

Milk Drinkers and Meat Eaters

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake from multiple sources)

Introduction:

A. 1Cor. 3:1-3

1. The church at Corinth was rife with problems; 13 of 16 chapters address a total of 17 problems.
2. They were divisive and immature spiritually; and, due to their immature nature, Paul had to feed them with milk and not meat.
 - a. He may have been verbally chastising them with this metaphor to highlight their childish behavior that inhibited their development and growth.
3. Milk is for the spiritually undeveloped in Christ.
 - a. Those who are in this condition should not be ashamed of this any more than a baby should be ashamed of the diet tailored for his developing body.
4. Meat is for those who are spiritually mature in Christ.
 - a. This is no cause for pride, as it is no one arrives at maturity independent of others: the help of God, the fellowship of the saints, the counsel and teaching of the faithful, the encouragement of family and friends, etc.
 - b. However, just as his salvation requires the outside help of the grace of God, the blood of Christ, and the power of the Gospel, yet he must also apply himself in faith and obedience.
 - c. So it is in growth: regardless of how much outside help we receive, we must apply our faith and diligence to becoming mature in Christ.
 - d. 2Tim. 2:15; 2Peter 1:8-10
5. Milk is (Greek gala - milk; Strong's G1051) the basic, elemental teachings of the Gospel first learned by new believers.
6. Meat is (Greek word broma - food, meat, victuals; Strong's G1033) the more solid, complete and deeper consideration of the Gospel.

B. Milk versus meat.

1. The content of milk and meat is similar.
2. The consistency of milk and meat differ.
3. The consumption of milk and meat differ.

I. THE CONTENT OF MILK AND MEAT IS SIMILAR

A. "There is no difference at all between the truths of a spiritual milk diet and a spiritual solid food diet, except in detail and depth. All doctrine may have both milk and meat elements. It is not that we are to be continually learning new doctrines in order to grow, but that we are to be learning more about the doctrines we have known for years. A new Christian might explain the atonement, for example, as 'Christ died for my sins.' A long-time student of the Word, on the other hand, would go into such things as regeneration, justification, substitution, and propitiation. One explanation would not be

truer than the other; but the first would be milk and the second, solid food” (John MacArthur, 1Corinthians, 71-72).

- B. Consider their makeup: both milk and meat have protein, water, and fats; to be expected as they both originate from the same source; the content of milk and meat is essentially the same.
 - 1. This principle is true in education. Reading, writing, mathematics, history, etc... from grade school through college, the same things are taught with increasing levels of complexity.
- C. The content of spiritual milk and solid food is essentially the same as well.
 - 1. Spiritual milk contains the same doctrine as spiritual meat.
 - a. All teaching comes from the word of God - 2Tim. 3:16-17
 - b. It is the only source for spiritual milk and meat - 1Cor. 10:3-4
 - 2. We grow by consuming both - Matt. 11:29; Psalm 119:73; Matt. 5:6
- D. Whether milk or meat is consumed, we still study the same truth.

II. THE CONSISTENCY OF MILK AND MEAT DIFFER

- A. Jewish law forbade the consumption of milk and meat together. The Hebrew Christians would have understood and strongly felt this rebuke.
 - 1. Hebrew: בחלב בשר, basar bechalav, literally “meat in milk,” are prohibited according to Jewish law. This dietary law, basic to kashrut, is based on two verses in the Book of Exodus, which forbid “boiling a young goat in its mother's milk” and a third repetition of this prohibition in Deuteronomy. (Wikipedia)
 - a. In all likelihood, it was because the pagans believed that cooking an animal in its own mother's milk would supernaturally increase its power to nourish and heal. Also a form of barbarian cruelty.
 - 2. According to the Talmud, these three almost identical references are the basis for three distinct dietary laws:
 - a. The prohibition against cooking a mixture of milk and meat,
 - b. The prohibition against eating cooked mixture of milk and meat,
 - c. The prohibition against deriving any benefit from a cooked mixture of milk and meat.
- B. Consider their physical properties:
 - 1. Milk is a liquid; meat is a solid.
 - 2. Milk is easy to handle, divide, combine, transport, dispense and consume.
 - 3. Meat is much more difficult to process, divide, transport safely, prepare, dispense, and consume.
- C. Spiritual milk and meat differ in consistency.
 - 1. Spiritual milk is teaching easy to understand and handle - Heb. 6:1
 - 2. Spiritual meat is teaching more difficult to divide and process.
 - a. 2Peter 3:15-16
- D. Paul's manner with the Thessalonians grew more mature as they grew.
 - 1. Gentle as a nurse - 1Thes. 2:7
 - 2. Correcting as a caring father - 1Thes. 2:11; 2Thes. 3:10

III. THE CONSUMPTION OF MILK AND MEAT DIFFERS

- A. There is a difference in how milk and meat is consumed.
 - 1. Milk is drunk, it goes down quick and easy.
 - 2. Meat must be chewed well, requiring teeth and patience.
 - 3. Babies drink milk because they have no teeth to chew and are impatient to be satisfied. Adults can eat meat because they have teeth and eat at a measured pace even when hungry.
- B. Spiritual food differs in how it is consumed.
 - 1. Spiritual milk is given to babes in Christ to grow - 1Peter 2:2
 - a. Many brethren prefer it to meat and are content to live on milk because it is quick and easy to eat, perhaps even objecting to meat when it is offered to them.
 - 2. Spiritual meat is given to mature Christians - Heb. 5:14
- C. Problems occur when one partakes of the wrong spiritual diet.
 - 1. Just as babies need to drink milk to grow and would fail to thrive if offered meat, so new Christians must have milk to grow; fundamentals.
 - a. Heb. 6:1-2 - These things must be learned first in order to create a foundation for later building and growth.
 - 2. Mature Christians must be fed solid food or spiritual meat; if they do not get such food, they will become spiritual babies again - Heb. 5:12-13
 - a. To demand milk when one ought to be eating meat is to return to carnality - 1Cor. 3:1-3
 - b. Folks who have been Christians for a while ought to know these things and have no excuse not to have an appetite the meat of the word.
 - c. Don't pass it off on circumstances or your feelings of inadequacy or your background; multitudes of people with scores of more disabilities and limitations than you have thrived on the meat of the word. See it for what it is -- laziness.

Conclusion:

- A. "The Bible was composed in such a way that as beginners mature, its meaning grows with them" (Augustine).
- B. Jer. 15:16; Job 23:12; Psalm 119:103
- C. When your hunger for the word of God becomes greater than your hunger for bread, when your first and last thoughts of the day are meditations on Holy Writ, when your opening and closing question in any test or trial is "What saith the will of God?", then you can know that you are spiritually mature. Until that time, the young in the faith will eagerly imbibe the sincere milk of the word, and the older disciple will hungrily ingest the solid food of the doctrine of Christ. -- prb