



Paul's Epistle... "Food For Thought"

You've heard the old saying, "You are what you eat." (That thought isn't much of a comfort to those of us who may be fast-food junkies.)

Mason Cooley, an American writer, is more to the point: "What I eat turns into my body. What I read turns into my mind."

How are you feeding your mind? And let's go one important step farther – how are you feeding your spirit?

Never before have humans been so bombarded with a constant stream of messages and images as they are today -- from television, the internet, movies, etc., etc. And not all of these media messages are good "food" for our minds and spirits. In fact, it seems fewer and fewer are.

But there still are good messages out there. There's Christian radio and Christian TV (chosen wisely). There are uplifting magazines and books. There are churches where the Word of God is preached faithfully. And, of course, there is the ultimate "soul food" – the Bible. Are you feeding your spirit through these opportunities?

There's an old computer expression, "garbage in, garbage out." It simply means that if bad data is entered into the computer, the computer will, predictably, generate more bad data. People are a lot like that. If "garbage" is what goes into our minds, "garbage" is what comes out. The Bible puts it this way: "...out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart brings forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things." (Matthew 12: 34,35.)

I remember years ago when I worked in secular jobs, I was around a lot of non-Christians. I was, frankly, stunned at the constant stream of profanities some people routinely use. These were relatively easy to dismiss from my mind. ("Consider the source.") But what caused me problems most was those otherwise-"decent" people who would routinely pepper their talk with those little "innocent" obscenities that are so common. If you hear it often enough, it begins to influence your thought patterns and, if it were allowed to do so, could affect your speech patterns. I never spoke that way. But, after such prolonged exposure, it bothered me greatly that such thoughts would even become part of my thought patterns. But that was an example of "garbage in, garbage out."

Galatians 5 tells us that some of the "works of the flesh" include adultery, fornication, hatred, wrath, strife, envyings, murders, drunkenness, etc. Wow, that sounds like prime time TV on any given night. But, "They which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." Are we allowing the media and others to "feed" us this kind of garbage routinely? Are we foolishly denying its impact on our lives? Do we say, "Oh, I can handle that." But is it subconsciously making you think these sinful things are "normal." Are your high moral standards being worn away by repeated exposures? Even granite can be worn away by soft rainwater over time. (The great deceiver loves this.)

But our spirit is fed "good food" when we observe and manifest the fruit of the Spirit: "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." (Gal. 5: 22,23.) Are we feasting on God's Word? Are we feeding our minds with what is good? If so, good things will result. Philippians 4:8 reminds us, "whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."

Author Frank Outlaw puts it this way:

Watch your thoughts; they become words.

Watch your words; they become actions.

Watch your actions; they become habits.

Watch your habits; they become character.

Watch your character; it becomes your destiny.

Truly, we must let the mind of the Master be the master of our minds. Is the mind of Christ in you? (1 Cor. 2:16.)

There is a story about an old Cherokee chief who is teaching his grandson about life. He tells him, "A fight is going on inside me. It is a terrible fight and it is between two wolves. "One is evil – he is anger, envy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority, self-doubt and ego. "The other is good – he is joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion and faith. "This same fight is going on inside you – and inside every other person, too."

The grandson thought about this for a minute, then turned to his grandfather and asked, "Which wolf will win?"

The wise old chief turned to his grandson, smiled knowingly and replied simply, "The one you feed."

Which "wolf" are you feeding?

- Paul

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