

Are You Consuming Heart-Healthy Foods in the Spirit?

God's main concern is—and our main concern should be—the condition of our heart! It is more important than the condition of our body, our car, our house, our yard, our clothes or anything else.

There are numerous “heart-healthy” foods on the market now that are low in sodium, low in fat, low in cholesterol and low in taste. (Many people are health-conscious, and rightfully so.) If we are mindful about the shape of our physical heart, shouldn't we be equally attentive to our spiritual heart?

Your physical heart is a vital organ (muscle) about the size of a fist that pumps blood throughout the body. On average, the adult heart beats about 70 times per minute—that's 100,800 beats per day, automatically without even thinking about it. God wisely designed our amazing circulatory system (60,000 miles of arteries, veins and capillaries that would circle the globe two and one-half times at the equator) to ensure that every cell gets its blood supply.

The heart is one of our most important organs (when it quits working, we die!). A person can have many other health problems, but if their heart is healthy, they will usually survive.

In a spiritual sense, our heart is the engine of our whole being, the core of who we are. Your “heart” is your true character, nature, attitudes and motives—the real you on the inside. There are over 900 references to the heart in the Bible (most refer to the spiritual heart, not the physical organ).

The heart is so important that Scripture tells us to make it a top priority to protect it from negative influences. One key

verse is, “Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life” (Prov. 4:23, NLT). You can have many things going wrong in your life, but if your heart is right with God, you can still thrive.

People tend to focus on our looks, personality, possessions or talent; God focuses on our heart! Remember when God sent Samuel to anoint a new king of Israel? When he saw Jesse’s eldest son, Eliab, he was immediately impressed with his muscular physique. He jumped to the conclusion, “Surely this is the Lord’s anointed!” (1 Sam. 16:6b).

God reminded Samuel that He wasn’t looking for the strongest, tallest, smartest or most handsome man, He was looking for a pure-hearted man of character to wear the crown. “Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the Lord sees not as man sees. For man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart” (1 Sam. 16:7, MEV)..

Samuel interviewed all of Jesse’s sons (Eliab, Abinadab, Shammah, Nethanel, Raddai, Ozem—1 Sam. 16:6-10, 1 Chr. 2:13-15). The three oldest served as soldiers in King Saul’s army and were fine specimens of humanity—strong studs who were tall, dark and handsome. But none of them was chosen. Frustrated, Samuel asked Jesse, “‘Are these all the sons you have?’” ‘There is still the youngest,’ Jesse replied. ‘But he’s out in the fields watching the sheep and goats.’ ‘Send for him at once,’ Samuel said. ‘We will not sit down to eat until he arrives’” (1 Sam. 16:11, NLT).

David was so young and insignificant he wasn’t even invited to the party. He was overlooked by his own father, by his brothers and even by the prophet Samuel, but God noticed him. He was a scrawny kid, the runt of the litter, but God saw something different in him—the heart of a champion! God’s not looking at your hair, your face, your clothes, your car, your house, your bank account, your intelligence or your talent;

He's looking at your heart!

The human heart is easily corrupted—"The heart is more deceitful than all things and desperately wicked; who can understand it?" (Jer. 17:9, MEV). The good news is Doctor Jesus still performs heart surgery, even total transplants! "I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh" (Ezek. 36:26).

Jesus promised, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God" (Matt. 5:8). C. S. Lewis observed, "It is safe to tell the pure in heart they shall see God, for only the pure in heart want to." Not only will they see God in heaven, they will see God intervene in their lives here on earth. To be "pure" means "without mixture, or free from anything of a different, inferior or contaminating kind." A thoroughbred dog has a pure bloodline. Pure gold has no other alloys mixed in with it.

How does God purify our hearts? By placing us in the fire. The most precious metals go through the hottest fires. "Silver and gold are purified by fire, but God purifies hearts" (Prov. 17:3, TLB).

When gold and silver are melted down, the impurities rise to the surface. Then, the dross is removed, and the process is repeated. A silversmith knows his product is pure when he can look at the liquid silver and see a clear reflection of himself. How long will the purifying process last? Until God can look at us and see a clear reflection of Himself. No wonder Job, who endured many fiery trials, said, "When he tests me, I will come out as pure as gold" (Job 23:10b, NLT).

The human heart is like wax—close to heat, it softens; away from heat, it hardens. When we're close to God (who is a consuming fire—Heb. 12:29), our heart stays soft; when we drift away from Him, our heart hardens.

Like David, the man after God's own heart (Acts 13:22), we should constantly pray, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me" (Ps. 51:10, MEV). Do a self-checkup today. How healthy is your heart? With God, the heart of the matter is always the matter of the heart! {eoa}

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