

Have you lost your spiritual appetite?

When someone gets sickly, one of the first signs is a loss of appetite. A healthy person is someone with a good appetite.

I remember a long time ago, as a young woman I had lost my appetite. I could not eat, not even my favorite food. Even the sight of food made me sick.

What would have happened to me if I had remained in this condition for too long? If one doesn't eat... one will eventually die.

When I am talking about spiritual hunger here, I am not talking of a helpless, desperate hunger that one has when forced to starve because Jesus mentioned in *John 6:35* "*I am the bread of life, he who comes to me will never be in need of food*" (BBE) but I am talking of a healthy hunger, a taste and a desire to eat what is good and nourishing.

Many in this world have lost this type of spiritual appetite. They no longer have a taste or desire for the word or the things of God. Even what they once loved and enjoyed so much no longer appeals to them. They once were on fire, couldn't wait to worship God, and read His word. They would sit on the edge of their seats to hear every word coming out of the mouth of the minister, but today reading the word became a chore or drudgery, going to church became nothing more than a duty or a form. They open their Bible and get absolutely nothing out of it.

The truth is that the less we eat the less hungry we get. And the less hungry we are and the less we want to eat, the less we want to eat, then the less we eat etc... You see it becomes a vicious circle that needs to be broken.

Just like one deprived of natural food and nutrients would soon or later die, so one deprived of spiritual food and nutrients would soon become spiritually malnourished and shrivel spiritually. Jesus clearly said in John 15 that He is the vine and we are the branches, and a branch that does not abide in the vine would soon or later wither. A disciple in order to be strong and fruitful needs to abide in Jesus, or as He added, abide in the Word and the Word abide in him. *John 15:5-7*

It is in the Word, that we find nourishment, instruction, training and correction.

2 Tim. 3:16 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.

No wonder many leave the path of righteousness and take the path that leads to the valley of shadow of death. They end up beat up, confused and abused by the devil, and of course many end up blaming God for it. *Psalms 23:3-4*

The good news is that The Holy Spirit, our helper is always in us to help us and this vicious cycle of spiritual anemia can be broken, and spiritual appetite regained.

Very often God will use some natural illustration to point out to me a spiritual lesson. We can stop a second and try to understand what actually happens in our body when we decrease our food intake... Our stomach, which is a muscle, will start shrinking and lessen in its capacity to receive and hold food. On the other hand, it always amazes me to watch people, let's say at an "all you can eat buffet" on the amount of food they can ingest. How did they get there? I guarantee you that they did not start this way. But by continual eating and increasing portions, they have stretched their stomach little by little, conditioned their senses and transformed their body. They even come to a place where they have to feed themselves, not only bigger portions but continually, and if they don't eat, they get cranky, upset, sometimes violent because for them eating has become a major priority.

If only Christians would do the same for their spiritual lives, they would end up stretching their heart and its capacity to receive revelations from the Word of God, they would condition their senses into loving the Word of God, and this would transform their lives.

Heb. 5:14 But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

I remember what I had to do when I had lost my physical appetite... In order not to let myself go, I first had to force myself to eat a little bit at a time. It started with a firm decision on my part and believe me, I did not **feel** like eating but I had to choose to do it, and then abide by that choice everyday, until I no longer had to remind myself to eat.

If one has lost its spiritual appetite, its desire to read the Word of God, then he must do the same, and make a quality and firm decision to feed himself with the Word, whether he feels like it or not... until he develops a strong desire, a passion, even an addiction for God's written Word.

It always amazes me when I hear people say they love God, but yet do not love His Word, and do not spend hardly any time in their bible. We all have heard the truth that love is a choice and not a feeling, so in the same manner, loving God is not always a feeling, but it should always be a choice when the feelings are not there... a choice to honor Him, to obey Him, and to get to know Him in His Word and in intimate conversation with Him.

The truth of the matter, is that the more we feed on His Word, and the more we will want to do it, and the more we will love and enjoy it.

It is the same way in my marriage. Fred and I, like every other couples, have had some highs and some lows, some times where we felt so in love with each other, and sometimes where we had to choose to love each other. But there is one thing I have learned, is that when I choose to love my husband, even when I don't feel the love... those warm and love feelings soon or later always return.

And so it is in our spiritual walk... If we choose to love and feed on the Word... soon or later the desire and the passion will return.