

Healthy Thinking

My wife and I love to work out, especially lifting weights. In this season of my life, almost all of my workouts are in the morning. But when I started around 30 years ago, my workouts were all late afternoon. I noticed something I didn't expect: My strength and endurance were affected by what I ate for lunch. It was quite surprising to me, but true. If I ate a healthy meal, I was stronger. If I didn't, my workout suffered. When I started realizing this fact, I began to eat for my workout. Food then became fuel, and wisdom was to be learned. I suppose it wouldn't have mattered if my time in the gym weren't important to me. But it was. As a result, food had become fuel. Its purpose was beyond personal pleasure. This new experience meant I mentally began my workout hours before I got to the gym by choosing well what I should eat.

Likewise, the way we feed ourselves emotionally, intellectually and spiritually has a great effect on the strength that sustains us. Such strength ultimately positions us to bring transformation to the world around us—especially in times of crisis.

We are the most overfed culture ever to walk the earth. The media serves to provide us with information and input even beyond the dreams of any prior generation. I love it in all its various forms. But without wisdom, discernment and intentionality with the use of our time, what is supposed to serve us becomes our master. Never is this more obvious than in a national or world crisis. The mainstream media takes center stage in homes all around the world.

Let me first say I'm thankful for those who work so hard to keep us informed with world events. There are many wonderful people who serve selflessly that we might live intelligently and successfully. The news services of the world offer us a luxury that was not afforded in prior generations in the same

measure that it is today. And sometimes these reporters even put themselves at great risk to bring us a story. Honor is due. And yet this luxury has become our undoing. One can receive more bad news in a day than previous generations would have in a year or more. As I recently told our Bethel Church family, "If your input from mainstream media is greater than your input from the Word of God, your discouragement is self-inflicted."

The worldview of the reporter, and more importantly the worldview of the management of the news outlet, determines what and how something will be reported. There is bias. And sometimes there is downright deception. Rarely are news outlets held accountable for the deception in their reports. *The end justifies the means* becomes the mantra of the day, as their intention of controlling and shaping culture to their ideals becomes valued over truth itself. Overall, the ideals of the media giants are liberal and godless. We must pray for the righteousness and truth to prevail in all places of influence in our world. Thankfully, there are more and more righteous people in all realms of society, including the media. I pray for their spiritual safety and promotion.

The point is, we must take responsibility for our emotional and intellectual intake. We must resist anything that competes in our hearts with our awareness of our Father, who has answers for every problem. All the solutions for life are in His heart right now, and believers have legal access to these things. They are called mysteries and are a part of our spiritual inheritance. But, if I become more aware of the work of the enemy than I am of the presence and nature of God, I will live in reaction to the devil. Jesus didn't live that way. He lived in response to the Father. And He is the one I follow. The devil is not worthy of any influence in my life, even if I were to live in reaction, attempting to destroy his works. Responding to our heavenly Father positions me to be a part of the solution. That is the way of Jesus and must become

the way of all who follow.

Let's be honest; fear sells. One only needs to look at the fear caused by a potential problem with Y2K, only 20-some years ago. Incredible numbers of generators and other survival goods were sold to people who wanted to be wise and be prepared.

Fear makes a news program popular or a print media outlet valued. It also serves them by making the advertisement space on TV or the columns of the newspaper or magazine of greater value. The point is our media outlets often become brokers of fear just to keep the bills paid. The only reason it is accepted in our culture is that it masquerades as wisdom. We have changed from a people who value responsibilities to a people who worship personal rights. Whenever rights are exalted over responsibility, disaster is the only possible outcome. A steady diet of continuous disasters will eventually reduce me to a person who wants the return of Christ, not because of love, but because of my desire to escape.

As a result, the most fearful among us think they're the most informed. Eating at the *tree of the knowledge of good and evil* does not make one wise. It becomes the poison of the soul, leading to resistance to the purposes of God. Unbelief is the end result of selling our souls to fear, which is obviously forbidden in Scripture.

The tragic condition of the COVID-19 pandemic, the economy or conflict of the Middle East, each has answers and solutions. The world system wants us to stay dependent on the media for bad news until the next problem arises. Avoid such nonsense at all cost.

The heart and mind reveal quite quickly what they have been feeding on. The strength for the workout called faith is quick to show whether or not I've been feeding my heart on the Word of God that reveals His heart or on the hopeless condition of

the world I'm called to change. Hope will always be in the heart of the one who feasts liberally on the heart and promises of our perfect heavenly Father. {eoa}

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