The Berean call.**

**We cannot “taste and see that the LORD is good” without having a taste for Him.**

- **A taste for God, as for anything else, must be developed.**  
How?
- **By an act of the will, we begin with obedience to the very first command:**  
“Thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might” (Deut 6:5; Mat:22:37; Mk 12:30; Lk 10:27). How can we do this?
- **We follow God’s instructions:** “And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates” (Deut 6:6-9; 30:6, 16-20).

## Taste and see that the Lord is good.

- With “all thine heart... all thy soul... all thy might,” leaves nothing for any competitors for my affections.  
May I not love my wife, my children? Yes. Every love is legitimate that is in harmony with my love for God; every affection is blessed that deepens my love for Him; every pursuit into which I invest my strength is to His glory that is in harmony with God’s will. My life and that of my family is to revolve around my love for God, and His Word is to be the subject of our conversation continually. What a glorious life!
- *Today the TV has taken the place of meal time conversation.*



# **Taste and see that the Lord is good.**

**David didn't develop his taste for the Lord in a day. He fed upon the Word of God until to him God's "judgments" were "Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb" Ps:19:10.**



- The quotes this month are from authors who lived in past centuries. One stands in awe of some of these writers. How did they develop such a deep understanding and appreciation, such an appetite for God and His Word, that most Christians lack today? They invested time, effort, and devotion in communion with God and in meditating deeply upon His Word—time that few are willing to invest today because loving God is not high on their list of priorities.
- **Jeremiah 29:13**. God did not promise to reveal Himself to the casually curious but to those who would seek Him with “all [their] heart”



## Taste and see that the Lord is good.

- Jer:15:16.

*Jeremiah said, “Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart...”*

- Sadly, the actual words God spoke are no longer palatable to many of those who call themselves Christians. Indeed, few today know what the genuine Word of God tastes like.
- We are raising a generation on the spiritual junk food of religious videos, movies, youth entertainment, and comic book paraphrases of the Bible. The Word of God is being rewritten, watered down, illustrated, and dramatized in order to cater to the taste of the carnal mind. That only leads further into the wilderness of doubt and confusion.

## **Taste and see that the Lord is good.**

Food is vital for our survival as humans and a lot of our time and effort is put into putting food on our tables. But God's Word should be more of a priority.

- **Deuteronomy 8:1-3.**

Be careful to follow every command I am giving you today, so that you may live and increase and may enter and possess the land the LORD promised on oath to your ancestors. Remember how the LORD your God led you all the way in the wilderness these forty years, to humble and test you in order to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commands. He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your ancestors had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.

*Jesus himself was tested in this very area after fasting for 40 days.*



# Taste and see that the Lord is good.

## Deuteronomy 8:6-13.

- Observe the commands of the LORD your God, walking in obedience to him and revering him. For the LORD your God is bringing you into a good land, a land with brooks, streams, and deep springs gushing out into the valleys and hills; a land with wheat and barley, vines and fig trees, pomegranates, olive oil and honey; a land where bread will not be scarce and you will lack nothing; a land where the rocks are iron and you can dig copper out of the hills.
- When you have eaten and are satisfied, praise the LORD your God for the good land he has given you. Be careful that you do not forget the LORD your God, failing to observe his commands, his laws and his decrees that I am giving you this day. Otherwise, when you eat and are satisfied, when you build fine houses and settle down, and when your herds and flocks grow large and your silver and gold increase and all you have is multiplied,



# Taste and see that the Lord is good.

- **Deuteronomy 8:14-20.**

then your heart will become proud and you will forget the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. He led you through the vast and dreadful wilderness, that thirsty and waterless land, with its venomous snakes and scorpions. He brought you water out of hard rock.

He gave you manna to eat in the wilderness, something your ancestors had never known, to humble and test you so that in the end it might go well with you. You may say to yourself, “My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me.” But remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your ancestors, as it is today.

- If you ever forget the LORD your God and follow other gods and worship and bow down to them, I testify against you today that you will surely be destroyed. Like the nations the LORD destroyed before you, so you will be destroyed for not obeying the LORD your God.



