

Take Your Vitamins!

Joe Slater

Nutritionists say vitamins are essential to good health. Some people take supplements in case they don't receive enough vitamins from their diet. To maintain optimum spiritual health, here are some "vitamins" you should take:

Vitamin A: Attendance. Early Christians met together often, sometimes every day (Acts 2:46). Later, when some of the brethren stopped attending, God instructed that Christians must not "*forsake the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is*" (Hebrews 10:25). In the assembly, we are built up (strengthened, 1 Corinthians 14:26); there we are stirred up to "*love and good works*" (Hebrews 10:24). Often, one of the first signs that a Christian is faltering is that (s)he begins missing church services.

Vitamin B: Bible study. Both personal (private) study and study with other Christians are important for spiritual health and growth. The Bible contains more than enough material for a lifetime of study. You benefit from the study others have done, as well as from your own analysis. "*But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ*" (2 Peter 3:18).

Vitamin C: Compassion. Christianity is more than coming to church and reading the Bible. We must also be helping those who are in need. Jesus looked with compassion upon multitudes of lost souls (Matthew 9:36). He not only felt for them, but did what was necessary to help them. Likewise, we are to have "*compassion for one another*" (1 Peter 3:8).

Vitamin D: Diligence. What is more important than your relationship with God? No wonder Peter warned us to be "*diligent to make your calling and*

election sure" (2 Peter 1:10). God has never been pleased with half-hearted, ho-hum indifference. Spiritual couch potatoes endanger their souls just as a lack of bodily exercise endangers physical health. Let us "*be diligent to present [ourselves] approved to God*" (2 Timothy 2:15).

Vitamin E: Evangelism. Without vitamins, you may feel weak and sluggish. Without evangelism, both churches and individual Christians become dull and lifeless. What could be more exciting and uplifting than helping precious souls turn from sin to salvation through Jesus Christ?

Be a healthy Christian! Take your vitamins!

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The Quick-Thinking Usher

An elderly woman walked into the local country church building. The friendly usher greeted her at the door and helped her up the flight of steps.

"Where would you like to sit?" he asked politely.

"The front row, please," she answered.

"You don't want to do that," the usher said. "The preacher is really boring."

"Do you happen to know who I am?" the woman inquired.

"No," he said.

"I'm the preacher's mother," she replied indignantly.

"Do you know who I am?" he asked.

"No," she said.

"Good," he answered, and quickly walked away.

--via House-to-House/Heart-to-Heart

Hi, My Name Is Jealous

"For you shall not worship any other god, for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God" (Exodus 34:14).

The Lord God has many names such as Creator, Redeemer, and Eternal Father. But Jealous? We consider jealousy as juvenile and petty. Jealousy seems so unlike a characteristic of God. So, when God introduced Himself to the Israelites that He had brought out of Egypt, did He have a reason for calling Himself Jealous?

The Israelites had come out of a culture with a god for everything. God was making it crystal clear that He will not share His people with anyone. There simply isn't room on the Throne for another god. God will not tolerate His people worshipping anything else.

You might say, "I worship God and do not have any statues or idols that I bow to." Examine yourself. What is the most important thing or things in your life? Money, work, entertainment, family, pleasure, or...? Our idols aren't made of stone or wood. Anything that is an object of desire can become a god to us.

So why is God jealous and unwilling to share us? He loves us, He created us, and He desires our love in return. The church is pictured as His bride. How do you feel about sharing your spouse with someone else? You would not tolerate it! Neither will God. We belong to Him body and soul, by creation and by redemption. He loves us so much that He graced us with the ability to choose.

Now is the time to choose. Will you serve the gods of money, work, pleasure, and so forth? Or will you serve the Living God? God is so jealous for us that He sent His Son to bring us back to Him. The gods of this world satisfy only for a short time. Kick them out and allow God and only God in.

--Ed Wittlif (Denver, CO)