

OCTOBER

Feasting On God's Word

BY: Virginia Justice



“When I was but a girl in days of childhood, I used to play till evening shadows come; then traveling down that old familiar pathway, I’d hear my mother call at set of sun, ‘Come home, come home, it’s supper time, the evening shadows fall; Come home, come home, it’s supper time...’” (*Supper time* by Ira Stanphill).

As a child, every supper was a feast! Why? Because it came from Mama. Granted, I was not as excited when a bowl of ‘mashed potatoes’ turned out to be a bowl of mashed turnips, but there was always a food I enjoyed!

So, it is with feasting on God’s Word. The feast is set before you, but it’s up to you to sit up at the table and begin to eat. There is no force feeding, no “You’ll sit right there until your plate is clean!” Only you can choose to feast at the table spread before you.

There is joy in the feast, there is pleasure, there is fulfillment, there is contentment, there is peace! Even when parts of the feast are not to your liking, you will always find provision for your needs.

Just as our physical body has appetites and needs, so does our soul. Physically, we need nourishment. Spiritually, we need nourishment. When longing for peace, happiness, and contentment, we are satisfied through feasting on His Word.

DESIRE TO FEAST: The Sweetness of Scripture

As a child, our family of four sat down to supper every night. Once the blessing was given, my dad always looked at my mom, and with a twinkle in his eye, asked the same question, “What’s for dessert? I want to be sure I leave plenty of room.”

My dear mother was a great cook and a wonderful baker. Everyone loved her cooking! A friend recently said to me, “I just made your mom’s Jam Cake! I have several of her recipes and I use them all the time.” At our Poole Family Reunion last year, a cousin brought a Pumpkin Cake with a note that announced, *Aunt Wilkie’s Recipe*. Mama’s cooking left a lasting impression.

Even more important is the lasting impression God’s Word can make in our lives. Sweetness can be found in Scripture, sweetness that is a balm to your soul, an encouragement to your spirit, and uplifting to your daily walk with Jesus. But that impression, that sweetness can only be enjoyed if we partake of what is offered.

His Word tells us:

“How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!” (Psalm 119:103).

“For He satisfies the longing soul, and the hungry soul he fills with good things” (Psalm 107:9).

“Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good! Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him!” (Psalm 34:8).

When I sat down to supper, just a taste was never enough. I always wanted more, eating until my hunger was satisfied. So, it should be with God’s Word!

Something to Consider:

Do you find God’s Word sweet to your taste? Why? Why not?

Is finding time to enjoy the sweetness of His Word difficult for you?

DAILY FEASTING: Developing a Habit of Scripture Reading

One of the most important things you can teach yourself is the habit of daily feasting on God’s Word. The question is: how?

Today’s world offers us so many opportunities to read/listen/learn daily. We have Christian radio and television, the Bible and Bible resource apps on our phones, and multiple personal devices that make the Bible easily accessible. Saturate your day with Scripture and music that uplifts God and uplifts you. Listening to Christian radio and podcasts will draw you closer to the One you long to know better.

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied” (Matthew 5:6).

“The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the LORD lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace” (Numbers 6:24-26).

God’s word encourages us to seek Him daily. “Give us this day our daily bread” (Matthew 6:11).

Something to Consider:

What do you hunger for in your life? Is it God’s presence, His peace, or something else?

Jesus is your Savior and Lord...do you want Him to be your best friend?

Do you want Him to walk with you daily?

For that to happen, you must have the closeness to God you crave and need.

You must spend time with Him. I can hear it now, “*Time?*” If you had any idea of my schedule, my responsibilities, etc. True, I do not know yours, but I know mine, and it’s crazy!

Have you ever wondered how some can get so much done in a day, and you struggle to get the dishes out of the sink?

Do you spend too much of your time complaining that you do not have time to get it all done? Stop!

Take a deep breath and think about it. We all have the same 24 hours in a day.

