

WoW Nation

Scripture: "Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need." (Heb. 4:16 NIV)

Got Milk?

"Milk, it does a body good!" That was the slogan in classic commercials run by the National Dairy Council years ago. According to information published by the California Milk Processor Board (CMPB), that's a true statement. Per the CMPB, the following health benefits may be derived from a simple glass of milk:

- **Hair, Skin and Nails:** Proteins, lipids, calcium, Vitamin A, B6, biotin and potassium, all vital nutrients found in milk, work together to promote healthy skin and nails and to keep hair soft and shiny.
- **Muscle Replenishment:** Proteins like casein and whey, which are found in milk, are great for helping to rebuild muscles after physical exercise.
- **Bones:** Consuming at least one glass of milk per day may reduce a person's risk of fractures or bone disease. For mature adults, it may also slow the rate of bone loss.
- **Oral Health:** Calcium in milk may help reduce cavities when used in conjunction with good dental hygiene. Also, milk contains multiple anti-bacterials and proteins that promote overall oral health.
- **Sleep:** A protein found in milk may improve sleep quality and next-day alertness which is particularly helpful for those who struggle with sleep deprivation or insomnia.

With so much to be gained, it's no wonder the US Department of Agriculture recommends that the average adult consume up to three servings of milk (dairy) per day. As important as milk is to our physical diets, it's an equally important part of our spiritual diets. Milk is referenced frequently throughout the Bible and it's used in many different ways. According to the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia (ISBE), as a source of nutrition, milk ranked second only to bread in order of importance during biblical times. Milk was considered a luxury (Exo. 3:8, Song of Songs 5:1). And it was frequently used for the hospitable purpose of welcoming road-weary guests upon their arrival at a destination (Gen. 18:8, Judges 5:25). The ISBE further describes milk in the following terms: 1) as signifying abundance (Gen. 49:12); 2) as symbolizing a loved

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one's charm (Song of Songs 4:11); 3) as symbolizing blessings (Isa. 55:1, Joel 3:18); 4) as symbolizing food for new believers and babes in Christ (I Cor. 3:2, Heb. 5:12-13); and 5) as symbolizing purity (I Pet. 2:2). The imagery suggested by those references is as rich as it is inviting, as appealing as it is satisfying—sustenance, luxury, hospitality, abundance, charm, blessings and purity. In relative terms, milk is as advantageous spiritually as it is physically. It is equally important for our overall well-being.

As milk is to our bodies, prayer is to our souls (individual and collective). Prayer is invaluable. As a source of spiritual nutrition, prayer (milk) is second only to the Word of God (the bread of life) in order of importance. What's more, it's a peace-inducing practice, a power-invoking tool and the principal vehicle through which we access the Throne Room of God (Heb. 4:16). By far, it is one of the greatest privileges available to those of us who've accepted Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior.

It is at once awe-inspiring and humbling to have an audience with the Creator and Sustainer of the universe at will. Yet that's one of the most significant benefits of being a Christian. We can take our concerns to the Lord and leave them there. Not only can we cast all of our personal cares on Him, we can also share with Him the concerns of our friends, neighbors and loved ones (Heb. 4:16). Because prayer is a privilege and an amazing source of power for Christians, we should pray often. In fact, the Apostle Paul instructed the church at Thessalonica to pray without ceasing (I Thess. 5:17). Though it may be impractical to kneel and pray all day, it is possible to communicate with the Lord throughout the day. He's always listening. Even when you think He's not listening, He hears you (Psa. 139:1-4). So talk to Him throughout the day. Better still, keep a prayer journal. If you don't already have a strong prayer life, it can help you develop one.

In assessing the health of your prayer life, consider the following:

- Frequency – On any given day, how often do you pray (e.g. once per day, at meal time, at bed time)?
- Consistency – Do you have a disciplined prayer life? Do you pray with regularity? If so, for how long do you usually maintain your commitment to daily prayer (e.g. a week, a month, a year)?
- Quality – When you pray, is the time well spent? Do you give God your undivided attention? Is your time with Him meaningful and productive?
- Content – Generally speaking, what's the content of your prayers? Are your prayers dominated by adoration, praise and worship? Confession? Thanksgiving? Are personal requests the primary focus of your prayers? Or do you use your prayer time to intercede for others?
- Monologue or Dialogue – Is your prayer time better described as a monologue or a dialogue? Do you dominate the conversation or do you listen for the Lord's

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responses (in your heart)? Do you use your prayer time to give God orders or do you use your prayer time to report for duty?

Your responses to these questions may help you identify changes that you can adopt to improve the health and strength of your prayer life. Why is it important to have a strong prayer life? Perhaps 19th century Scottish clergyman, John Aikman Wallace, said it best, "Prayer moves the hand that moves the world." With all that affects us and with all that's going on in the world today, Christians need to pray now more than ever. Our world needs a serious move of God. And the best way to bring it about is through prayer.

Here's food for thought to conclude this study. A prayer-less Christian is a powerless Christian. In this hour, the body of Christ can ill afford weakness or powerlessness from any one of its members (I Cor. 12:12). Therefore, we must pray fervently and frequently, individually and collectively (James 5:16). Just as food sustains our physical bodies, prayer sustains the body of Christ. Yes, it's true. Milk, it does a body good. But prayer does the body of Christ even better. So do your part to strengthen the body. Consume your recommended daily allowance of milk, both physical and spiritual, today.

Be blessed.

Elle Bailey

Bibliography Information

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