

CHANGE YOUR LIFE. CHANGE YOUR WORLD.

activated

Vol 16 • Issue 5

THE BREAD OF LIFE

Hunger no more

The King's Banquet

You're invited!

Setting the Menu

How to plan your intake





EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION DAILY NEEDS

When Jesus taught His disciples to pray, only one of the things He told them to ask for was a physical need—"Give us this day our daily bread."¹ All the rest of the prayer is praise to God or requests for spiritual gifts or blessings so that we can better please and serve Him. His including a request for

material supply recognizes that we live in the natural world and that God wants to supply our physical needs. But it goes deeper than that.

When the Samaritan woman met Jesus at Jacob's well, He told her that physical sustenance wasn't enough. "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst."² Jesus is the bread and water of life, and His presence in our lives is even more important than our physical food and water.

Just as food and water are needed every day to sustain life, so we also need a daily supply of spiritual strength. Just as God expects us to work hard to procure our daily food, He expects us to put effort into procuring our spiritual food, by reading His Word and spending time with Him in prayer, reflection, and meditation.

Thankfully, God wants to give us what we need—and most importantly, He wants to give us Himself. God wants everyone to eat His spiritual food. Going back to the Lord's Prayer, Jesus was teaching His disciples to not only pray for supply of their daily needs, but also for His Spirit—"the living bread that came down from heaven"³—to be present in their lives each day.

I hope the articles in this issue of *Activated* will be a blessing in helping you to learn about and absorb His goodness so that you too can "taste and see that the Lord is good."⁴

Samuel Keating
Executive Editor

1. Matthew 6:11
2. John 4:13–14 NIV
3. John 6:51 NIV
4. Psalm 34:8

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A STRAY MUSHROOM

BY OLIVIA BAUER

CHOPPING VEGETABLES FOR DINNER, I twice caught a stray mushroom before it rolled from the cutting board off the counter.

You're so good to me, God! I thought.

Somewhere else in my mind, I was thinking about the apartment rental application I had put in that morning. *Please be good to me, and let them accept my application.*

—As if there are times when God *isn't* good.

My thoughts went to a YouTube performance I'd seen a few weeks earlier of the Newsboys singing “Blessed Be Your Name.”

*Blessed be Your name
In the land that is plentiful,*

1. Psalm 34:1 KJV
2. James 1:17 ESV
3. Job 1:21

*Where Your streams of abundance flow,
Blessed be Your name.*

Blessed be Your name

*When I'm found in the desert place,
Though I walk through the wilderness,
Blessed be Your name.*

God is good and fair in happy times and hard times. His goodness shows both in what He gives and what He withholds, what He allows and what He denies. This is one of those “a lot in one” concepts. With this attitude, you can't help but also experience increased joy, faith, peace, and gratitude.

I hope that reflecting on this familiar truth and the message of this song will help it to go a little deeper into my heart—more than a convicting phrase or a moving song that comes to mind now and then, but part of who I am.

King David practiced this: “I will bless the Lord at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth.”¹

James understood it: “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.”² (God is not given to being moody when it comes to answering prayer or acting on my behalf.)

Job immortalized it for faith generations to come: “The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.”³

I got the mushroom.

I might get the apartment. Or not.

Either way, God is good.

OLIVIA BAUER WORKS WITH A NOT-FOR-PROFIT COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION IN CANADA. ■

THE BREAD OF LIFE



1. John 6:35
2. See Exodus 16:4.
3. ESV
4. John 6:35 ESV
5. ESV
6. See Ecclesiastes 3:11.
7. See Romans 3:23.
8. See Romans 6:23.
9. See Romans 3:10.
10. <http://www.gotquestions.org/bread-of-life.html>

“I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE”¹ is one of the seven “I Am” statements of Jesus. ...

Bread is considered a staple food—i.e., a basic dietary item. ... Bread is such a basic food item that it becomes synonymous for food in general. We even use the phrase “breaking bread together” to indicate the sharing of a meal with someone. Bread also plays an integral part of the Jewish Passover meal. The Jews

were to eat unleavened bread during the Passover feast and then for seven days following as a celebration of the exodus from Egypt. Finally, when the Jews were wandering in the desert for 40 years, God rained down “bread from heaven” to sustain the nation.²

All of this plays into the scene being described in John 6. Jesus was trying to get away from the crowds to no avail. He had crossed the Sea of Galilee, and the crowd followed

Him. After some time, Jesus inquires of Philip how they're going to feed the crowd. Philip's answer displays his "little faith" when he says they don't have enough money to give each of them the smallest morsel of food. Finally, Andrew brings to Jesus a small boy who had five small loaves of bread and two fish. With that small amount, Jesus miraculously feeds the throng with lots of food to spare.