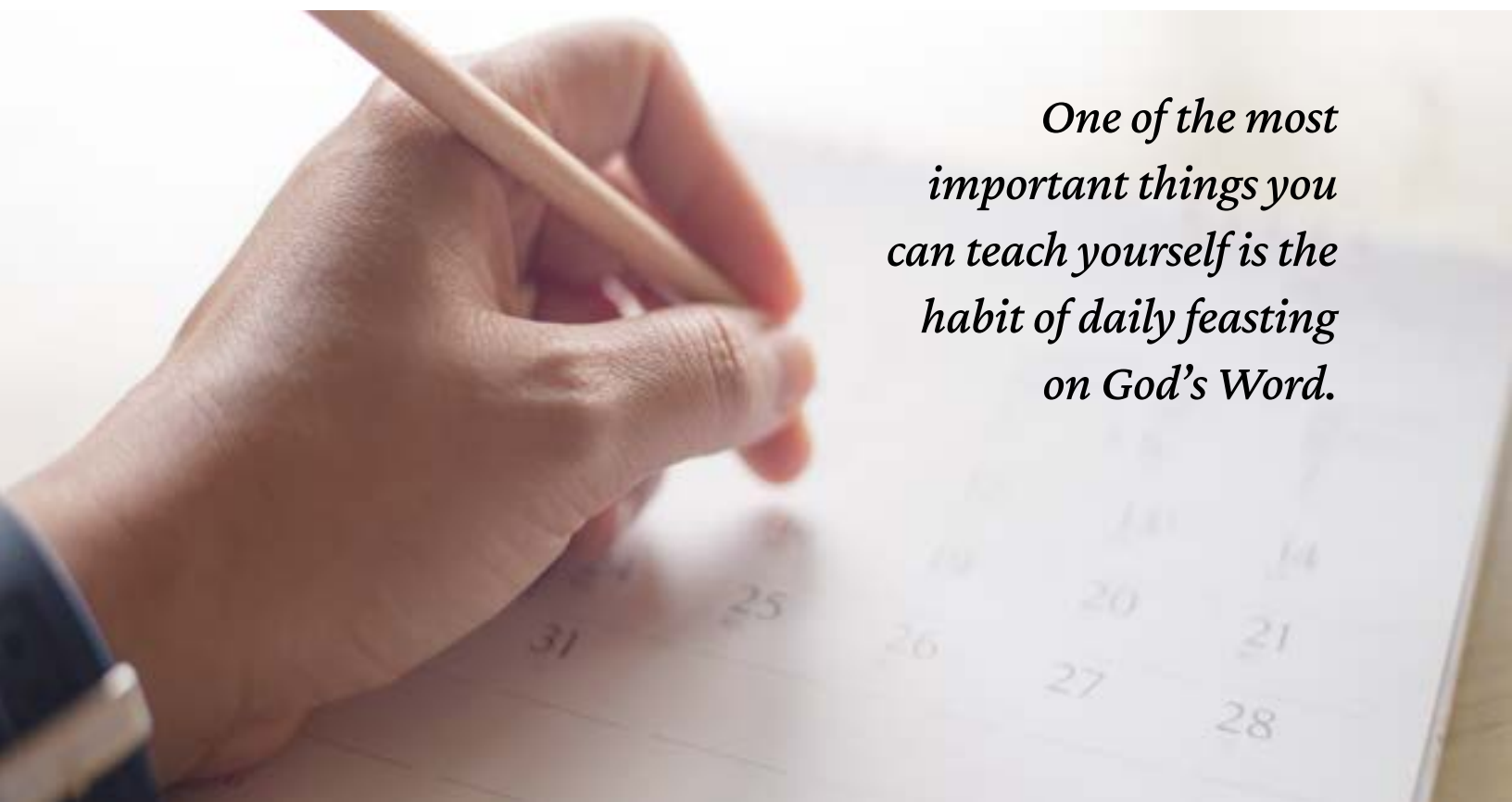
Did you get that? Each of us has a 24-hour day given to us. How we use it is a choice we make. It may take some extra planning and some extra effort on our part, but we can carve out time to spend with the Lord every day.

