

Nourishment

Ponder: Physical and spiritual nourishment

Scripture: “If you instruct the brethren in these things, you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished in the words of faith and of the good doctrine which you have carefully followed” (1 Tim. 4:6, NKJV).

First-century Christians struggled with the dietary laws of Moses, food sacrificed to idols, and Gnostic notions about what should and should not be eaten. Paul warned the young preacher Timothy of the trouble false teacher would stir up over these and other issues. The bottom line was this: “every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving; for it is sanctified (made holy) by the word of God and prayer” (1 Tim. 4:4-5).

I’ve known a few brethren who still had scruples about Mosaic dietary restrictions, but they never made an issue of it. For the most part, we don’t have to deal very much with such questions where I live, and for that I am thankful.

Timothy, however, would have to deal with them as current issues. By instructing the brethren as Paul said, he would diminish the likelihood of division and the loss of precious souls. Timothy himself would also benefit from being “nourished in the words of faith and of the good doctrine which you have carefully followed” (cited above). What he and others consumed to nourish their bodies mattered little if at all; but their inner persons needed to be nourished with God’s word to generate faith in their hearts (Rom. 10:17). They needed not the demonic doctrines of the false teachers (1 Tim. 4:1), but the good doctrine (teaching) that Timothy had learned from Paul.

Peter urged his readers to desire the word of God with the fervency of a newborn child craving milk. With such nourishment, they would grow (1 Pet. 2:2). While milk comprises an appropriate diet for newborns, however, more mature people should eat stronger, more substantial food. The same is true in spiritual matters. The inability or unwillingness to tolerate more advanced Biblical teaching indicates a fleshly mindset (such as the Corinthians had, 1 Cor. 3:1-3) and spiritual immaturity (which also characterized the Corinthians as well as the recipients of Heb. 5:12-14).

How are you nourishing your soul? God’s word provides both milk for the babe in Christ and meat for the mature. Dig in! Bon appétit!

Song: “Break Thou The Bread Of Life”

Prayer: Loving Father in heaven, You have provided us with everything we need. We praise and thank You for supplying all that is necessary for physical life; but more so we are grateful for Your word that nourishes our souls. Help us, we pray, to grow and mature in Christ as we take Your word into our hearts. In Jesus’ name, Amen.