Afterward, Jesus and His disciples cross back to the other side of Galilee. When the crowd sees that Jesus has left, they follow Him again. ... He accuses the crowd of ignoring His miraculous signs and only following Him for the "free meal." Jesus tells them in John 6:27,³ "Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you. For on him God the Father has set his seal." In other words, they were so enthralled with the food, they were missing out on the fact that their Messiah had come.

So the Jews ask Jesus for a sign that He was sent from God. ... They tell Jesus that God gave them manna during the desert wandering. Jesus responds by telling them that they need to ask for the true bread from heaven that gives life. When they ask Jesus for this bread, Jesus startles them by saying, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst."⁴

This is a phenomenal statement! First, by equating Himself with bread, Jesus is saying He is essential for life. Second, the life Jesus is referring to is not physical life but eternal life. ... He is contrasting what He brings as their Messiah with the bread He miraculously created the day before. That was physical bread that perishes. He is spiritual bread that brings eternal life. ...

The key is found in another statement Jesus made, back during His Sermon on the Mount. In Matthew 5:6,⁵ Jesus says, "Blessed

are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied." When Jesus says those who come to Him will never hunger and those who believe in Him will never thirst, He is saying He will satisfy our hunger and thirst to be made righteous in the sight of God. ...

The Bible says God has placed [the desire for] eternity in our hearts.⁶ The Bible also tells us that there is nothing we can do to earn our way to heaven because we've all sinned⁷ and the only thing our sin earns us is death.⁸ There is no one who is righteous in himself.⁹ ... When Christ died on the cross, He took the sins of mankind upon Himself and made atonement for them. When we place our faith in Him, our sins are imputed to Jesus and His righteousness is imputed to us. Jesus satisfies our hunger and thirst for righteousness. He is our Bread of Life.

THIS ARTICLE IS INCLUDED COURTESY OF GOTQUESTIONS.ORG.¹⁰ ■

Christ compares the needs of men to hungering and thirsting. Now hungering is no sham. Those who have ever felt it know what a real need it indicates and what bitter pangs it brings. Thirst, also, is not a sentimental matter; it is a trial, indeed. What pain can be worse beneath the skies than thirst?

The heart, also, has its hunger, for almost unknown to itself it cries, "O that someone loved me and that I could love someone whose love would fill my nature to the brim." Our hearts are gluttons for love. They hunt here and there, and are bitterly disappointed. But when they hear that Jesus Christ loved them before the world was, and died for them, their roving affections find rest. The love of Jesus casts out all hankering for other loves and fills the soul! He becomes the Bridegroom of our heart, our best Beloved, and we bid the more common things depart.—*Charles Spurgeon (1834–1892), adapted*



SALTED CUCUMBERS

BY AKIO MATSUOKA

A FRIEND OF MINE was showing me the large number of old cucumbers she was planning to preserve in salt.

“Are old cucumbers all right to eat?” I asked.

“These are quite dried out, but they’ll be great to pickle!” she replied knowledgeably. For my busy friend, having pickled cucumbers to supplement on-the-go meals is convenient and appreciated.

The thought of these dried cucumbers being transformed into something delicious and healthy reminded me of a story I heard about kimchi. Although kimchi has always existed in Korea, some trace its massive popularity as a food staple to the shortages of the First Sino-Japanese War (1894–1895). New varieties of kimchi were developed by pickling bits of vegetables that weren’t appealing as they were or that were on the verge of rotting with lots of spices in order to make them edible and preserve them. I marvel that one of my favorite foods was developed during a time when there wasn’t enough to eat!

This brings to mind a situation in a rural area of North America where rattlesnakes were making an unwanted appearance. The villagers were scared by the sudden increase in the snake population, and some people even began to move away. Other more enterprising citizens began using the rattlesnakes’ leather skins to manufacture bags and belts. It turned out that the diamondback rattlesnake, which had previously been such a pest, ended

up contributing greatly to the development of that area’s economy.

