
“Starvation”

During His forty days in the desert and in one moment of Satanic-directed temptation, when Jesus declared that “man does not live on bread alone”, He was speaking about another type of nourishment (Matt 4:1-4). The type of nourishment He referred to had life-sustaining properties far beyond material food. He was declaring that life giving and strength building sustenance did not come from what we put just into our mouths but what we put into our hearts, mind, and soul. Total nourishment would only come from a complete balance of material food and spiritual food. What Satan offered Jesus was a lopsided approach to total nourishment and the avoidance of starvation. It was material food to sustain the body and nothing else. Sure, it would have given Jesus the physical nutrients and energy to keep going in the desert for a few more days. Yet, Jesus knew what many today miss; that feeding the body without feeding your spirit can still bring you to starvation. Without feeding on the Word of God daily, we can all face spiritual starvation.

As a former bodybuilding champion, I know what it is to almost starve yourself by calorie cutting to a level low enough where you are burning more calories than taking in. It is an arduous time of dieting and training. The training is designed to increase your metabolism while decreasing caloric intake. This madness goes on for about 12 weeks until you achieve the “winning look” for competition. It was during those moments of low caloric intake that slight effects of starvation were felt. It was my physically weakest and most vulnerable moments where I lacked strength, motivation, desire, and focus, in addition, being more susceptible to sickness. It was also during those times that I would question myself and ask “Why am I doing this?”; “Was it worth it?”; “Who really cares if I win?” Or, equally detrimental was the negative self-talk and self-doubt that created internal statements like: “Just give in and go back to working out like everyone else”; “You’re probably not going win, anyway. Did you see the guys who won last year?”; “You’re looking good already, why put yourself through this?”; and “This is just putting an unnecessary strain on your life.” Imagine, going through all of this emotional, mental, physical stress and badgering just because of cutting back on food. A simple decline of calories created inner turmoil and a physical low point. Well, if this is possible with material food, what then becomes of us when we starve our spirit of spiritual food? I have learned that the parallels are the same when we deprive our bodies of material food and when we deprive our spirit of spiritual food.

The onset of spiritual starvation is when we begin to skip reading and meditating on God’s Word. The once daily ritual becomes an every other day event until days (and even weeks) go by before you open His Word. You begin to starve your spirit when you no longer participate in spirit-building events and fellowship consistently. You slowly detach yourself from your church family and Godly relationships and replace them with secular events, activities, and friends. Your personal church attendance declines because other events become more important to participate in than going to church. Your choice of entertainment becomes questionable. Unfortunately, these seemingly innocent patterns can quickly become habits, unbeknownst to you, until you have reached a critical low point where you become spiritually weak, vulnerable to attacks, lacking motivation and desire for the things of God, confused of who you are in Christ, buying into the lies of the enemy and depleted of wisdom and discernment...being “...tossed about by every wind of teaching...” (Eph 4:14). This is a very dangerous place to be. If, in the natural, we know that not eating food for a long period of time (if at all) can induce death by starvation, then the same can be said of our spiritual condition if we miss opportunities to feed our spirit. So, due to the seriousness of the matter an immediate introspection is in order to determine if you are doing well or if you are in the early stages of starvation.

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