

Special Forces: Day Thirty-three

Intermediate Training: Unit Two

Personal Development

Radical Change and Special Needs

I have the privilege of participating in a weekly fellowship lunch in one of the dining facilities on Ft. Carson, Colorado. From the outside, the building containing the facility looks exactly the same as it did when constructed, probably more than fifteen years ago. Internally, however there have been many changes through the years. What amazes me is the number of choices the modern soldier has concerning cuisine! There are two different hot food lines (real food on one side and fast food junk on the other), a complete soup and salad bar, a cold sandwich section, beverages of all sorts, as well as a variety of desserts. Indeed there is something for everyone - or is there?

What about the person whose dietary needs are so unique that the dining facility cannot fulfill them? Typically, there must be sufficient demand to justify the cost and preparation requirements. Therefore, while the majority can be more than adequately served, there remains a small minority that simply must find alternative ways to satisfy their unique dietary requirements. Simply put, what some folks might need, the typical military dining facility cannot provide.

Similarly, a Christian in today's culture, or any culture throughout history, is like that person who has special dietary needs and cannot eat what everyone else eats without certain risks, and possibly serious physical harm. The child of God, born of the Spirit, needs to feed the Spirit within in order to be spiritually healthy as well as to grow strong and become an **effective** soldier for the Kingdom of God. Just as the average military dining facility caters to the menu desires of the majority of its clientele and cannot provide special food for special dietary needs, the culture we live in caters to the selfish desires of the masses and does not provide food for the Spiritual diet of the born-again Christian.

Key Verse:

"Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." John 3:5-6 (NKJV)

Jesus, speaking to the Jewish leader Nicodemus, emphasized the need for a **total rebirth** in order to enter the Kingdom of God. Note Jesus' comment concerning flesh and Spirit. Jesus seems to be saying they are two separate issues, not complimentary character traits. Listen to the Apostle Paul's description of the contrast between our natural selves and new life in Christ.

And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others. Ephesians 2:1-3 (NKJV)

For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. Colossians 3:3 (NKJB)

Paul, speaking to the early church, calls the contrast between human birth and spiritual rebirth, the difference between ***death and life***. Without Christ, we live by the rules of the one who controls our present world system and we are by nature concerned primarily with pleasing ourselves. When we acknowledge Christ as Savior and Lord ***we actually pass from death to life!*** In more practical terms, we have been reassigned from a life where we by nature lived to serve ourselves to a life where we are called to ***selfless service to the King of King and Lord of Lords!***

Can you grasp the enormity and significance of God has done through Christ? I pray that you can, because I cannot find words that can adequately express this awesome miracle! What I do know and can express with utmost certainty is that in order to live the life of service to the King we desperately need a drastic change in 'diet'. The Apostle Paul agrees:

And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. Romans 12:2 (NKJV)

If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. Colossians 3:1-2 (NKJB)

So What?

Our new birth in Christ is, to put it mildly, a radical change. Think about it. ***Death to life. Darkness to light.*** In order to grow and become strong in our faith, we need a change of 'diet' that is equally as radical. We are in charge of maintaining the proper spiritual diet. The environment and culture in which we live and conduct our daily lives is like that dining facility at Ft. Carson that offers cuisine designed to appeal to just about any appetite. We are continuously offered a multitude of products, services, entertainment venues, opportunities for quick riches, and other 'stuff' designed to help us 'self-actualize'. Like the dining facility that does not and indeed cannot meet very specialized physical dietary requirements, ***a Godless culture and value system does not and cannot meet the spiritual dietary needs of new life in Christ.*** We can by choice consume whatever we choose, but an improper diet is hazardous to our health!

Here's the bottom line. Our old nature (dead in trespasses and sin) does not just disappear when become Christians. We are however given a new nature (alive in Christ). Our modern culture feeds, almost exclusively, the dead person. I don't know about you, but I've never seen anyone place a steak dinner at a gravesite!

If we are constantly being fed Happy Meals for the dead man, where do we get the right stuff? Jesus, speaking to Jewish leaders of His time said:

"I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me. It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life. " John 6:35, 56-57, 63. (NKJV)

Jesus is the bread of life. The world (our culture) has nothing of real substance to offer.

What does that mean in practical terms? How can we overcome the disastrous effects of all the junk food?

I'm so glad you asked? Here's a start:

Don't go to the junk food bar. (No rocket science there!)

Eat the right stuff! Begin with daily hearty helpings of the major spiritual food groups:

The Word of God - disciplined study.

Prayer - communicate with the Master.

Like minded fellowship (hang out with other Christians).

Don't forget healthy snacks between your main meals. The music we listen can fit in this category. I am sure you can think of others.

Food for thought - How's your diet?