And so it often is that in the midst of situations that appear to be defeats, God can use that very thing to bring something better. We are surrounded daily by problems and unwelcome occurrences. However, God always has a plan. No matter how horrible a situation may appear, we have a God who will never fail us. When things don’t go as planned and when dreams are torn, He may very well be preparing something better.

AKIO MATSUOKA HAS BEEN A MISSIONARY AND VOLUNTEER WORKER FOR THE PAST 35 YEARS, BOTH IN HIS NATIVE JAPAN AND ABROAD. HE LIVES IN TOKYO. ■

We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.—*Romans 8:28 NIV*



Hope is the power of being cheerful in circumstances which we know to be desperate.—*G. K. Chesterton (1874–1936)*



The Promised Land always lies on the other side of a wilderness.—*Henry Havelock Ellis (1859–1939)*



EAT, PRAY, STAY TOGETHER

BY CURTIS PETER VAN GORDER

NOT SO LONG AGO, the various members of our family had different schedules, and as a result, we were seldom able to eat together. I couldn't help feeling that our family was drifting apart—especially since visiting an Italian friend who taught me what a joy “breaking bread” together can be.

A meal in an Italian home is an event. It's not about grabbing a quick bite on the run; rather, it's a time to swap stories, to chat, to debate, to share hopes and wishes. Then, just when you think the meal is finished, another delicious dish is set in front of you. Before you know it, two hours have gone by, and maybe many more. No need for any other evening

entertainment; the meal is an event in itself.

We may not often have the opportunity to indulge in an Italian-style feast, but even in our busy lives, surely we can find a way to share a meal. There is a lot of research that supports the benefits of families eating together.¹ The opportunity to talk over a meal strengthens bonds, creating warmth, security, and a sense of belonging. A home-cooked meal is likely to be more nutritious and cheaper than fast food. Younger members of the household learn manners—asking to pass food, not putting elbows on the table, and eating slowly all contribute to the pleasant experience. Language skills are reinforced as we listen and tell stories around the table. Eating together also increases the whole

household's awareness of food preparation—another great way of giving the children a good start in life.

No matter the composition of your household—even if you're alone—taking time to stop and enjoy your food is going to be good for your digestion and emotional well-being. Meals are also a great time to pray for our specific needs and show appreciation to God for what He's done.

My visit to Italy has inspired me to commit to calling our family together at mealtimes as often as possible. What we get is a lot more than just the food. We receive bonds of love, joy, and togetherness that will last.

CURTIS PETER VAN GORDER IS A SCRIPTWRITER AND MIME ARTIST² IN MUMBAI, INDIA, AND A MEMBER OF THE FAMILY INTERNATIONAL. ■

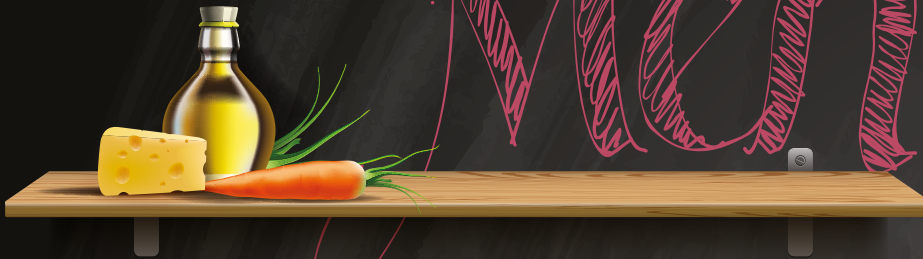
1. E.g., <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/fy1061>

2. <http://elixirmime.com>



Setting the

Mom



BY PETER AMSTERDAM, ADAPTED




CHRISTIANS WHO ARE INTERESTED IN SPIRITUAL GROWTH recognize that spending time taking in and absorbing God's Word is of utmost importance. It is within the Bible that we learn about God's love for humanity, Jesus' message, and how to live in harmony with God and our fellow human beings.

