

Nurturing Father

Receiving From The Father Freely

³ Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh?

Galatians 3:3

One of the most important yet overlooked aspects of our walk with God is learning to receive freely from Him. If we do not learn the importance of being nurtured by our Father we will either live a dry, disconnected life or constantly battle sin.

- A. Nurture is one of the most fundamental and basic needs of humanity, in fact without it, babies will die. There have been infants who simply lacked touch and died not because of a lack of food but nurture.
- B. Malnutrition is the lack of nutrients or nurture of some degree. Many in the body are malnourished spiritually because they have yet to discover the necessity of receiving from God/ being nurtured by God. Our walk with God is based upon remaining connected to and receiving from Him.

In the beginning...

- A. The beginning of creation testifies to this need. God created humanity in a place of perfection and the sustaining power of it was based upon humanity depending on and trusting in their Creator for all their needs.
- B. The basis of the temptation of the devil was to allure them from whole hearted trust in their Source to another source.
- C. The nature of every temptation is there is a source apart from and outside God. The enemy tempts us with false sources of power, purpose, identity, pleasure, satisfaction, significance etc.
- D. Instead of partaking of the Tree of Life, they choose the tree of knowledge. The issue was not simply the tree and its fruit, the issue was humanity finding a source outside of God. This lead to sin, unto death and separation from their Source.

In search of a source

- A. Since the fall, humanity has been mostly eating the fruit of knowledge rather than life-meaning we have found a source of wisdom, knowledge, pleasure, power etc in the world

rather than God. From that point forward, humanity has learned to live apart from God, groping in the dark for anything that has life.

- B. The testimony of history and modernity should convince us that there is no life apart from Him. Celebrities alone should convince our hearts of the vanity of temporal pleasures.
- C. God has created each of us without the ability to sustain life on our own. We are not self-sufficient nor can we generate our own sustenance. Our lack should lead us to recognize our need and cause us to search for the true Source of life. [Acts 17:26–28]
- D. Upon salvation we must understand that we need nurture from our Father; we need to receive from Him. Salvation was not so we could primarily give to God [since He lacks nothing] but that we might first receive from Him and then glorify Him.
- E. Prov 9:13–18– describes the foolishness and vanity of seeking pleasure in other sources and the voice of our culture entreating us to partake of things of darkness and death. It is the façade of other sources satisfying. Instead of life we are drinking of death

The battle to freely receive

- A. Many of us have learned to be fulfilled and satisfied apart from God, therefore it is hard to relinquish control and trust in Him to satisfy us and nurture us.
- B. The struggle of allowing God to nurture us is this rests upon trust. We must trust Him to nurture us, we must believe that He will [that He is able and willing] and we must believe the futility of all other sources.
- C. Many of us must face and overcome our ‘orphan’ mentality that causes us to live self-sufficient lives. Jesus said that unless we are converted like children we will not enter the kingdom. He also declared He would not leave us as orphans, but make us sons of God. Our own brokenness can keep us from receiving from the Father. If we grow up under the influence of rejection, abandonment, lack, abuse etc it can empower a lie/mindset that keeps us from trusting, depending on the Lord to receive what we need. Our own experience can cause us to resist His nurture or work to earn from Him.
- D. For many the greatest issue is not their sin, but their heart condition that causes them to believe and behave as if there is no source, therefore they seek out a source in countless other things. For many of us, our dull hearts, our discontentment and struggles with sin are

simply fruit of the real problem. We have yet to know the One who loves to give us good gifts. We have yet learned to receive and be nurtured by our Father. Our hearts are not satisfied in God. so many of us are constantly trying to fight sin and do not realize that it is more of an indicator of our hearts lacking the proper rooting in His love than it is a deficiency in us.

