

Feast on the Words of Christ — The Daily Practice

One of the most important discoveries you will make in searching the scriptures is that every virtue promised, discussed or commanded is conditioned upon your performance: your faith resulting in action. In some cases the condition is expressed in the form of “if you will do . . . , then . . . will happen.” In others, a promised blessing is described followed by the invitation to access the blessing by obeying the governing principle. Regardless of the form of the covenant implied in the Lord’s promises, you soon come to understand that virtue flows into your life only as you obey specific principles. Consider the example of this counsel from Nephi’s instruction to “feast on the words of Christ”:

Angels speak by the power of the Holy Ghost; wherefore, they speak the words of Christ. Wherefore, I said unto you, feast upon the words of Christ; for behold, the words of Christ will tell you all things what ye should do. (2 Nephi 32:3)

Can you imagine a gift more needed today than to have divine direction on every decision you make and heavenly guidance through all the trials and difficulties you must pass? What a difference such assistance would make! And what is the key you must turn to access this remarkable gift? Nephi states that all you have to do is “feast” on the words of Christ to have this guidance flow unto you.

Why did Nephi use the term “feast” to guide our use of the scriptures? The scriptures themselves seldom use the word “read” to promote their use and instead encourage us at various times to “search,” “seek,” “study” and even “meditate therein.” Nephi’s reference to feasting connects our primary physical need for food to our less obvious dependence on spiritual nutrition. No one questions or avoids constant physical nourishment, yet so many are completely blind to or ignore its spiritual counterpart.

Eating three times a day is completely analogous to our spiritual caloric intake. How many meals in a row are you willing to forego because you don’t have time or are too busy doing some other task? How many days in a row could you skip food and still expect to be energetic and productive? The truth is that your spiritual body, as surely as your physical body, loses energy, focus and capacity in direct relation to the interval of time from its last nutritional input.

With the use of the image of feasting on the word, Nephi not only ties the frequency of eating food to use of the scriptures but he also distinguishes the difference between types of meals. Without referencing snacking, nibbling, eating or even dining, he highlights the ultimate meal by encouraging us to feast. The biggest feast of the year for most of us is the Thanksgiving dinner with family and we look forward to it with great anticipation and delight. Such a meal usually satisfies our need for food for many hours. In like manner, one daily feast on God’s words will satisfy our maintenance need for daily spiritual fuel.

In his vision of the Tree of Life, Nephi learned that the only way to arrive safely at the tree through the mists of darkness and away from the treacherous precipice bordering the river of filthy water was to maintain a firm hold on the rod of iron. As he tutored Nephi on the symbolic significance of the vision’s images, the Spirit added to Nephi’s correct understanding of the meaning of the Tree of Life as being the “love of God shed abroad in the hearts of men and the most desirable above all things” by stating that it was also “the most joyous to the soul” [1 Ne 11:21, 22]. He then tied the receipt of the gift of God’s love in our life to holding firmly to the iron rod or the word of God: a blessing predicated upon individual performance. Our ability to feel God’s love spreading in our hearts like the growing branches of a tree is directly connected to our choice to feast daily on the word of God. Inasmuch as our hearts being filled with the pure love of Christ is the object to be desired above all others and feasting upon the words of Christ is the path to obtain this desire, then feasting on a daily basis is critical to attaining this pinnacle of human achievement.

In a life packed with deadlines and commitments, the question becomes, “How does one go about ‘feasting’ to gain the needed spiritual nourishment without neglecting other important pursuits?” The first part of the

answer relates directly to the level of commitment and desire within you. If receiving God's answer to the perplexing challenges you face is truly a heartfelt desire, then feasting will quickly become the top priority in your day. The second part of the answer is a function of your ability to discipline yourself to do what you need to do initially and then maintaining a rewarding regimen afterward. To ensure that no day ever closes again without drawing nourishment from the words of Christ, make sure that feasting is the first thing you do every day.

This brings to mind the old adage: If you give a starving man a fish, you feed him for a day, but if you teach him to fish, he can eat for a lifetime. To assess the state of your desire to "learn to fish" so that you meet the nutritional needs of your spirit every day for the rest of your life, consider the following questions.

- Do you believe that you have a literal Father of your spirit that loves you and desires nothing more than your happiness?
- Do you believe that he knows who you are, where you are, what you are going through, what you need and how to help you?
- Do you desire to feel God's love in your life and to have your heart filled with the pure love of Christ?
- Do you trust the simple promise that by consistently feasting on his word daily, your heart can be filled with his love?
- Do you have faith in and trust his promise that if you humbly ask for what you need, he will supply the answer?
- Are you willing to put that faith into action by committing the first fifteen minutes of your day to this end?

If the answer to these questions is yes, then you are ready to embark on a venture that will take you to places you have only dreamed of going before.