Setting aside daily time to read the Bible provides the opportunity to connect with God each day. It opens us up to receiving His instruction, guidance, and help through life's problems and difficulties. It reminds us of the moral code upon which we try to fashion our lives and provides us with guidance when we are faced with decisions. It's a key element for those who seek to be like Jesus, because it is in the Bible that we hear His teaching, see the example of His love, and are introduced to the relationship with His Father that His sacrifice has opened up for us.

Each day we are flooded with a barrage of input from a wide variety of delivery systems that try to influence us in one direction or another. Taking time daily to read what God has said provides a way to navigate through the maelstrom of input that we are faced with. It enhances our spiritual ability to discern truth and falsehood. It makes it easier to keep our hearts centered on those things which are important, to living lives of true happiness, inner peace, and alignment with God and His will. It helps us to survive and overcome all that life brings our way.¹ Abiding in God's Word brings us in regular contact with His Spirit. "The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life."²

Carving out the time to read daily is no easy task—it requires self-discipline. Like the workouts and training that maintain our physical conditioning and improve our performance, taking regular time to read God's Word will strengthen your spirit and make you





DIGESTION

By Charles Spurgeon, adapted



There are times when solitude is better than society, and silence is wiser than speech. We would be better Christians if we were alone more, waiting upon God, and gathering spiritual strength for His service through meditation on His Word. We ought to muse upon the things of God, because we thus get the real nourishment out of them.

Our bodies are not supported by merely taking food into the mouth, but it is by digestion that the food becomes assimilated. Our souls are not nourished merely by listening awhile to this, and then to that, and then to the other part of divine truth. Hearing, reading, marking, and learning, all require inwardly digesting to complete their usefulness, and the inward digesting of the truth lies for the most part in meditating upon it.

Let this be our resolve: "I will meditate on Your precepts."⁷³ ■



a stronger Christian—one who is grounded in God's truth and love. The connection you'll develop with God will help you be Spirit-led in your daily interactions with others, in your decision making, and in your ability to stay strong in the face of temptations.

There is no specific formula for how much you need to read daily or what portions of the Bible you should read. The key is setting aside the time to do it and then sticking to it even on busy days. Finding and following a Bible reading plan of some kind can help you persevere with your reading and forge ahead when you find yourself in the more difficult portions of Scripture. It may also be helpful to use a contemporary translation that you're comfortable with.

Ideally, you should try to read when your day is the most free from distractions, perhaps early in the morning before your day begins or late at night when all is winding down. The quietness and absence of activity around you facilitates meditating on what

you're reading. And if you can't carve out some quiet time, you can still read on the run, in whatever time opens up for you—or listen to the Bible in audio form as you go. It's a fight to keep your commitment to read and study God's Word, but doing so will make a difference in your life.

When you read the Bible or listen to others expound on it, think about what you're reading. If a passage stands out to you, read it again. Think about it; ask yourself why it stood out and what God might be trying to tell you through it. He desires to speak to each of us directly, and by meditating on what we read, we create the opportunity for His Word to speak to our hearts. Take the time to commune deeply with God through His Word. It will change your life.

PETER AMSTERDAM AND HIS WIFE, MARIA FONTAINE, ARE DIRECTORS OF THE FAMILY INTERNATIONAL, A CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY OF FAITH. ■

1. See Matthew 7:24–25.
2. John 6:63 ESV
3. Psalm 119:15





The King's Banquet

BY ROSANE PEREIRA

MY MOTHER OFTEN COOKED SOMETHING SPECIAL ON SUNDAYS. I can still remember the big open window in the living room, the unfolded table spread in the center, the delicious food, and the joyful family conversation.

We usually went to Children's Mass at 10 AM, while she stayed back and cooked and my dad did some fixing around the house. The story I remember most from those child-friendly sermons was the parable Jesus told of the king who invited his nobles to a banquet, but they all gave excuses why they couldn't attend. So he sent for the beggars and poor peasants, who gladly came.¹ Though at the time I didn't understand its

deeper meaning, that story left a deep impression on me.

Food is often connected with unity, good times, and celebrations. When I was a teen, a popular song went: "We plough the fields and scatter the good seed on the land. But it is fed and watered by God's almighty hand. ... All good things around us are sent from heaven above. Then thank the Lord ... for all His love."² Even though I was an unbeliever at the time, this song filled my soul with joy.