First, set aside a time for personal, daily moments in God’s Word. It might not be easy the devil will distract you in every way possible. Set a specific time and also choose a backup time. Depending on your daily schedule, your Bible study may vary every day. But determine to carve out a time each day to spend in God’s Word. Corrie Ten Boom said, “If the Devil cannot make us bad, he will make us busy.” Resolve not to fall into his trap.

Make up your mind and do it. Once it becomes a daily habit, you will wonder how you ever managed without it; it will be a resting place for you, a haven, a place of encouragement and peace.

Remember:

*“When your day is hard,
in the presence of the Lord.*

A close-up photograph of a person's hand holding a wooden pencil, poised to write on a calendar. The calendar is open to a page showing dates from 19 to 28. The hand is in the foreground, slightly out of focus, while the calendar page is in the background, also slightly out of focus. The lighting is soft and natural.

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*He knows what you're going through,
He sees your struggle.
Your broken heart is safe with God.
He counts your tears
and hears your silent prayers.
Your Father has not forgotten
or forsaken you.” (Author unknown)*

CHALLENGES AND CHANGES FOUND IN FEASTING

Scripture provides us the joy and peace we seek in our lives. In its sweetness, we find strength for each new day. As Christians, we are to live for God every day. Scripture challenges us to be all that we can be for Jesus.

The devil is alive and well! We see that in our world with more and more frequency. Ideologies, beliefs, lifestyles that are so far from God and His teachings for His creation abound all around us.

“Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour” (1 Peter 5:8).

“I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you” (Psalm 119:11).

“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path” (Psalm 119:105).

One of the greatest challenges we face is obedience. *Yes, obedience.*

Obedience does not come easily. Yet, obedience is foundational in our walk with God. From the Ten Commandments: “Honor your father and mother, that your days may be long upon the land...” (Exodus 20:12). “Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord” (Colossians 3:20).

Look for a moment at the word *obedience*. Notice the small word in the center: Obe—*die*—nce. That small word has significance when you consider the definition of *obedience*. Simply and somewhat profoundly, obedience means you die to self. To be truly obedient, you must die to what you want, what you think is

best, what you believe is the answer, and what you desire. As naturally selfish human beings, that is a tough pill to swallow!

Have you ever known a child who enjoyed being told *no*? It is doubtful. After children, grandchildren, and forty years in education, I have yet to meet one. You would be hard pressed to even find an adult who appreciates hearing *no*. Yet, it is part of life. The word is a great teaching/learning tool! Although not easy to hear or accept, it is necessary.

God's ways are best.

“For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope” (Jeremiah 29:11).

God does not tell us to understand. We are to trust.

“Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make straight your paths” (Proverbs 3:5-6).

God's timing is always right. Yours is not.

“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts” (Isaiah 55:8-9).

God will never leave you. People will.

“...for he has said, ‘I will never leave you nor forsake you’” (Hebrews 13:5).

The challenge of obedience is one we must accept. Obedience is a daily struggle! We must obey God first and foremost. Study of His Word directs us in the obedience He expects from us. His laws and commands are evident when we read and study His word. The more we read, the more we study, the more we learn regarding His law, His commands. True happiness and peace come from obedience to God.

Accepting the challenge of obedience leads to other challenges. Accepting those challenges will lead to changes in our lives. Obedience to God will bring



*You can give no greater gift
than encouragement.*

changes in the way we live, the places we go, the things we say, the things we do, and the way others see us.

Something to Consider:

Is change difficult for you? Why or why not?

Is change necessary for you to move forward?

Remember change is not bad, it's just different.

Do you struggle with obedience?

**SHARING THE FEAST: Encouraging Others
in the Word**

Encouragement! You can give no greater gift than encouragement. Encouragement comes in many forms—a smile, a hug, a word, a card, a shared experience, and most of all, sharing Scripture.