There are approximately 2500 pages of standard works that comprise the "word of God" upon which we are to feast. Finding the precise kernel of truth you need for today's spiritual nourishment is like finding a needle in a haystack in the fifteen minutes you have allotted to start your day. Said differently, it is like being sent to a city of 100,000 people with your companion to open an area in your mission. The president counsels you that he knows there are 30 kingdom builders somewhere in the city waiting to find the truth so they can start a branch of the church and he wants you to find them within three months. How would you go about accomplishing this mission? Would you rely on the arm of flesh and start at the first house on the first street across from your apartment and work quadrant by quadrant until you had tracted the whole city? Or would you trust the promise that "whoso believeth in Christ, doubting nothing, whatsoever he shall ask the Father in the name of Christ it shall be granted him" [Mormon 9:21] and ask to be led to the very person you are to start teaching and then act immediately on the impressions that come into your mind? To try to find the elect in so short a time by the arm of flesh would be frustrating, discouraging and cause you to lose hope; but to rely upon the ample arm of the Lord would be exhilarating, rewarding and a pure delight. Applying the same principle to the task you face of finding the very word of God that you need for your daily spiritual uplift will bear fruit that is both delicious and life sustaining.

As you consider Alma's classic dissertation comparing the word of God to a seed planted in your heart, apply Nephi's counsel to "liken the scriptures unto" yourselves and see what new perspective you receive. [Alma 32:28-41 — the word as a seed: if not cast out by unbelief it swells, enlightens the understanding, and grows; nourished with diligence, faith, and patience it becomes a tree springing up unto everlasting life, whose fruit is "sweet above all that is sweet... pure above all that is pure," that ye may "feast upon this fruit even until ye are filled, that ye hunger not, neither shall ye thirst."]

In summary, you are looking for the fruit of the tree of life [the love of God] that is white, precious, pure and sweet and more delicious than anything you have ever tasted. You desire it because it is the only thing that can fill the hole in your soul and begin to mend the hurt in your heart with healing balm. Daily completing the ten steps that follow will make the promise of the Tree of Life a living reality for you and take you to the better place you seek.

The Ten Steps of the Daily Feast

1. Begin by formulating a written statement of your greatest need at this moment.
2. Ask Father in prayer to guide you to the place in his word where you will find his tender mercy manifest in the answer to your need.
3. Open the scriptures and on whatever page they land, begin casting about for a verse that captures your attention.
4. Once found, begin feasting on that section until the Spirit identifies that you have found the verse or verses that contain the answer to your need and is the spiritual nourishment that will sustain you for the next 24 hours.
5. Open the attached spreadsheet and fill out the date, the scriptural reference and the general topic keyword(s).
6. In the remarks section, formulate an application to your circumstances as guided by the Spirit.
7. Offer a prayer of gratitude for this gift of his mercy and grace being revealed to you.
8. Savor for several moments the security of the embrace of his loving arms around you [D&C 6:21].
9. Treasure (lock in the memory of) that feeling in your heart.
10. Recall that feeling throughout the day as needed to continue to nourish your soul.

Put your faith into action and His promise to a test. Receive the evidence of this gift you hope for and continue to grow grace by grace and line upon line one day at a time.

The promise is sure that as you faithfully follow this pattern, healing and wholeness will come into your soul, long sought for changes will begin to emerge and more love and discipline will come into your life than you have ever known.

A note on the words: search, seek, study, meditate

- **Psalms 119:9-16, 23-24, 46, 74** — “Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word... Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee... I will meditate in thy precepts... I will delight myself in thy statutes: I will not forget thy word... I have hoped in thy word.”
- **Psalms 1:1-3** — “his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. 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.”
- **Joshua 1:7-8** — “This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night... for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.”
- **John 4:13-14** — the living water “shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.”
- **John 6:35, 51** — “I am the bread of life... I am the living bread which came down from heaven.”

Nelson’s closing invitation: “**What other references to the benefits of and the patterns for feasting can you find as you feast daily?**”

More scriptures on the feast

- **Deuteronomy 8:3 / Matthew 4:4** — “man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD.” The food analogy is scripture’s own; Christ Himself answers the tempter with it.
- **Helaman 3:29** — “lay hold upon the word of God, which is quick and powerful, which shall divide

asunder all the cunning and the snares and the wiles of the devil, and lead the man of Christ in a strait and narrow course... and land their souls... at the right hand of God." (*The iron rod as the line held against the adversary — the direct engine behind 2 Nephi 32:4-5 "energizing the markers."*)

- **Jeremiah 15:16** — "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart." (*Eating the word, verbatim.*)
- **Job 23:12** — "I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food." (*The food analogy, in Job's own trial.*)
- **Ezekiel 3:1-3 / Revelation 10:9-10** — the prophet is told to *eat* the scroll/little book, "sweet as honey" — the word taken in before it is spoken out.
- **1 Peter 2:2** — "desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." (*Nutrition → growth.*)
- **Jacob 2:8** — "the pleasing word of God... healeth the wounded soul." (*The healing balm Nelson names.*)
- **Enos 1:3-4** — "the words which I had often heard my father speak... sunk deep into my heart" — the feast working inward until it becomes the wrestle and the forgiveness. (*A lived example of the seed of Alma 32.*)