

Heart to Heart

Devotional Thoughts for Women

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Just Say “No”

My husband and I are one in many ways, but this week we added a new dimension to the list: we are now one in the low sodium diet realm. Yeah us! After a surgery removing one of my kidneys earlier this year, I had to adopt a drastically changed diet. My husband was sympathetic but didn't sympathize with me to the point of actually joining me. After a scary ER visit which revealed his very high blood pressure, he is now willingly on board with me on this low sodium thing. He was initially a little down about not being able to eat some of his favorite things (like Chinese food!), but we talked about it being a matter of perspective. I understand how hard it can be to “Just say no”, but I told him that when I am tempted to eat something I know I shouldn't, I don't look at it as some wonderful pleasure I'm being denied, but rather, I look at it and think “dialysis.” That pretty much does it right there. I suggested to him to try the same strategy – looking at the “naughty” food he wants and thinking “stroke.” When we both realistically view those high sodium foods as something dangerous and painful to us, we are able to overcome the temptation and shun the things we know would cause us great or even irreparable harm.

All of these reflections made me make comparisons to how we look at sin. I'm afraid that we sometimes look at temptations and feel frustrated that we're “not allowed” to give into it, but must reject it because it's “supposed to be what's best for us.” When we think that way, as if we're being deprived of something wonderful, we are looking at sin with the wrong perspective. It is true that sin is pleasurable, or we wouldn't be tempted to do it. (Hebrews 11:25)

But when we see sin as God sees it, that pleasure is completely overshadowed by some important truths:

1. **Sin is always harmful.** Satan loves to deceive us into thinking no harm will come if we give into temptation. He began using that argument at the beginning of time with Eve in the Garden of Eden, and we all know the sad outcome of her believing that deception. Back to the food analogy – My husband and I could eat one really high sodium meal and it wouldn't automatically kill us right then, but it would start causing damage in our bodies that would reach a point of no return if we continued down that path. Sin is always harmful, and we must look honestly at the damage, both short term and long, that it will most certainly do.
2. **Sin hurts.** If we would only stop and consider the pain our sin will cause – to ourselves in long-lasting consequences, maybe to others who will suffer because of what we've done, but ultimately to God the Creator who is being rebelled against by His creation. When Joseph was being tempted by Potiphar's wife, he wasn't lamenting or struggling with the fact that he knew he shouldn't lie with another man's wife, but instead cried out that he could not do such a great wickedness and sin against his God. (Genesis 39:9) Joseph didn't see pleasure being denied because he was looking at the pain that would result.
3. **Sin cost God dearly.** Because of my sin and your sin, God gave the very best He had, the blood of His dear Son. It cost the life of Jesus Christ. There is always a price to be paid for sin. No one has ever or will ever “get away with it.” Romans 6:23 reminds us, “*The wages of sin is death...*” It was our sin that caused Christ to leave the splendors of heaven and humble Himself here on earth as a man even to death on a cross. (Philippians 2:5-8) How can we look at any temptation and see a pleasure denied when we see Jesus hanging on that cross for us?

Satan will continue to try to tempt us with those things he thinks we strongly desire, but God has promised each of us a way of escape. (I Corinthians 10:13) He is faithful and will not let us be tempted in a way that we cannot overcome. It is up to us to fight the temptation and seek the way of escape by taking a good hard look at sin for what it really is. It is harmful, it is painful, and it cost the lifeblood of Jesus Christ. Looking at sin rightly is a powerful motivator to just say, “No.”

~Heather Pryor

Ladies Bible Class – Mark your calendars for **September 16th!** Our class will begin studying the book of Hebrews. Don't forget to read that entire book of the Bible before we begin the study.

Search the Scriptures

“They Said 'No'”

- 1. Who refused a bribe in Acts 8:20? _____
- 2. Who refused payment for a miracle he performed in II Kings 5:16? _____
- 3. Who refused to accept a reward in Genesis 14:22-24?

Answers to last month's quiz

“Bible Students”

- | | |
|----------------------|---|
| <u>d.</u> 1. Ezra | a. He knew the scriptures from childhood. |
| <u>e.</u> 2. Bereans | b. He said he loved the law of the Lord. |
| <u>b.</u> 3. David | c. He was told to meditate on God's Word daily. |
| <u>a.</u> 4. Timothy | d. He was an expert in the words of the Lord. |
| <u>c.</u> 5. Joshua | e. They searched the scriptures daily. |

RECIPE CORNER

"She...provides food for her household." ~Prov. 31:15

Since some of us are on a low-sodium diet, I'll be good and print some heart-healthy recipes this edition.

LEMON GARLIC FISH

- 4 fish fillets (tilapia, cod, etc.)
- 3 T. fresh lemon juice
- 1 T. melted unsalted butter
- 1 tsp. minced garlic
- 2 tsp. dried parsley flakes
- pepper to taste

Place fish fillets on a sheet of heavy-duty aluminum foil and place in a baking dish coated with cooking spray. Pour lemon juice over fish, then drizzle with melted butter. Combine the spices and sprinkle evenly over the fish. Seal the foil over the fish to retain moisture. Bake at 375 degrees for about 30 minutes.

SWEET POTATO SLAW

- 1 (20 oz.) can crushed pineapple, with juice
- 2/3 cup shredded, unsweetened coconut
- 1/2 cup slivered almonds
- 1/3 cup raisins
- 1 1/2 cups shredded raw sweet potato (peeled)
- 1 1/2 cups shredded apple (peeled)

Combine all ingredients in a large bowl and chill for several hours before serving.

NO or LOW-SODIUM SNACKS:

- Natural almonds, cashews, or mixed nuts
- Raw vegetables
- Fresh fruit
- Celery stuffed with all natural, no salt peanut butter
- Tortilla chips made with beans such as the Beanitos brand
- Millet & flax crackers
- Lily's chocolate bars (my favorite!) - Sugar free and zero sodium