

A GREAT PARADOX

I once read that a bird can go nine days without food, a dog ten days, a turtle five hundred days, a snake eight hundred days, a fish one thousand days, some insects twelve thousand days (almost thirty-three years). For most human beings, the limit is about fourteen days. However long one may go without food, eventually, all of God's creatures must have food or they will perish. Each of us has probably been hungry enough at some time that we could think of nothing else but eating. Although a person may be honest to the core, if one becomes hungry enough, he will steal his food if he cannot get it otherwise. Hunger is one of the most compelling instincts in man and beast.

One might think that the soul that is shriveling and dying from spiritual starvation would experience a yearning for nourishment, but here is a great paradox: The soul that is stunted for lack of the necessary nourishment of the "solid food" of the Word of God (Heb. 5:14) is least likely to be hungering and thirsting after righteousness (Mat. 5:6). The Christian who has remained a spiritual infant over the years has the least inclination toward maintaining a hearty diet of spiritual delicacies—which is why he remains a spiritual infant. Those who need them the most could hardly care less whether the church even continues its program of Bible classes on Sundays and Wednesdays. They count a four-day Gospel meeting or a Bible lectureship a great "weariness" (Mal. 1:13) and have no problem virtually ignoring such opportunities for spiritual growth and enrichment.

Such saints seem to see themselves as having no need of such activities, when in reality they are most in need of them. Some even seem to have the attitude that they are so spiritually mature they could not even profit from continued studies in the Word of

God. One would certainly be surprised to learn that these folk were feeding themselves on God's Word daily in their homes.

Such brethren may be identified with various life forms. Some, like the turtle, may have taken little or no spiritual nourishment for five hundred days. Others may be like the snake, the fish, or even the insect. May we never miss our Bible class and worship periods on Sunday morning or Wednesday night by choice. May we faithfully read and study our Bibles on a daily basis.

The world, our nation, and the church are all suffering some grievous crises at present, many of which relate directly to self-inflicted spiritual starvation and malnutrition. God's people have a dual responsibility: (1) To feed on God's Word so that it controls our very thoughts (2 Cor. 10:5), and (2) with the knowledge we gain, to spread God's Word to as many others as we can (Mark 16:15–16).

—Dub McClish

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