

How God Wants to Nourish Your Soul in This New Year

Tick, tick, tick goes the clock as we watch the falling ball in Times Square drop in New York City and the realization of another year dropping. As children, we all wanted to get older as quickly as possible. Getting older meant freedom, but as adults, we find that we want to slow down that ticking time bomb as we watch our lives evaporate more rapidly than we would like. The good news is that research is showing that we are living longer due to scientific and technological advancements. More people are living to be over 100. According to research, a child born today has more than a 50% chance of living to be 105 compared to a century ago. And, if you are in your 40s, you may live to be 95; and if you're in your 60s, you have a good chance to reach into your 90s.

However, as we age, we notice lots of unsatisfactory changes both in our mental and physical bodies. Brain freeze happens more readily than we'd like to admit, and our waking bodies just keep getting creakier and droopier. No amount of exercise or beauty cream is going to stop the inevitable wrinkles or keep our brain cells from dying. They just will, and we will eventually die. The one part of our being that won't die, however, is our soul. It is the only part of our being that grows stronger, less rigid and healthier the more we stimulate it.

Tragically, we don't. We ignore it most of the time and seem to get brain freeze on that fact. Scientific and technological advancements seem to have lulled us into forgetting that we truly are finite beings. For thousands of years, mankind had to fight daily to stay alive, and death was never *not* thought about daily. Today, it rarely crosses our minds. We have few conversations on strengthening our soul or even where it will eventually end up. It's just too personal, confrontational and

politically incorrect to talk about.

How Do We Learn and Keep Our Souls Stimulated?

We engage with God, the Creator of our soul, mind and body through Bible reading, prayer or meditation. We start desiring soul food as much as exercise and face-lifts. We get to know the Creator who will spend eternity with us, or we choose to ignore Him and become familiar with the demon of darkness and an eternal life in hell. It sounds blunt, but it is truth.

Soul food begins with our free will to choose how we will use our God-given time on this earth. And it's challenging. Living in a broken world with a culture consumed on outward beauty and intelligence can be overwhelming. We are constantly hounded to stimulate and feed our physical and mental capacities because they are visible. Choosing to focus on our inside soul's development and strength becomes scary, mystical and to some even irrelevant. It is too easy to turn up the noise in our earbuds, busy ourselves (because busy people are the cool ones) and drown out our soul's voice, crying for spiritual food.

Research () and wisdom, however, tell us something different. It has been proven that when we feed our souls with Bible reading, prayer and engagement with God, our lives change in positive ways. So much so that soul food affects our physical and mental lives as well and brings even more positive changes to our lives. Just as we have to strengthen our physical and mental beings through positive choices, repeated exercises and disciplines, so too do we need to be intentional about strengthening our eternal soul.

Take a lesson from the Bible's Exodus story of the children of Israel. They were in bondage in Egypt and had gotten so used to their day-to-day miserable lives they didn't even know how deeply enslaved they had become. Changing their ways became unthinkable because their souls were rigid.

Is It Time to Change and Get Out of the Rigidity and Mindlessness of Egypt?

Busyness and digital distractions have gotten many of us into bondage. Corrie Ten Boom said, "If Satan can't make us bad, he will make us busy." In our nonstop world where being at peace and not busy is an oddity, how much more will we stand out to others as a witness of the "peace that passes all understanding" (Phil. 4:7) that God brings when we are fully engaged with Him? Have we gotten so used to the dictates of our world and the mentality of "Well ... that's just how it is, and it's never going to change," that we've lost our ability to see the freedom and peace Jesus brings?

Jesus came into the world at a time in history when the indulgent Roman world dominated. It was a culture that was constantly at war and had satanic religious practices that included a complete disregard for life. Yet, Jesus came perfectly timed of God to show mankind how to live in the midst of uncertainties and chaos. He not only gave us wisdom through His Word, but He also gave us His life and instructed us to be bold and fearsome. He taught us to not rely on the limitations of this world but showed us that through His power, we could do miraculous things and need only fear Him. In Matthew 18:18, He said, "Truly I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."

Are Our Souls So Rigid That We Don't Fear Him Because We Don't Know Him?

It took 40 years of wandering before the children of Israel could discard their rigid ways and trust God to bring the freedom they so longed for in life. They had to learn to leave their stiff neck ways and determine to serve an unchanging God. How long will it take us? Will it take plagues and pestilence before the ball drops again?

Make a change for eternity this year. Engage the truth as never before and watch in awe as He shapes your perspective, bringing visual peace to your chaotic circumstances and His miraculous healing power to every situation. {eoa}

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