

10 Tips to Nourish Your Starving Soul

You and I are full of leaks. The good things we get filled up with only last so long. We can feel top-of-the-mountain right now, and in an hour, a day, or a week feel empty and discouraged. Our souls get hungry. We need regular soul-nourishment if we are to function well and be of any use to anyone.

Jesus knew this well. On earth, He was constantly being drained through interactions with people and with evil. He regularly needed to get away in order to get filled up again.

God makes an infinite variety of physical food available to us. But you and I are responsible for knowing when we are hungry and for finding, choosing, preparing and taking into our being the food we need. Some food tastes better than others, and some is more nourishing than others. Food is available, but God doesn't drop food into our mouths.

It's the same with mental/emotional/spiritual nourishment. There's an infinite variety of soul nourishment available, but we are responsible for knowing when we need it, for finding it, choosing it and taking it into our being.

Different people get filled up in somewhat different ways. The kind of "leaks" you have (work, family, other stresses) affect that somewhat. So does your personality. If you already know what fills you up, do more of that.

On the other hand, you may need some ideas of where to get healthy soul nourishment. If you're empty, hungry, dry, try some of these things.

Good Books

A book engages parts of your brain that visual media does not. With over a million books published each year there's no shortage of this type of soul food. Some categories to think about are biographies of inspiring people, nonfiction books on a topic you want to grow in, well-written novels about struggles you are facing or books about spiritual growth. Look for more than entertainment; look for the kind of nourishment you need.

Uplifting Media

Much available media is ungodly, fluffy entertainment or downright destructive. But by choosing TV programs, podcasts, video, or other media carefully, they can be a good source for soul nourishment. Again, look for more than entertainment; look for nourishment. Evaluate carefully the impact on your soul. Are you inspired, stretched, encouraged? Do you have a new perspective? Is your faith strengthened?

Time in Nature

Go natural. Go non-digital. God's green earth nourishes the soul in ways humanly-produced "stuff" cannot. Go out and look at the stars at night—really look. Notice the beauty of a flower, a bird song or a tree. Let the sound of the river, the vigor of a thunderstorm or power of the ocean waves do something to your soul. Let themes of life, beauty, hope and creativity be stirred up.

Time Alone

Many of us who spend our days interacting with people at home or at work seem to "leak out" very quickly whenever we get filled up. Time alone—reading, in nature, with God or just thinking—can in itself be soul-nourishing. During some difficult days as my husband's caregiver, I carefully sought out 15 minutes in the morning to be alone, often with God. Be intentional about it, and make your alone time count.

Time With Positive People

Some people make you feel worse simply by being around them. Others lift you up and nourish your soul just by their presence. Proactively look for opportunities to be around people who fill you up. Jesus did that. People cannot fix you. But uplifting people are important in providing things such as perspective, feedback, encouragement, stimulation, fresh ideas, fun, fellowship and love. If you're not getting any of those things from the people around you, consider finding new friends.

Helping Others

There are many ways in which helping others also fills up your own soul. While people can drain you, offering yourself to others also enlarges your capacity to receive even more. Nothing can duplicate the satisfaction and fulfillment of making a difference in someone else's life. Where do you start? Ask yourself, *Whose pain do you feel?* Now, what are you going to do about it?

New Adventures or Experiences

A change is sometimes immensely invigorating. Daily, that means physical exercise if your work is mentally intense. It means time alone if your work is with people. Weekly, it means a day of rest—with family, with God, and/or doing something different. Periodically a low-cost vacation, a sabbatical, or a conference can provide an especially enriching kind of soul-nourishment. Plan carefully for what kind of nourishment you need most.

Reading the Bible

What more nutrient-rich soul food could there be than God's Word? This is reading the Bible for food, not primarily for study. Do this daily as part of your regular spiritual practices, even if only a verse or two. Choose a Bible reading

plan from YouVersion. And when you have a problem, consciously go to God's Word and seek to understand what He has to say on the matter.

Time in Worship.

In the presence of Jesus is where things happen. It's where you are changed, healed, transformed. Worship is more than a song or two or a church service. Worship is allowing your soul to be totally enraptured and transfixed by Him. Your soul is still, open to whatever He is wanting to do for you. You can do this either in gatherings with other believers, or while alone in your own prayer closet.

Time in Prayer

Prayer was the most important way Jesus stayed nourished while on Earth, and you won't get all you need any other way. Start by unloading all your "stuff" before God— your hurts, your worries, your hopes, your questions. Pour them out to Him. Then get quiet long enough to hear what He has to say to you. Respond when He speaks to your heart. Thank Him for the insights He gives you. Take action on anything He asks you to do. And come back again and again.

Proactively getting filled up in these ways will increase your joy, continue your growth, and increase your usefulness to God and to others.

Your turn: What kinds of soul-nourishment do you most need? What are you going to do about that this week? Leave a comment below.

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