

Bland Diet

When I was a student at the University of Oregon in the late 1960's I began to develop stomach trouble. I tried the usual regimen of antacids and staying away from caffeinated beverages and alcohol, but it was to no avail. So, I "took the bull by the horns", and went to the infirmary to see the doctor.

The medical exam and associated medical tests revealed the presence of what was called a duodenal deformity which, in their words, "was probably due to an active duodenal ulcer". I was ordered to commence treatment immediately. Treatment in those days consisted of frequent feedings of soft foods, with little if any seasoning. I was to avoid coffee, colas, and any beverages which would tend to stimulate gastric secretions. I was also to take antacid tablets on a regular basis and to avoid stress if at all possible. Keep in mind that it was about 1968 or 1969 and the war in Viet Nam was raging. I was 19 or 20 years old and had two choices in life: Stay in College or go to Viet Nam. Neither seemed viable options at that time.

The diabolical feeding torture which was dreamed up for me by the well meaning physicians was called a "bland diet". In my less jaundiced times I referred to it as "mush and boiled eggs"...Salt and pepper were taboo. I did have to eat pudding or something between meals, and, because of the specialized nature of this "bland diet", I was required to go to a special dorm to eat my meals....Being sequestered from my friends. The good news is that either because of, or in spite of, medical treatment my diagnosed condition improved (the process of diagnosis of the condition was almost as bad as the treatment for the condition). To my knowledge the treating physicians had no idea about the bacteria *Helicobacter Pylori* which is now believed to cause as much as eighty percent of duodenal ulcers.[1]

I find that too often, Christians take their walk with Christ with even less enthusiasm than I did my "bland diet". Jesus said that He had come that we may have life and have it more abundantly[2]. If He lives within our hearts in the form of the Holy Spirit, should we not (myself included) live as if we had a reason to be joyful? I was not happy with my duodenal ulcer, but even as a nineteen or twenty year old college student, I feel as if I had a certain amount of joy present in my life. I could not change the situation: ulcer, draft status, dissatisfaction with college, unhappiness with my social life, and believed further restrictions on my life, but I could truly change the way I interpreted the situation I had problems with. My mother always told me "God grant me the serenity to accept the things I can not change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference". It is this latter category of the three things my mother told me that I did then and still do have problems with. Perhaps it all stems from a willingness, or non willingness, just as my initial reluctance for a diet of "mush and boiled eggs", to obey God's instructions to me in the form of His written word. Or a still small voice as Elijah received from God on Horeb[3]; this still small voice is one which emanates from teachings in His Word.

The Bible is written because of man's failure to obey God's instructions stemming from the Garden of Eden and his traversing through the conquests of other nations, who followed their own path rather than seek one which was pleasing to God.

In a parallel fashion to my own failures, the societies laid down by mankind have failed to produce the satisfaction of success they seek after. Like the Gallant Knight in the poem Eldorado, man, as both an individual and as a society finds himself traveling "over the mountains of the moon, down the Valley of the Shadow"[4] in a vain and self serving attempt to find the elusive satisfaction of this non existent Eldorado. Consequently, we fall prey to our own lusts and suffer the fruit of our misplaced values.

The Book of Psalms is replete with Psalms of Praise and Adoration of God the Father, and His deliverance is sought after. Modern society is plagued by ulcers, heart attacks, depression, cancer, and other stress related maladies. We then try to produce an Eldorado style palliative treatment which only produces more problems and a dismal out look on life. As in the Book of Ecclesiastes, we find ourselves reaching out like Solomon to the many false Gods this present society has to offer only to fall victim to the plague of extolling the virtues of a false god[5]. We have been attacked by Satan's spiritual version of *Helicobacter Pylori* and have a spiritual ulcer as a result.

We then must fall back on the treatment, a spiritual version of a “bland diet” wherein we are given milk not solid food until we are again ready to return to the spiritual solid food in the walk with Jesus Christ and the concomitant indwelling of the Holy Spirit[6].

Jesus, the Divine Physician has diagnosed our problem and paid the price of our treatment. We must only agree to believe in Him Who died for us and we will have the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in our lives to destroy Satan’s Spiritual version of Helicobacter Pylori which is slowly but surely killing us.

Therefore, in a fashion similar to a spiritual version of a bland diet, we must start with a diet rich in spiritual milk, until we recuperate and mature in the Lord. We will, of course, continue seeking out the Divine Medical Team, Essence, Expression and Recognition[7] in One Divine Physician. This will bring us back into a full zest and spice filled service to He Who created us and put us here for service To Him.

[1] Wikipedia reference from the internet

[2] John 10:10

[3] 1 Kings 19: 10-13

[4] Poe, Edgar Allan poem Eldorado

[5] Bibliographic reference: Ecclesiastes miscellaneous chapters

[6] 1Corinthians 3:2; Hebrews 5:11-6:12; 1 Peter 2:2,3;

[7] Idea generated by a “radio preacher” whose name I cannot recall