

1 Feed the Heart

2 Mayo Clinic – Study

- According to a new study from Mayo Clinic researchers, breakfast is, in fact, the most important meal of the day, at least when it comes to the health of your heart.
- Throughout the course of 20 years, doctors tracked the breakfast habits and health statistics of some 2,100 individuals.
- The monitoring began in early adolescence and continued into adulthood.
- The goal of the study was simple: to determine the positive or negative overall health effects of skipping breakfast.

3 Study – The Findings

- Respondents who grew up in homes where breakfast was skipped or who later in life chose to pass on breakfast as adults—showed significantly higher levels of heart-wrenching health statistics.
 - Their waistlines were larger.
 - Their cholesterol was higher.
 - Their insulin levels were out of whack.
- The bottom line?
 - Their hearts were sick.

4 Study – The Results

- In fact, many doctors who have studied the report now recommend waking up and eating some kind – in fact, almost any kind – of substantial breakfast—as an essential step in avoiding serious heart trouble later in life.
- So our moms were right, sit down and eat your breakfast.

5 The Big One

- Redd Foxx who played Fred Sanford on the TV sitcom called Sanford & Son, frequently faked having heart attacks to get sympathy and get out of trouble.
- What was the name of his deceased wife that he would call out to?
 - Esther
 - Elizabeth
 - Mary
 - Ruth

6 Spiritual Heart Trouble

- Moms, doctors and the Mayo Clinic aren't the only ones concerned about heart trouble. So is Jesus.
- Jesus gives his disciples – and us – this clear command: “Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me.” (John 14:1 NIV)
 - Worry, fear, anxiety, or stress

- Cause us to feel . . .
 - Loss of hope
 - Lack of faith
 - Panic attack
 - Pangs of uncertainty

7 Spiritual Heart Trouble

- Again, the heart problems that Jesus is talking about are those things that . . .
 - keep us up at night thinking about money,
 - biting our nails when you're worried about a child, or
 - phone call with a friend needing advice for a crumbling marriage.
- All of these are kinds of problems we've all experienced.
- It can be the kind of heart trouble, faith trouble and lack-of-peace-trouble that tends to run rampant in our lives.

8 Feeding Your Spiritual Heart

- According to God's Word, having an untroubled heart of faith all comes down to what you're feeding that heart.
- Just as an omelet makes a difference physically, what you're feasting on or depriving yourself of makes all of the difference spiritually.
- Ask any doctors, and they'll tell you there are two keys to physical well-being:
 - It all comes down to a good diet and regular exercise.
 - Neglect either of those, and you're headed for trouble.

9 Feeding Our Spiritual Heart

- The same is true with our heart of faith.
- It must be well-fed and well-run in order to be strong and healthy.
- Let's take another look at Jesus' words, when he says, "Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me" (v. 1, ESV).
- Jesus tells us the key to "heart health" as one of his followers is to trust in and feast on him.
- What our hearts need to stay healthy is regular nourishment from Christ and an active life of following Christ.

10 Feeding Our Spiritual Heart

- According to the experts, far too many followers of Christ have heart trouble stemming from the fact that their lives involve no regular consumption of Christ and no actual exercise of their faith in Christ.
- As a result, they're unable to withstand the anxieties of life that come up daily.

- Starving for a sense of direction that comes from Christ in his Word or craving some lasting peace that can come only from standing on his promises, we wind up looking for nourishment in all the wrong places.

11 Feeding Our Spiritual Heart

- If we skip our spiritual meals, we may later binge on earthly things, believing they'll bring us God-things.
 - For example,
 - We might religiously consume cable news, thinking that the talking heads will give us lasting wisdom in a crumbling world.
 - Or we may join the neighborhood gym—believing that regaining control over our body will give us control over our starved soul.
 - We may also fool ourselves into thinking that religious activity is the same thing as spiritual activity, or piety is the same thing as true godliness.

12 Mayo Clinic

- If you already know you suffer from actual heart disease, the Mayo Clinic prescribes the following steps to help establish a healthier existence.
- Simply . . .
 - stop smoking,
 - control your cholesterol,
 - manage your diet,
 - get moving for 30 minutes each day,
 - manage your stress,
 - practice good hygiene,
 - maintain a healthy weight,
 - take your vitamins and
 - be sure to get a flu shot.

13 A Heart of Faith

- But when it comes to our hearts of faith, it's once again about just two things.
- Our troubled hearts need to be . . .
 - Fed with Christ, and
 - Exercised in a life of following him.

14 Feeding Our Hearts

- So how do we feed our hearts the power of Christ? It comes down to being connected . . .
 - to the promises of his Word, found in the Scriptures, and
 - the power of his presence, found in the gathering of His people.

- Just as someone who's cultivating physical heart health by taking up running might subscribe to Runner's World for insight and join a local running club for application and exercise, God's Word and his people are essential for a strong heart of faith.

15 Gaining Faith . . .

16 Applying Faith . . .

- Once your heart of faith is fed with Christ, the essential element is to make sure it's regularly stretched, exercised and put to the test in a lifestyle of pursuing Christ.
- Questions we need to ask ourselves?
 - Could the reason why our faith feels so weak is because it never gets off the couch?
 - Is the reason why we feel so ill-equipped to handle life's obstacles is because we only attempt to avoid them?
 - Could it be that the very means of strengthening our heart of faith is jumping at opportunities that will test it?

17 Opportunities . . .

- What if, rather than avoiding that difficult conversation with your sister-in-law, you prayed for courage, sought God's people for counsel and then approached her in an attempt to reconcile?
- What if, rather than be content going to a cell-group you pray and trust God to help start, host, or lead a new group and do so faithfully.
- What if, rather than worrying about your finances, you trusted Christ to be King over your treasure, set an actual budget and attempted to tithe?
- What if, rather than feeding your heart with excuses to stay where you are in life, you took bold steps to train, engage and grow your heart?

18 The Realities

- According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, each year some 785,000 people suffer their very first heart attack.
- Heart disease is the number-one health issue among adults, both male and female. Each year, more than 630,000 of us will die of a heart-related disease. It's the number-one killer.
- Don't you think it is time to start feeding your heart a little breakfast?

19 Spiritual Reality

- Each day, millions of disciples will feel a few shooting pains run through their hearts as
 - their work-stress rises,
 - a relationship gets rough,
 - money gets tight or
 - health grows weak.

- We should remind ourselves of Jesus' words, "Let not your hearts be troubled."
- It's time to heed Christ's call, feed on his Word and begin flexing that faith.

20 Conclusion . . .

- If Mom was right about breakfast, then certainly Jesus is right about this!
- Let us feed our hearts!
- Bring on the Pancakes!
- Or in other words, let us feed on his Word and begin flexing that faith.