Soon after that, I began to grow in faith again and eventually entered Christian service. A few years back, at a time when my problems seemed to have multiplied, I started to think God had forsaken me, but I didn't go far before reading "The Lord is always with me,"³ "I have loved you with an everlasting love!"⁴ and "I will never leave you nor forsake you."⁵

Throughout my life, God's Word has helped me countless times to grow and better understand God

and others. Sometimes His words are like a snack, other times a full meal, like my mother's delicious Sunday specials. I am so grateful that the King invited me to His banquet, and that I accepted the invitation!

ROSANE PEREIRA IS AN ENGLISH TEACHER AND WRITER IN RIO DE JANEIRO, BRAZIL, AND A MEMBER OF THE FAMILY INTERNATIONAL. ■

COME AND DINE

"Come and dine," You said to Your followers after Your resurrection,⁶ and You give the same invitation to everyone today. I accept. I want to know You, to receive You. I want sit at Your table and eat with You in paradise.

Be present at our table, Lord;
Be here and everywhere adored;
Thy creatures bless, and grant that we
May feast in paradise with Thee.

—John Cennick (1718–1755)

1. See Luke 14:16–23.
2. Stephen Schwartz. *Godspell*, 1971.
3. Psalm 16:8 NLT
4. Jeremiah 31:3
5. Hebrews 13:5
6. John 21:12 KJV



FEED ME

BY CHRIS HUNT

“IT’S NOT FAIR! They’re getting more than we are.”

“Things are tough enough as it is. How come *they’re* being favored?”

“What’s the difference between us? Only our language!”

Comments like these were apparently flying around in the daily food line organized by the burgeoning early church for their growing membership. We read in Acts: “Some of the ones who spoke Greek started complaining about the ones who spoke Aramaic. They complained that the Greek-speaking widows were

not given their share when the food supplies were handed out each day.”¹

Life often doesn’t seem fair. About 800 million people go to bed hungry every night, many of whom are children,² while almost one-third of all food purchased in some developed nations is thrown away.³ At the top end of the scale, there are celebrity chefs cooking sumptuous feasts for the rich and famous. It can easily set you back hundreds of pounds to dine in a top London restaurant, yet Britain has also seen a rise in hunger.⁴ Hundreds of food banks, often organized by faith-based organizations, provide millions of meals every year to prevent parents and children going to bed hungry. It seems incongruous to witness this type of food poverty in the seventh-richest country in the world, but of course, this isn’t only in the United Kingdom. Unequal distribution of resources is a global problem.

So, no, life often isn’t fair, but that doesn’t mean we aren’t responsible to do our part to change our world. Let’s look back to the new believers

and the unequal distribution of resources. Things weren’t just left to stand: the apostles recognized there was a problem, appointed some competent organizers, prayed for their wisdom, and left them to sort out the matter.⁵ The result: “God’s message continued to spread,”⁶ and there is no further mention of strife around food.

Few of us are in positions of political power such that we can make a radical difference in the organization of our country, much less the world, but we are all in a position to do *something*, like the Good Samaritan—one individual helping one other individual. That’s all it takes: one parcel of food, one bucket of rice,⁷ one donation, one offer of a meal to a lonely neighbor. Any action that results in even one less person going to bed hungry is progress.

CHRIS HUNT LIVES IN GREAT BRITAIN AND HAS BEEN READING *ACTIVATED* SINCE IT WAS FIRST PUBLISHED IN 1999. ■

1. Acts 6:1 CEV

2. See <http://www.stophungernow.org/hunger-facts>.

3. See <http://www.unep.org/wed/2013/quickfacts>.

4. See http://www.trusselltrust.org/resources/documents/foodbank/6323_Below_the_Breadline_web.pdf.

5. See Acts 6:2–6.

6. Acts 6:7 NLT

7. See <https://www.facebook.com/ricebucketchallenge>.

THANKSGIVING TAKEAWAY

BY JULIE VASQUEZ



THE DAY BEFORE THANKSGIVING, I saw an article about a “Turkey Operation” here in Austin, Texas. The organization was calling for volunteers to help serve and pack meals for those not fortunate enough to already be looking forward to that wonderful Thanksgiving dinner that I enjoy so much. Turkey, mashed potatoes, gravy, stuffing, cranberry jelly, peas and carrots, green bean casserole, pumpkin pie ... and that’s just the beginning!