- E. Receiving from God is a problem for many of us, and so we resist it; we resist spiritual nurture. We are much more comfortable performing for God than receiving from God, probably for many reasons. Performing for God can be done from a position of relative strength, but receiving can be perceived as a kind of weakness. Giving to God gives us something to feel good about, but receiving can leave us feeling like a burden. Performing for God allows us to feel in control and protects us from the vulnerability of our needs, but receiving may accentuate our neediness. This can be a deadly to our spiritual lives.
- F. Both sons in **Luke 15** lacked nurture from their father. Two expressions of this: seeking out pleasure, comfort, nurture in another source [sin] or working relentlessly in an attempt to attain worth to receive from God.
- G. **Jeremiah 2: 11–13**– the people of God committed two evils: they forsook the Lord, the fountain of living waters and made broken cisterns that could hold no water.

The Father has not left us without a solution, but spoken to us through the Son.

The solution: the Bread of Life

John 6:25–58 is a great chapter concerning the heart of God to nurture us in our weakness and lack.

- A. The dynamic Jesus is addressing is the fact that God has created people with the need for nourishment that comes from outside themselves. We are not self-sustaining, we require substance and nurture from outside ourselves in order to maintain life. He has designed us to have a need that would launch us into a pursuit that ultimately would find its fulfillment in the relationship with Him in Christ. [Acts 17:26–28]
- B. In John 6, Jesus highlights the need of humanity and how He is the ultimate fulfillment of the need [hunger, desire, lack] of humanity. He uses two situations to illustrate this: the miracle of multiplying loaves and fish and the story of the Exodus.
- C. **Do not labor for what doesn't last:** Vs. 27– Jesus calls them to not waste their lives trying to attain bread that will not last, that will only bring temporary pleasure or fulfill a temporary purpose, but labor for the bread that will be of eternal significance.

- D. The way the Father has created us to have life is within the context of relationship with Him. This is alluded in many ways in scripture: the vine/branch, the foundation of living waters
- E. Jesus declares that He alone is the Bread of Life, the sole source of sustenance and life. When we come to Him we will not hunger or thirst anymore [vs. 35] Many of our struggles spiritually come from partaking of another source than Christ- which in turn leaves us in a worse condition and deceives us that He won't satisfy.
- F. We must purpose to partake of the Bread of Life, posture our hearts to be satisfied in Him alone and grow in maturity as we receive from Him.

How do we begin to be nurtured by the Father or receive from the Father

- **Turn from false sources:**
 - we will never truly hunger if we have a secret supply line. We must disconnect from the things that are replacing Christ in our life, or eroding our need and dependency on Him. When was the last time you stepped out and truly depended upon Him? Do we constantly have a plan B in place so we are left self-sufficient rather than dependent?
 - This is actually a facet of the fasted lifestyle, where we willingly embrace weakness and restrict our appetites for Christ and Him alone.
 - We must abandon the false pursuits of horizontal pleasure and begin to pursue vertical pleasures and reality.
 - We must press through the maze of empty distractions and turn our affections and attention to Jesus. This requires diligence and determination. It is not an overnight fix.
 - We must choose life and not the illusion of life offered by the world
- **Live in the presence of Jesus:**
 - Purposing to daily be aware that His presence is a turn of the heart away. Each day and each moment we have a choice how we will live- connected to Him or disconnected from Him.
 - Spending time abiding in the place of worship, prayer, devotion in the Word etc is a practical way to receive from and get nurtured by the Father.

- John 15 speaks of the vital nature of our connection to Him. Without Him we can do nothing and have no life.

- **Embrace your weakness and inability**
 - Paul found out that in his weakness, the grace of God was sufficient. This is the posture of heart that the Lord desires to bring all of us to
 - Childlike dependence is strength
 - Galatians 3:3- what began in the spirit cannot be fulfilled in human strength
 - We must embrace our weakness as the avenue that leads us to dependence. The Lord enjoys us in our weakness and in the process.

Psalm 36:7-9 promises us satisfaction from the abundance of His house, pleasure in His presence and life in Him.

Luke 11:9-13, Luke 12:30-32, Eph 1: 3, 2 Peter 1:2-4, Romans 8:31-32 [31-39], Luke 15:11-32 all tell us about the extravagance of our Father who loves to give us good gifts. The Father who desires to nurture us and provide all we need. We must know this Father and be nurtured unto maturity.