

Christianity Is Not a Diet – It Is a Lifestyle

By Kent Heaton

The American culture is driven by the diet dogma. Diet free drinks, low carb snacks, all natural health oriented weight saving produce that attempts to slim down, reduce, shrink and manage the ever growing waist line. Obesity is a national concern with billions of dollars spent on how to, why to, where to and what to with every guru known to man hawking their wares of enrichment and quick fixes. There are concerns over the roller coaster philosophy of diet today, lose control tomorrow and back on a diet the next day. New Year resolutions to lose weight change as often as the moon phase and often on the same calendar. The reason many do not lose weight is they are dieting instead of making life changes.

There is a similarity in how many people approach their life with Jesus Christ. It is more of a fad than anything to be serious about on a daily basis. Some diet because they become concerned temporarily about their health and weight. After a time they lose interest and concern and return to the way they were before. Then they go on a diet again and up and down it goes. Sounds like the way some treat the word of God. It is good for emergencies and special needs when we feel guilt but when we lose interest or concern it is laid aside and forgotten – until we need it again. The power of the gospel is not a short fix to solve a few problems but rather a long term remedy of the sin that so easily ensnares us (Heb. 12:1).

Psalms 1 shows how a relationship with the Lord is not a temporary fashion style we can enjoy one moment and lay aside for another. “Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful; but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night. He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper. The ungodly are not so, but are like the chaff which the wind drives away. Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. For the Lord knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the ungodly shall perish” (Psalms 1:1-6). Day and night suggests the need for a constant impact of the word of God. This is a way of living and living a way that is rooted in the word of God.

After Moses died, the Lord encouraged Joshua to take the Book of the Law and not let it depart from his mouth. “But you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success” (Joshua 1:8). Losing weight is accomplished when a lifestyle is changed. Finding success with the word of God is a lifestyle measured by a daily mediation on the mind of God. Lacking the courage to instill the grace of God in our lives will only bring heartache and sorrow.

The apostle Paul was thankful that Timothy had made the word of God a daily habit. He reminds him of his childhood that taught him to love the word of God daily. “But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus” (2Tim. 3:14-15). His word is inspired and will make us complete!

In Exchange

“For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” (Matt. 16:26).

In a chapel in Southern France, the great Emperor Charlemagne is buried. In that chapel is a large dome and in the center of that dome is where the body of Charlemagne is placed. It is not unusual that his body is buried in a prominent place. However, the manner of his burial is.

He's seated on a marble chair and wrapped in his emperor's robes. In his lap is a copy of the New Testament, and his finger is pointing to the following verse: "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matt. 16:26). Truly, one's soul is more valuable than all the world.

Aware of the Urgency

"Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect. Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them food in due season? Blessed is that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing." (Matt. 24:42-46)

A U.S. Army officer told of the contrast in his pupils during two different eras of teaching at the artillery training school at Fort Sill, Oklahoma (Home of the Field Artillery). In 1958-1960 the attitude was so lax that the instructors had a problem getting the men to stay awake to hear the lectures. During the 1965-1967 classes, however, the men, hearing the same basic lectures, were alert and took notes. What made the difference in the classes of 1965-1967? The students knew that in less than six weeks they would be facing the enemy in Vietnam. Let us be fully aware of the urgency of being ready, watching, and waiting for our Master's return.

Time to Give

"Jesus said to him, 'If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.'" (Matt. 19:21)

Marquis de Lafayette was a French general and politician who joined the American Revolution and became a friend of George Washington. An influential man in the U.S. and France, Lafayette was also a man of compassion. The harvest of 1782 was a poor one, but the manager of his estate had filled his barns with wheat. "The bad harvest has raised the price of wheat," said his manager. "This is the time to sell." Lafayette thought about the hungry peasants in the villages and replied, "No, this is the time to give."

Real love is often measured by our willingness to let go of what we possess. Sometimes the thing we grip most tightly in our hands is the very thing God asks us to hand over to Him. (From Bible Illustrator)

Really!?

The more man's wisdom changes, the more it stays the same:

2000 B.C. - Here, eat this root.

1000 A.D. - That root is heathen. Here, say this prayer.

1850 A.D. - That prayer is superstition. Here, drink this potion.

1940 A.D. - That potion is snake oil. Here, swallow this pill.

1985 A.D. - That pill is ineffective. Here, take this antibiotic.

2000 A.D. - That antibiotic is artificial. Here, eat this root.