Dr. David Jeremiah wrote, “Even Jesus needed the help of an angel in the most difficult moment of His life. He was in the Garden of Gethsemane, praying

to the Father about the path ahead of Him—a path leading to the cross of Calvary. And ‘an angel appeared to Him from heaven, strengthening Him.’ So great was His anguish that He sweated drops of blood as He prayed (Luke 22:43-44). If Jesus needed strength and support in a trying moment of His life, how much more might we or others in our lives need the same?”

Jesus provides the help and encouragement we need through His Word and the Holy Spirit. He also gives us opportunities to share with others—in our family, at church, at work, during a trip to the store, over lunch with a friend, or simply throughout our day. Sometimes, these opportunities are placed right in our path; other times, we must intentionally seek them out.

“A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver” (Proverbs 25:11). Solomon reminds us a word carefully chosen and spoken at the right time is

of great value—like a drink of cool water to a parched and hurting soul.

You may be thinking, there’s nothing I could ever say that would meet those qualifications. Oh, really? How do you know? You don’t! God, through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, can use your words to make a difference. You may never be aware of the difference you have made in someone’s life.

My daddy was my hero, my best friend, my counselor, my go-to guy! God called him home to Heaven at the young age of 66. Heartbroken does not begin to describe my state of being during that time. A large crowd attended his visitation, each one speaking words of kind remembrance of him, expressing sorrow to Mama, my sister, Bonnie, and me. Words much appreciated. One person stands out to me. As I stood at the casket, deep in my sorrow, a friend approached, placed her arms around me, held me close, and cried with me. She never spoke one single word. Yet, she shared my grief in a way that I hold dear today, 38 years later.

So, you see, you do have the ability to help, encourage, and uplift everyone you encounter. Sometimes through a kind word, a sent card, a prepared meal—or most importantly, a shared Scripture. Each of these simple acts can make a lasting difference.

Often, you may never know the impact you’ve made. But now and then, God may graciously allow you a glimpse.

Through forty years in Christian Education, the Lord allowed me the privilege of working with many, many children. During my years of teaching third grade (the best grade to teach), He allowed me the opportunity to share in many young lives. Oh, I loved my little ladies and gentlemen!

One year I taught a group of children who were especially frightened of storms.

At the hint of a rain drop and a slight rumble of thunder, their anxieties began to rise. And, wouldn’t you know it, that year we were in a classroom located at the outside corner of the building with more windows

than other classrooms, and also that year we seemed to experience more stormy days than ever before!

After pausing and praying for God’s protection over us, we attempted to continue our lessons. Praying helped, but I still saw anxious faces and hearts before me. It troubled me greatly! I wanted to help them! And God gave me an idea.

We memorized Psalm 56:3: What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee.” My husband helped me print and laminate business-sized cards with that verse. Each student received a card with instructions to keep it with them, or place it on their mirror at home, or in some prominent place as a reminder of God’s presence and promise.

Years later, a former student stopped to speak to me. (It was always a thrill for me when one of my children took the time to chat.) This young man said, “Mrs. Justice, I want to show you something.” He opened his wallet, pulling out the small, laminated card I had given him in third grade! He said, “See, I’ve never forgotten.” With tears in my eyes, I thanked him, told him how very proud I was of him, that I loved him, and encouraged him to always remember that promise. This young man was in the 8th grade. I was overwhelmed with joy and gratitude to God for the gift God gave to me that day!

Something to Consider:

Do you know of someone who could use a word of encouragement?

Have you seen or heard of anyone who could use some help?

Are you willing to share with others the feast God has provided?

Listen! Do you hear His call—come home to His Word—enjoy the feast!! 

About the Writer: Virginia Poole Justice is a wife, mother, and “Mama Jen” to four grandchildren. She served 30 years as a pastor’s wife and 40 years as an elementary teacher and principal. A member of New Hope FWB Church in Joelton, TN, Virginia enjoys time with family and friends.