

You Are What You Eat, Part 1

Thy words were found and I ate them, and Thy words became for me a joy and the delight of my heart; For I have been called by Thy name, O LORD God of hosts. –Jeremiah 15:16

No one argues with the adage, “You are what you eat,” today. It is a generally accepted axiom. The meaning behind the phrase is clear: the type, quality, and quantity of physical food an individual eats will have a direct relationship to their health.

The reason is simple: our physical body is in a constant process of repairing, healing, and rebuilding at the cellular level. Our body is affected positively or negatively by what food we eat.

One example of this principle is found in the contrast between asparagus and a cinnamon roll. Asparagus is rich in vitamins A, C, E, K, and B6, as well as minerals such as folate, iron, copper, calcium, and protein and fiber. Asparagus is one of nature’s finest products and its health benefits are off the charts.

A cinnamon roll on the other hand, smells much better, looks more appealing, and makes our mouths salivate more quickly, especially at breakfast time with a hot cup of coffee! However, that warm, sweet, cinnamon delight also packs a whopping 880 calories, 127 grams of carbohydrates, and 37 grams of fat. By comparison, a quarter chicken dinner with mashed potatoes, a salad with balsamic dressing, with a multigrain roll is only 725 calories.

The take away is that appearances are deceiving. What we want to eat is not always what we should eat in many instances. We can state this another way as well: what tastes good, goes down easy, and makes us happy is not necessarily healthy.

We should be careful about what we eat. This is illustrated by the following story.

A Pastor was visiting members of his congregation one day and stopped to see an elderly widowed lady. During their conversation the Pastor noticed a bowl of peanuts sitting on a table near where he was sitting. This Pastor loved peanuts. He asked if he might have some of the peanuts to which his host replied, "of course, I can't eat peanuts."

As their conversation turned into a rather lengthy visit, the Pastor continued to eat the peanuts. He thought to himself that these were the best peanuts he had ever eaten. He tasted a very slight hint of chocolate which made them even more appealing.

At one point in their visit the elderly lady went into the kitchen to get them both a cup of coffee. The Pastor continued to eat the peanuts until he realized he had eaten the entire bowl. He was quite embarrassed by this and apologized to his host when she returned with their coffee.

The elderly woman was gracious and smiled as she said, "That's ok Pastor. As I told you earlier I can't eat peanuts so, I just suck the chocolate off of them."

I use this illustration for two reasons. The first reason is that it always elicits the same response: a groan mixed with laughter and a contorted face. The second reason is that it makes the point that we should be sure that we know what it is we are eating.

Now, let's consider this within a context of spiritual food. Do you know what you are eating spiritually speaking? Most will answer, yes, of course I do. Do you know if it is healthy for you? If you answered yes to the first question you no doubt answered yes to the second question. I want to challenge you to think deeper about what spiritual food you are eating.

Organic or Processed?

Is the spiritual food you are eating organic or processed? What do I mean by organic and processed spiritual food? Let's start with natural, physical food. When you think of organic food what characteristics come to mind? Many people think that organic food is better for your body and therefore healthier. They believe this because organic food is thought to be grown without harmful chemicals. Another characteristic of organic food is that it usually costs more money than normally grown food.

When we think of processed food we think of food that may or may not be comprised of what it claims to be. There is a reason that the number one selling brand of "cheese" Americans like to use with their macaroni and cheese recipes is labeled "processed cheese food." One look at the label tells you that there are chemicals and additives and ingredients most people can't even pronounce. The only redeeming quality to processed food in some people's minds is that it is cheaper. But, is cheaper always better?

Now, let's move into the spiritual realm. When I speak of organic and processed spiritual food I want you to consider those categories in relation to truth and indoctrination. Truth is unvarnished, unaffected by additives like opinions and can be costly. Indoctrination is much easier to swallow and costs hardly anything at all initially.

Some readers might ask, "What is truth?" The opinion of a large number of Americans today is that truth does not exist. Many famously quote Pontius Pilate without knowing it.[\[1\]](#) Of course, Christians have the answer to this question. Truth is a person. Jesus famously said, "I am the truth."[\[2\]](#) Here is a somewhat more theological definition of truth:

Truth is that which corresponds to reality. Truth is truth for all people in all places in every age. Truth is found in the

God of the Bible who is the truth as well as its author.

This is an important point that people must understand. Truth is found in relationship with God the Father through faith in Jesus Christ the Son. Truth is discovered in relationship with God. Just as God is absolute, so is truth.

Let us turn our attention to a definition of indoctrination. Indoctrination is the process of presenting information to individuals or groups in such a way that these individuals or groups accept what they are being told uncritically. In other words, indoctrination occurs when individuals or groups accept whatever they are told or taught without examining the information in relation to truth.

Another name for indoctrination is brainwashing. Brainwashing is little more than charismatic persuasion. People accept information as truth not based on the information but rather on the charisma, personality, or talents of a person or group presenting the information.

Americans are increasingly aware that corporate media in America are little more than indoctrination outlets. It is not an overstatement to say that NBC, ABC, CBS, CNN, FOX, and their spin-off networks, along with radio news, newspapers, and magazines offer a daily, weekly and monthly dose of propaganda. There is another source of indoctrination that is hidden in plain sight in many churches today. Let's turn there next.

Part 2 Next Week

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Footnotes:

[1] Pontius Pilate asked Jesus the Christ 'What is truth?' as recorded in the Gospel of John chapter 18 verse 38.

[2] John 14:6.