

Have you ever checked the ingredients to what you're eating, and have you heard the old saying, "You are what you eat?" As is too easily seen, this is proven true today through the many preservatives and unhealthy additives to foods to increase their taste and delight. Unfortunately, these eating habits will lead to an unhealthy life.

The same is true for what we digest spiritually. Too many of us don't give enough evaluation to the ingredients that make up the teachings of our spiritual leaders. Are there emotional and cultural additives that we've become accustomed to? Is there a way to make sure that what we are consuming spiritually will keep us spiritually healthy?

The apostle Paul writes to the Romans to watch out for those whose teaching causes divisions and give obstacles to spiritual growth and unity. Whereas so many are quick to enter into debates and controversies that get the blood pumping, he encourages the church towards obedience and innocence of evil.

Romans 16:17-19 New International Version (NIV)

17 I urge you, brothers and sisters, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them. 18 For such people are not serving our Lord Christ, but their own appetites. By smooth talk and flattery they deceive the minds of naive people. 19 Everyone has heard about your obedience, so I rejoice because of you; but I want you to be wise about what is good, and innocent about what is evil.

- THE CAUTION

vs. 17 - "watch out" - same idea as in Matthew 16:6 "*beware the yeast of the Pharisees*"

- THE CONFLICT

vs. 17 - "contrary to the teaching you have learned"

2 Ti 4:3-4 "*You're going to find that there will be times when people will have no stomach for solid teaching, but will fill up on spiritual junk food—catchy opinions that tickle their fancy. They'll turn their backs on truth and chase mirages.*"

- THE CONSEQUENCE

vs. 17 - "cause divisions and put obstacles in your way"

1 Timothy 6:3-5 - "*constant friction*"

- THE CONCLUSION

vs. 17 - "keep away from them"

Titus 3:9-10 NLT "*Do not get involved in foolish discussions about spiritual pedigrees[a] or in quarrels and fights about obedience to Jewish laws. These things are useless and a waste of time. 10 If people are causing divisions among you, give a first and second warning. After that, have nothing more to do with them.*"

- THEIR COMMITMENT

vs. 18 - "not serving Christ, but their own appetites"

2 Timothy 3:1-5 - "lovers of themselves, rather than lovers of God"

- THEIR CRAFT

vs. 18 - "by smooth talk and flattery"

Proverbs 26:23-25

25 "Smooth words may hide a wicked heart, just as a pretty glaze covers a clay pot.
24 People may cover their hatred with pleasant words, but they're deceiving you.
25 They pretend to be kind, but don't believe them. Their hearts are full of many evils."

- THEIR CAUSE
vs. 18 - "they deceive the minds of naive people"
Matthew 24:24-25 - "24 For false messiahs and false prophets will rise up and perform great signs and wonders so as to deceive, if possible, even God's chosen ones."
- THE COMMENDATION
vs. 19 - "your obedience, so I rejoice because of you"
- THE COMMAND
vs. 19 - "be wise about what is good, and innocent about what is evil"

#1 - PAY ATTENTION to what your digesting spiritually.

5 ingredients to watch out for

- 1 - people pleasing - vs 18 "flattery" - the don't speak the truth b/c they can't offend
- 2 - easy-fixes - vs 18 "naive people" - undisciplined, lazy, don't make me work for it
- 3 - feel goodisms - vs 18 "own appetites" - can't make a diet of it!
- 4 - easy-listening - vs. 18 "smooth talk" - *Hmmmm uuuhmmmmh* sermons
be careful if you're always agreeing, pastor should make you think!
- 5 - substitutions - vs. 18 "deceive minds" can't change
"sin" to "mistakes"
"holiness" to "be a better person"
"atonement" for "get right with God"
"sanctification" to "be the best you, you can be!"

#2 - Pursue OBEDIENCE - not controversy.

What comes out of you

- exalts God
- exalts YOU?!

*** a footnote of denominations**

There is a major difference between DIVISION and DIVERSITY
DISSENSION and DIFFERENCES

Be careful of anyone who says that their right simply because they go to a different church or someone who says their church is the ONLY correct church. You will find in heaven there are no denominations.

Luke 9, and 22

24 A dispute also arose among them as to which of them was considered to be greatest.
25 Jesus said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors. 26 But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves. 27 For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am among you as one who serves. 28 You are those who have stood by me in my trials. 29 And I confer on you a kingdom, just as my Father conferred one on me,"

We break bread with anyone no matter their creativity in worship who affirms these words of the church:

We believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
begotten from the Father before all ages,
God from God,
Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made;
of the same substance as the Father.
Through him all things were made.

For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven;
he became incarnate by the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary,
and was made human.
He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered and was buried.
The third day he rose again, according to the Scriptures.
He ascended to heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again with glory
to judge the living and the dead.
His kingdom will never end.

And we believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord, the giver of life.
He proceeds from the Father and the Son,
and with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified.
He spoke through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.
We affirm one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look forward to the resurrection of the dead,
and to life in the world to come. Amen.