

may even meditate on it some, but if we do not apply it, we are bulimic. We will not benefit from it. We will continue to starve spiritually.

- 2) Look at Ephesians 4:32 once again. What does God want me to do? "**And be ye kind** [pleasant, not harsh or bitter] **one to another, tenderhearted** [compassionate], **forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.**" How must I apply this to my marriage, to parenting, to my work relations, or to my unreasonable neighbours?
- 3) Often, our problem is not ignorance of what God expects, it is refusal to do what God expects. We twist our situation. We make excuses. We deny the clear application. When we do this, we are vomiting out Bible truth.
- 4) God promises to bless those who apply and do what He says. (Psalms 1:3) "**And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.**"
- 5) If you have been reading the Bible faithfully, but your spiritual life seems anaemic, have you been applying what you read and allowing God to change you? If not, you may be spiritually bulimic.

**Conclusion:** If your spiritual life is not what you know God wants it to be, very likely, James has identified the problem and the solution. Spiritual growth requires a daily consumption of the Bible, a continual meditation on what you read, and a personal application of what God said.

If it is not your daily habit to study the Bible, stop being satisfied with a starving spiritual diet. Begin Bible study today. If you have not been digesting and applying the Bible that you consume, you too are starving spiritually. Soberly, ask God to help you change.

If spiritual anorexia or spiritual bulimia describe your present condition, take action before you starve to death spiritually!

**Song:** I Am Resolved – 389 #3

# Spiritual Eating Disorders

7 January 2024 AM – Text: James 1:21-25 – Topic: Bible Study

**Introduction:** We live in a day when access to the Bible has never been easier. We have it in print, on tablets, on the computer, and on our phones. With just a click, we can listen to it being read. Yet with all this easy access, the number of people who read the Bible is dwindling. Knowledge of the contents of the Bible is fading like the morning fog.

In his book, "Point Man", Steve Farrar compared this decreasing interest in the Bible to two physical eating disorders. **Anorexia nervosa** is an eating disorder caused by fear of being overweight in which a person avoids food, becomes extremely thin and is literally starving. Many Christians are spiritually anorexic due to lack of Bible intake. They weigh half what they ought to for their spiritual age. They are starving to death spiritually. Does this describe you? Do you read the Bible daily? Have you ever read the entire Bible? Can you explain the ten major Bible doctrines? Would you struggle to explain the Gospel to an unbeliever? Can you explain why Creation is right and evolution is wrong? Do you have a truly biblical world view? Do you struggle with sinful habits? Can you quote five key verses about salvation? Are you living in spiritual defeat or victory? Can you list three key chapters about your marriage roles? Are you spiritually healthy or starving?

The second eating disorder is **Bulimia**. To remain thin, the person eats lots and then purges or vomits it out again, preventing the body from absorbing the nutrients. Farrar compared this to the Christian who attends church and reads the Bible, but then purges it out without absorbing the spiritual nutrients. He does not apply the Bible to his daily life. He may appear to be spiritual, but on the inside, he is starving.

The Apostle James addresses these spiritual eating disorders in James 1:21-25. Follow along as I read these verses.

**Transition:** If these spiritual eating disorders describe you, God had James describe exactly what you need to do to become spiritually healthy.

## 1. You must Receive God's Word (v.21).

### a. This begins with a desire for spiritual growth.

- 1) When you become weary of being an immature Christian who struggles to live in victory, and you begin to desire

God's closeness and direction, your desire is being prepared to receive God's Word.

- 2) James commands that we lay aside **ALL** filthiness and residue of wickedness from our former way of life. This is a willingness and desire to let the Word transform your life.
- 3) God is not going to zap you and take away all your sinful desires, but when you are willing to let God's Word make changes in your life, you will begin to grow.

**b. It progresses with a decision to give the Bible priority.**

- 1) You must receive the Bible with meekness, a mild and gentle attitude.
- 2) God's Word is engrafted in the teachable Christian. To graft is to attach a quality branch where it did not naturally grow. The Holy Spirit, the author of the Bible, will graft His word in your heart and life when you are willing to receive it.
- 3) The word "save" not only refers to rescuing a soul from hell. It also speaks of delivering your life from the world, the flesh and the devil.
- 4) Life is busy, but each of us finds time to do the things we truly want to do. When you get serious with God and desire to receive His Word into your life, you will make time to read and study the Bible.
  - a) God is not going to add time to your day. You must delete something less important from your day to make room for Bible study.
  - b) It may mean cutting back on Facebook or YouTube. It may mean shutting off the TV.
  - c) It will likely mean getting up earlier than you presently do. When Jesus said, (Luke 9:23) "**And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.**" Do you think He included establishing a daily Bible study time? I do!
- 5) If you have been spiritually anorexic, it is time to get serious about feeding your soul from God's Word.

**2. You must Apply God's Word (v.22-25).**

Hearing God's Word through preaching or daily reading is vital to nourishing your soul; however, James reminds that if we do not act on what we hear, we deceive ourselves. We do not absorb what God said, and we become spiritually bulimic. Many well-meaning Christians are suffering from spiritual bulimia. Note carefully the prescription James gives for this ailment (v.25).

**a. Consumption – looking into the Word.**

- 1) The word "**looketh**" means, "To stoop down near or by something, bend forward or near in order to look at something more closely." CWSD
- 2) It is like the close examination of your face in a mirror. A casual reading of the Bible seldom feeds the soul.
- 3) Consider Ephesians 4:32 for example. What is God saying? "**And be ye kind** [pleasant, not harsh or bitter] **one to another, tenderhearted** [compassionate], **forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.**"

**b. Meditation – continuing therein**

- 1) How long did James say that you must continue or remain in what you read? **Until you are no longer a forgetful hearer but a doer.**
- 2) Keep looking in the mirror of God's Word until you see clearly the problem and deal with it adequately.
- 3) Meditation is spiritual digestion. Meditating is chewing on what you read. It is pondering it. It is talking to God about it. It is evaluating how it applies to you. (Psalms 1:2) "**But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.**"
- 4) To aid your meditation, write brief notes on a card and carry it with you all day long; thinking on it often.
- 5) Consider again, Ephesians 4:32 for example. What is God teaching me? "**And be ye kind** [pleasant, not harsh or bitter] **one to another, tenderhearted** [compassionate], **forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.**" What is the significance of this verse to my life?

**c. Application – doing the work.**

- 1) The application is doing. We may consume the Bible. We