# Taste and see that the Lord is good.

Food and appetite are often mentioned in Scripture as a source of temptation and sin.  
(Lust)

- **Genesis 3.** (*Adam and Eve*)

And to Adam he said, “Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, ‘You shall not eat of it,’ cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”

- **Hebrews 12:16,17.** (*Esau*)

that no one is sexually immoral or unholy like Esau, who sold his birthright for a single meal. For you know that afterward, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no chance to repent, though he sought it with tears.



# Taste and see that the Lord is good.

Numbers 11:4-6, 10-13. (Children of Israel)

- Now the rabble that was among them had a strong craving. And the people of Israel also wept again and said, **“Oh that we had meat to eat! We remember the fish we ate in Egypt that cost nothing, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic. But now our strength is dried up, and there is nothing at all but this manna to look at.”**
- Moses heard the people weeping throughout their clans, everyone at the door of his tent. And the anger of the Lord blazed hotly, and Moses was displeased.
- Moses said to the Lord, ...Where am I to get meat to give to all this people? For they weep before me and say, ‘Give us meat, that we may eat.’



# **Taste and see that the Lord is good.**

## **Numbers 11:18-20, 31-54. (*Children of Israel*)**

And say to the people, ‘Consecrate yourselves for tomorrow, and you shall eat meat, for you have wept in the hearing of the Lord, saying, “Who will give us meat to eat? For it was better for us in Egypt.” Therefore the Lord will give you meat, and you shall eat. You shall not eat just one day, or two days, or five days, or ten days, or twenty days, but a whole month, until it comes out at your nostrils and becomes loathsome to you, because you have rejected the Lord who is among you and have wept before him, saying, “Why did we come out of Egypt?”’

Then a wind from the Lord sprang up, and it brought quail from the sea and let them fall beside the camp, about a day's journey on this side and a day's journey on the other side, around the camp, and about two cubits above the ground. And the people rose all that day and all night and all the next day, and gathered the quail. Those who gathered least gathered ten homers. And they spread them out for themselves all around the camp.

**While the meat was yet between their teeth, before it was consumed, the anger of the Lord was kindled against the people, and the Lord struck down the people with a very great plague. Therefore the name of that place was called Kibroth-hattaavah, because there they buried the people who had the craving.**



# Taste and see that the Lord is good.

## 1Kings 13:14-24. (*The unknown Prophet*)

- And he went after the man of God and found him sitting under an oak. And he said to him, “Are you the man of God who came from Judah?” And he said, “I am.” Then he said to him, “Come home with me and eat bread.” And he said, “I may not return with you, or go in with you, neither will I eat bread nor drink water with you in this place, for it was said to me by the word of the Lord, ‘You shall neither eat bread nor drink water there, nor return by the way that you came.’”
- And he said to him, “I also am a prophet as you are, and an angel spoke to me by the word of the Lord, saying, ‘Bring him back with you into your house that he may eat bread and drink water.’ But he lied to him. So he went back with him and ate bread in his house and drank water.”



# **Taste and see that the Lord is good.**

## **1Kings 13:14-24.** *(The unknown Prophet)*

- And as they sat at the table, the word of the Lord came to the prophet who had brought him back. **And he cried to the man of God who came from Judah, “Thus says the Lord, ‘Because you have disobeyed the word of the Lord and have not kept the command that the Lord your God commanded you, but have come back and have eaten bread and drunk water in the place of which he said to you, “Eat no bread and drink no water,” your body shall not come to the tomb of your fathers.’**
- And after he had eaten bread and drunk, he saddled the donkey for the prophet whom he had brought back. And as he went away a lion met him on the road and killed him. And his body was thrown in the road, and the donkey stood beside it; the lion also stood beside the body.



# Taste and see that the Lord is good.

## 1Samuel 2:12-17. (*Sons of Eli*)

- Eli's sons were scoundrels; they had no regard for the Lord. Now it was the practice of the priests that, whenever any of the people offered a sacrifice, the priest's servant would come with a three-pronged fork in his hand while the meat was being boiled and would plunge the fork into the pan or kettle or caldron or pot. Whatever the fork brought up the priest would take for himself. This is how they treated all the Israelites who came to Shiloh. But even before the fat was burned, the priest's servant would come and say to the person who was sacrificing, "Give the priest some meat to roast; he won't accept boiled meat from you, but only raw." If the person said to him, "Let the fat be burned first, and then take whatever you want," the servant would answer, "No, hand it over now; if you don't, I'll take it by force."
- This sin of the young men was very great in the Lord's sight, for they were treating the Lord's offering with contempt.