The next morning, a girlfriend and I headed out bright and early to volunteer. We arrived at a large restaurant and immediately saw the throngs of fellow volunteers. There was a long line of cars backed up to turn into the full parking lot, and what seemed to be hundreds of people were standing outside the restaurant awaiting instructions. I hadn’t expected that.

As it turned out, there were over 1,500 volunteers on site, and it was a small challenge just to find everyone some work to do, but the organizers—all volunteers

themselves—did a good job delegating tasks. There were teams deboning turkeys, mashing potatoes, handling every aspect of the Thanksgiving meal, plus organizing donated clothes and coats. Kids drew pictures on the Styrofoam meal boxes, adding a cheery and personal touch. I ended up leading the “pie” team.

By midmorning, with the many pies cut and serving well underway, I joined the long line of people boxing the dinner meals. Each volunteer would take one empty box, walk it through the various serving stations, close it up, and drop it off for the delivery team. I was standing in line for quite a while, so I struck up a conversation with a woman behind me. It was one of those immediate connections, and we ended up spending the next hour or more talking about our lives, travels, and families.

Within a few hours, a few thousand meals had been prepared, served, and boxed, and volunteer drivers whisked them away to be passed out to those in need.

There was music in the air, a lot of enthusiasm, and a great sense of camaraderie. After cleanup, people gradually headed home, and so did we.

Driving home, my friend and I swapped stories about how it had gone for each of us. We passed a group of homeless men off the freeway, and spotted Thanksgiving dinner boxes by their sides. We talked about the people we had worked alongside—the fireman, the woman who hosted benefit events professionally who was helping things run more smoothly, the obviously well-to-do older couples, the catering professional making sure the volunteers wore hair nets, and so on. There were people from all walks of life, young to old, rich and poor—all there to give several hours of time on their day off in celebration of our many blessings.

The next day someone asked me how the volunteer experience was, and the highlight that came to mind was meeting the woman in the serving line. I'm glad I didn't miss that, but I have to say I easily could have. You see, I was feeling a little out of place in that line. Some people were volunteering with their family or a group of friends, chatting away, but I didn't know anyone standing around me. I don't know why I sometimes forget that others are just like me. Sometimes it can feel like everyone else has their act together, is 100% happy, problem-free, has their life all figured out, and their friendship fold is full up. I was reminded that day how untrue that usually is, and how everyone (or at least, most everyone) is looking for others to interact with, to befriend, and to potentially connect with on a deep level.

My takeaway from this Thanksgiving was a reminder to just take a step. To reach out. To open the conversation. To give Jesus a chance to put someone in my path who needs a friend, and who perhaps, in time, I can share my faith with. If I do what I can—make some effort, take some action—however small, I can trust Him to keep me in a place of usefulness, regardless of my personal limitations.

JULIE VASQUEZ IS A FREELANCE WRITER LIVING IN AUSTIN, USA. ■

RECIPE FOR HAPPINESS

BY GABRIEL GARCÍA V.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN, put on a strong stain-proof apron to protect against the drips of bitterness and the sourness of life. In a bowl of resilient material, able to withstand blows, falls, and chipping, mix the following ingredients:

- 2 heaping spoons of gratitude
- 1 1/2 spoons of satisfaction
- A dollop of generosity
- 3 drops of concentrated optimism syrup
- A wedge of sunny smile
- A seed of faith
- A cup of Joy Elixir

Season with a generous dose of good humor.

Blend all the ingredients together with enthusiasm, and serve on a wide and joyous table, big enough to share with all you meet.

GABRIEL GARCÍA V. IS THE EDITOR OF THE SPANISH EDITION OF *ACTIVATED* AND A MEMBER OF THE FAMILY INTERNATIONAL IN CHILE. ■





NECESSARY FOOD

QUIET MOMENTS
BY ABI MAY

FOOD IS ONE OF THE MOST BASIC NEEDS OF HUMANITY, so it makes sense that food would make an early entrance in the account of God's dealings with us. In Genesis, plants and trees are given for food: "Every seed-bearing plant ... Every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food."¹

COOKING

From the master chef to the housewife preparing a family meal to the student heating a pack of instant noodles for lunch, food preparation is part of our everyday lives. In the

cultural milieu of the Bible, this was usually a job for women, unless the food was for ceremonial purposes.

