

Meaningful Worship and Dining With the King of Kings

One morning recently, I was reading my Bible and eating breakfast at the same time. I put a bite of egg in my mouth and chewed it. I had the fork raised to put another bite in my mouth when the Holy Spirit said quietly, “You haven’t finished the food in your mouth yet.”

Startled, I realized that in my distraction, I wasn’t even paying attention to the food I was eating. I wasn’t enjoying it. It was just a mindless ritual, a task to get out of the way until I moved on to the next thing.

I put the fork down. One of the principles of *Take Back Your Temple* is to “appreciate every bite.” Now, the reason for the principle started out based on biology. The brain has a built-in appetite regulator called the “Appostat” that kicks in about 20 minutes after you start eating. It tells you when you have had enough to eat. So if you are eating your meals in less time than that, it is possible that you are eating two or three times the amount that your body needs.

However, this time I saw this principle from a different perspective. You see, I teach Sunday school, and one of the upcoming lessons I’m teaching is called “Meaningless Worship.” It is based on Isaiah 29:9-16, in which the prophet spoke to the people of Judah about going through the motions in their worship. They performed the rituals, but their hearts were far from God.

In other words, it was just another task to get out of the way until they moved on to the next thing. Sound familiar?

The lesson commentary gave three reasons why worship had become meaningless to God’s people. You’ll see in a moment how it relates to eating:

1. Forgetting about the Life-Giver. The people were so caught up in their daily lives, pursuing their personal goals and dealing with life challenges that they did not acknowledge God's presence or thank Him for their provision.

2. Failing to consult God about their daily decisions. They relied on their own understanding or everyone else but God to decide what actions to take.

3. Failing to spend time with God. They didn't take time out of their day to seek the Lord about His plan and purpose for their lives, or for private prayer, praise and worship.

After thinking about this, I put my Bible aside. I decided to have breakfast with my King.

I put a bite of food into my mouth, thinking, "God, I am so grateful that You are with me and that You never leave me nor forsake me."

I finished that bite and went on to the next one, remembering the Scripture, "Fear not, for I am with you. Do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, I will help you, yes, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand" (Is. 41:10).

After finishing that bite and in the middle of the next one, I thought, "God, thank You so much for providing this food to me."

Several moments passed, in which I ate quietly, finishing and appreciating one bite at a time before moving on to the next. Finally, with the last bite came the thought, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord."

It was one of my most enjoyable breakfasts in a long time! Then I thought, "What if I could always think of my meals as an opportunity to dine with the King of Kings?"

While it is true that I pray before I eat, it had become a ritual, another task to get out of the way before moving on to the next thing. It was sobering to realize this. I was convicted of taking my Lord for granted in this area.

So I repented and said this prayer:

“Dear Precious Lord, thank You so much for having breakfast with me. Thank You for loving me enough to provide for all my needs according to Your riches in glory by Christ Jesus. I am sorry for not truly appreciating the food You provided for me today. You provided the clothes on my back and the roof over my head. I thank You for saving me, Lord. I thank You for giving me the opportunity to experience a real, daily relationship with you, not just engage in meaningless rituals. You created me fearfully and wonderfully. With every meal, Lord, I want to dine with You. I don’t want to just eat anymore. I want to upgrade my eating experience to dining. To me, dining means that I am eating with a friend. And what closer friend do I have than You? So dine with me, Lord. Each meal, tell me which foods we should have on the menu, and I will prepare them. I will set a quiet a place for us so that I can hear You speaking to me. Dine with me, Lord. Empty me of myself and fill me with Your presence. That will truly satisfy me—spirit, mind and body. Amen.”

I challenge you to dine with the King at your next meal. Not just eat—*dine*. After all, you are eating with a friend!

I hope, like me, you’ll decide to upgrade your meals and never rush through them again. God bless you this day as you dine with your King! {eoa}

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