# Taste and see that the Lord is good.

**In contrast Jesus was master of his appetite.**

## John 4:31-34.

- Meanwhile his disciples urged him, “Rabbi, eat something.”
- But he said to them, “I have food to eat that you know nothing about.”
- Then his disciples said to each other, “Could someone have brought him food?”
- “My food,” said Jesus, “is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work.”

Don't you have a saying, ‘It's still four months until harvest’? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest.



# **Taste and see that the Lord is good.**

## **Warning From Israel's History**

### **1 Corinthians 10:1-7.**

- For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers and sisters, that our ancestors were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea. They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. They all ate the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ.
- Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them; their bodies were scattered in the wilderness. Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did. Do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written: "The people sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in revelry."

### **Philippians 3:17-19.**

- Join together in following my example, brothers and sisters, and just as you have us as a model, keep your eyes on those who live as we do. For, as I have often told you before and now tell you again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is set on earthly things.

# **Taste and see that the Lord is good.**

- **Hebrews 6:4-12.**

**It is impossible for those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit, who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming age and who have fallen away, to be brought back to repentance. To their loss they are crucifying the Son of God all over again and subjecting him to public disgrace.**

Land that drinks in the rain often falling on it and that produces a crop useful to those for whom it is farmed receives the blessing of God. But land that produces thorns and thistles is worthless and is in danger of being cursed. In the end it will be burned.

Even though we speak like this, dear friends, we are convinced of better things in your case—the things that have to do with salvation. God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them. We want each of you to show this same diligence to the very end, so that what you hope for may be fully realized. We do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised.

## **Taste and see that the Lord is good.**

- **John 6:50-53.**

This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die.

I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.

The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat?

Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.

*In the light of what we have seen today it is no wonder we are instructed to Fast and Pray in Scripture and not allow our flesh and it's appetites to rule our lives.*



# **Taste and see that the Lord is good.**

*article by Debbie Werner*

## **Snack Between Meals**

- **Nutritionists advise people to eat every few hours to maintain steady blood sugar levels.** While meetings give us ample time to digest a large amount of *Bible* study, church instruction and "iron sharpening iron" discussion with fellow Church members, the pace of life and its many distractions do not often allow for large chunks of time to devote to spiritual pursuits during the week. That's when small "snacks" on God's Word can keep us spiritually energized and hold us over until those bigger meals of study time.
- Many people have suggested tips and tricks about how to work in small bits of spiritual boosts throughout the day—putting scriptures that pop up as reminders in their Outlook calendars at work, placing Post-it notes on the fridge or bathroom mirror to focus on a particular scripture or issue to meditate on, or reading a particular Proverb or short verse and meditating on it during a commute or trip to the grocery store.
- These small reminders keep us focused on the Kingdom of God instead of getting mired in the details of this life.

# Taste and see that the Lord is good.

## Pick Whole Foods

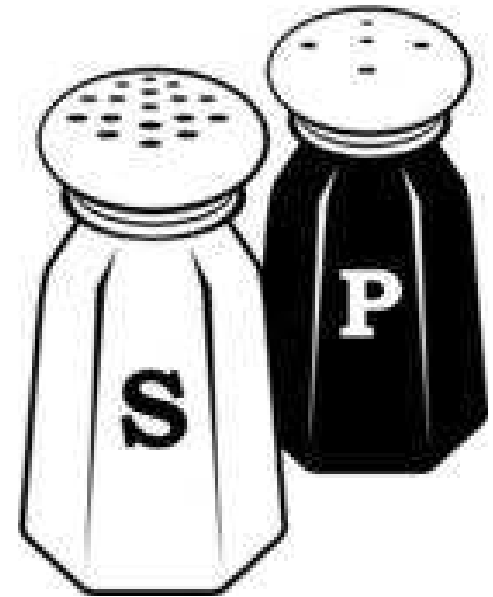
- Nutritionists now recommend more whole foods (fruits, veggies and whole-grain, less-processed breads and pastas) and fewer refined grains and sugary/salty foods. Whole foods keep us fuller for longer periods of time and even out blood sugar, which improves mood.
- Similarly, although there are many "easy" forms of *Bible* study out there articles, Web videos, etc. the best source of filling and energizing spiritual nutrition is always the *Bible*. It is packed with so much depth that even a lifetime solely devoted to its study will continually provide new discoveries! Other *Bible* study outlets have their place in our spiritual diets, but the best source of sustained spiritual energy will always be God's Word.