Sarah prepared a meal for the angels visiting her husband Abraham,² and Martha was busy preparing food for Jesus while her sister Mary sat and listened to Him.³

On one occasion, Jesus Himself cooked: "Then, as soon as [the disciples] had come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid on it, and bread. ... Jesus said to them, 'Come and eat breakfast.' ... Jesus then came and took the bread and gave it to them, and likewise the fish."⁴

Reference is sometimes made to particular ingredients or spices: "Can flavorless food be eaten without salt? Or is there any taste in the white of an egg?"⁵

There's even the occasional recipe: "Heap on the wood, kindle the fire; cook the meat well, mix in the spices, and let the cuts be burned up."⁶

FEASTING

There's nothing quite like getting together with friends over a delicious meal. The menu for a three-day feast celebrating King David's accession included bread and figs, raisins, oil, wine, oxen, and sheep.⁷

Members of the early church enjoyed their fellowship and meals together: "Breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart."⁸

Fast forward to the joyous climax of the Bible, and there's another

1. Genesis 1:29 NIV

2. See Genesis 18:6-8.

3. See Luke 10:40.

4. John 21:9,12-13

5. Job 6:6

6. Ezekiel 24:10

7. See 1 Chronicles 12:38-40.

8. Acts 2:46

9. Revelation 19:9

10. See Matthew 14:15-16.

11. See Mark 14:12-25 and

Luke 24:28-31.

12. Deuteronomy 10:17-19

13. Matthew 25:35,40 NIV

14. Psalm 119:103

15. Matthew 4:4 CEV

16. Jeremiah 15:16 MSG

17. Luke 12:23

18. Psalm 145:15

19. Ecclesiastes 3:13 NLT

20. See Matthew 5:6.



banquet to which all believers are invited: “Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!”⁹

SHARING

Jesus showed concern for the everyday needs of those around Him. When His followers wanted to send the crowds away to find food, He insisted: “They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat.”¹⁰

Jesus shared meals with His followers both before His death and after His resurrection.¹¹

Sharing food with others is part of our responsibility: “The Lord ... loves the stranger, giving him food and clothing. Therefore love the stranger.”¹²

Jesus told us that when we give to the hungry, we are giving to Him: “I was hungry and you gave me

something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink ... Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.”¹³

SWEETER THAN HONEY

God’s Word itself is likened to spiritual food: “How sweet are Your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!”¹⁴

Jesus was quoting the Old Testament when He said: “No one can live only on food. People need every word that God has spoken.”¹⁵

The prophet Jeremiah certainly enjoyed his spiritual food: “When your words showed up, I ate them—swallowed them whole. What a feast!”¹⁶

GOD’S GIFT

“Life is more than food,”¹⁷ yet God knows we need it: “The eyes of

all look expectantly to You, and You give them their food in due season.”¹⁸

Even the enjoyment of food is another of God’s gifts: “People should eat and drink and enjoy the fruits of their labor, for these are gifts from God.”¹⁹

No matter who we are or where we live, food is something that matters to each of us. We grow or buy it, we prepare it, we eat it. And while we may not connect so easily with the distant history and heroes, miracles, and unearthly events of the Bible, when it comes to food—that’s something we can understand. It’s on our level and relevant, just as God wants to be in our lives. He cares about satisfying our hunger, both literally and spiritually.²⁰ Quite a thought to digest.

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FROM JESUS WITH LOVE

HUNGRY and THIRSTY

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled.”¹ “Those who seek me diligently will find me.”² “You will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.”³ Let My voice guide you and sustain you and keep you close to Me.

Pay attention to the voice of My Word,⁴ for My words are powerful. They are life, they are truth, they are energy. They will give you the strength and the grace to carry on. They will provide direction and guidance and counsel. They will support you when you feel weary or weak, and they will sustain you when you feel faint. They will provide peace when you feel confused and tired. They will provide energy and grace when you feel you cannot go on.

“Keep my words and treasure my commands within you.”⁵ Pray, and I will come to you. I will answer your call. I “will guide you continually, and satisfy your soul.”⁶

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1. Matthew 5:6
 2. Proverbs 8:17
 3. Jeremiah 29:13
 4. See Psalm 103:20.
 5. Proverbs 7:1
 6. Isaiah 58:11

