

In Poor Taste

by Dave Meurer

Not everything that looks tasty is a treat.

Although many women appreciate husbands who help with the cooking, my wife, Dale, gets rather territorial and even kind of twitchy when she sees me pull out the flour, sugar, olives, sardines, chocolate chips and beets. (She knows nothing about adding a little excitement to a church potluck.)

Although I have invented several unique culinary creations over the years, my favorite is a gastronomic masterpiece that is unprecedented in its extremes of taste, texture and camouflage: the Angel Food Spam Cake. The key to creating a visually enticing Angel Food Spam Cake is to carefully conceal all the little chunks of salty reconstituted meat product deep inside the cake and then cover everything with whipped cream. That way, unsuspecting guests have no idea what awaits them until it is too late.

For reasons that my wife will never quite understand, I decided one year to take an Angel Food Spam Cake to a workplace Christmas party.

"It will be fun," I told her.

"It's weird and disgusting," she replied.

"That's why it's fun!" I said.

A guy named Jerry was the first one to venture close to the bait.

"Let me cut it for you," I offered, grabbing the knife and sawing off a generous slab of a dessert that contained roughly as much salt as Lot's wife after her backward glance.

I worked hard not to stare as Jerry took a big bite. His mouth paused in mid-chew. A look of alarm creased his brow. Then his eyes bulged. His nostrils flared. His corpuscles constricted. His feet spun for traction, like Fred Flintstone's in his rock mobile, as he lunged for a waste can where he ejected my gourmet creation. Regrettably, he made such a scene that everyone else was forewarned.

On the plus side, the experience provided him with a practical spiritual lesson: Life is full of enticing, eye-pleasing delights that have been carefully frosted to hide the truly disgusting stuff inside. Many a marriage has been wounded, sometimes mortally so, when a guy takes a big bite of Satan's

bait because it looks really good on the outside.

Satan's implicit promise in all temptations, whether it's materialism, pornography, an affair, alcohol or substance abuse, can be summed up like this: "This will make you happy. This will fulfill you."

But Satan always lies. He often makes good on a short-term thrill, but he thinks long term. Too often we don't.

Jerry was not to blame. He had not been warned. But God warns us, emphatically. Imagine walking past Satan's bakery as God explains: "See that apple dumpling on the shelf? It looks good, doesn't it?"

"Yes, it does," you reply.

"The devil has added extra ingredients just for you," God says.

"Like what?"

"Like rancid deer guts he scraped off the road, some rattlesnake venom and three tablespoons of Drano."

Sooner or later, we all end up with our noses against the window of Satan's shop.

Yes, his doughnuts look really, really good. And we vaguely recall God warning us about this, but our stomachs are growling, and our mouths are watering, and it can't be all that bad, can it? Something that looks so good? Maybe just one bite, just to see.

You can taste, or you can trust.

Choose to trust.

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