# Taste and see that the Lord is good.

## Use Healthy Seasonings

- Some think that following a healthy diet involves eating lots of bland, boring foods. But there are plenty of seasonings out there that keep taste buds interested.
- Likewise, we have concordances and commentaries and many other *Bible* study helps that add flavour to our personal study. I've always read through the *Bible* in the New King James Version, but this round I'm going through scriptures with a New Living Translation chronological *Bible*, which gives me a slightly different perspective.



# **Taste and see that the Lord is good.**

## **Drink Your Water**

- Our bodies are 55 percent to 78 percent water, so we need a lot of water during the day just to maintain natural functions. We would die quickly if we were deprived of water for more than a few days. Our spiritual lives, too, will shrivel and shrink quickly if we don't maintain daily contact with God and ask for His Holy Spirit in prayer

## **John 4:13-14**

Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again:

But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

- *Water also aids digestion, and God's Holy Spirit helps us understand our Bible study and focus our meditation.*



# **Taste and see that the Lord is good.**

## **Share Meals With Family and Friends.**

- Finally, one of the joys in eating a meal is sharing it with one's family and friends. The early Church did this.

### **Acts 2:46-47.**

And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.



- Families today are encouraged to eat nutritious meals together at home as a way to share and connect with each other. At church services we share spiritual meals (and sometimes physical ones too with potlucks) that help bond us together as God's spiritual family.
- We can encourage each other to continue in our healthy spiritual nutrition plans. "Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man who trusts in Him!" (Psalm 34:8).

## **Taste and see that the Lord is good.**

### **Matthew 5:6.**

- Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.

### **John 6:25-27.**

- When they found him on the other side of the lake, they asked him, “Rabbi, when did you get here?” Jesus answered, “Very truly I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw the signs I performed but because you ate the loaves and had your fill. **Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you.** For on him God the Father has placed his seal of approval.”

# **Taste and see that the Lord is good.**

## **Matthew 6:31-33.**

- So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.
- *I have ministered a few times on being hungry and thirsty for God. Do you have an appetite for the Lord? Have you set your affections on spiritual things or are you prepared to give in to the flesh and it’s desires and cravings?*
- **Close with page 63 & 64 of God’s chosen fast.**



## FLESHPOTS OF EGYPT

Would that we had died by the hand of the Lord  
in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the fleshpots  
and ate bread to the full. Exodus 16. 3.

It is said that the quickest way to a man's heart is through his stomach. Evidently Satan thought that that was equally true for a woman, for it was Eve he tempted with the forbidden fruit. 'So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food. . . . she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, and he ate' (Gen. 3. 6). So it was, among other things, a temptation to eat that encompassed the ruin of the race. The cry of man's stomach helped to drown the voice of God in the garden of Eden.

Satan found he could make a strong appeal to the human stomach, and in the millenniums that followed he has pursued this line with obvious success. Even Noah, a man who walked with God, fell into the trap. 'He planted a vineyard; and he drank of the wine, and became drunk, and lay uncovered in his tent' (Gen. 9. 20, 21).

In his old age we find Isaac, the patriarch, despite what God had revealed to him, favouring Esau rather than Jacob, and for no nobler reason than the fact that this elder son supplied his father's table with the food that he liked (Gen. 25. 28). Esau in turn sold his birthright for a single meal, and for this he later forfeited also the blessing of the firstborn (Heb. 12. 16, 17). To what extent was Esau's carnality to be laid at the door of his aged father, who did not discipline his own appetites? It is a challenging question for Christian parents.

The sad story of God's people in their wilderness wander-

ings reveals a continuous record of failure along this line.  
Over the matter of food, they murmured, they wept, they  
craved, they lusted.

"Would that we had died by the hand of the Lord in the  
land of Egypt, when we sat by the fleshpots and ate bread  
to the full" (Exod. 16. 3).

"O that we had meat to eat! We remember the fish we ate  
in Egypt for nothing, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks,  
the onions, and the garlic" (Num. 11. 4, 5).

"Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the  
wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we  
loathe this worthless food [the manna]" (Num. 21. 5).

God's attitude in all this is brought out vividly by the  
Psalmist:

He gave them what they craved. But before they had sated  
their craving . . . the anger of God rose against them and  
he slew the strongest of them, and laid low the picked men  
of Israel (Psa. 78. 29-31).

He gave them what they asked, but sent a wasting disease  
among them (Psa. 106. 15).

This lust for food even reared its head in the sanctuary of God, and brought a curse upon the house of Eli. God asked the aged priest with indignation, 'Why then look with greedy eye at my sacrifices and my offerings which I commanded, and honour your sons above me by fattening yourselves upon the choicest parts of every offering of my people Israel?' (1 Sam. 2. 29).

Though God has given us our bodies and planted within them certain basic instincts, including the bodily appetites, we are required to keep the physical subservient to the spiritual. The body is ever to be our servant, not our master. That lust for food displayed by Israel in the wilderness is still with us. If, as Paul tells us, God was displeased with His lusting people then, and overthrew them in the wilderness (1 Cor. 10. 5), why should we think that He is any more pleased with His lusting people today?

For each believer there is a finely drawn line between the satisfying of the normal desires of the body, and satisfying that inner demanding spirit, that bondage to a fleshly craving, which is not removed because we try to camoullage it. When we cannot say 'no' to the second helping of the food we like, though we do not need it; when we are forever having 'snacks' between regular meals; when we crave special foods that tickle the palate and appeal to our fastidious appetites; when, in a word, food is an ever present temptation to which we constantly yield—then it is clear we are in bondage.

“All things are lawful for me,” but not all things are helpful. “All things are lawful for me,” but I will not be enslaved by anything. “Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food”—and God will destroy both one and the other (1 Cor. 6. 12, 13).

For whatever overcomes a man, to that he is enslaved (2 Peter 2. 19).

Paul had some hard things to say to the undisciplined believers at Corinth where such evils as drunkenness and gluttony were seen in their love-feasts, so that it became impossible to observe the Lord's Supper (1 Cor. 11. 20-22). He reminded them concerning the history of Israel in the wilderness:

Now these things are warnings for us, not to desire evil as they did. Do not be idolaters as some of them were; as it is written. "The people sat down to eat and drink. . . ."  
(1 Cor. 10. 6, 7).

Sitting down to eat and drink—and the Holy Spirit calls it idolatry! We are not suggesting that the God who gives us richly all things to enjoy cannot bless our feasting as well as our fasting. The fact remains that the Holy Spirit is here warning us that our sitting down to eat and drink can be idolatry, just as it can be to the glory of God. There has been too much indiscipline in this realm among professing Christians to allow us to think that we do not need this apostolic injunction.

It is a sobering thought that all the sin and sorrow, sickness and death in the world today stemmed, in the first instance, from tasting the forbidden fruit. But God be praised that in the fulness of time there stepped into the arena another Man, 'the last Adam'. He met the attack of the same tempter, not in the perfect environment of paradise, but in a desolate wilderness; not well nourished by the bounteous provision of Eden, but with a body weakened by prolonged fasting and gripped by intense hunger.

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 proceeds from the mouth of God' ". . . . Then the devil left him (Matt. 4. 3-11).

Where the first Adam failed the last Adam triumphed. Through His death and resurrection He has restored to man



the paradise he had lost through sin. John sees at last the tree of life, from which man had been driven by his disobedience, growing on either side of the crystal river in the city of God. He tells us of the eternal blessedness of those who wash their robes and so have right to the tree of life, who enter by the gates into the city (Rev. 22). Man, shut out from the paradise of Eden, is restored at last to the paradise of God, through the obedience of the Man, Christ Jesus.

In the meanwhile we have to live in a body subject to temptation. 'Eating and drinking, Christ warned us, would mark the days prior to His return, just as they had marked the days of Noah. He told us to watch lest our hearts be overtaken with surfeiting and drunkenness and the cares of this life, and the day of His return find us unprepared (Matt. 24. 37, 38; Luke 12. 45, 46; 21. 34). His disciples must say 'no' to self, take up the cross and follow Him. What part does fasting play in the disciplining of our bodies? That is a question we must now consider.

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