

Many of you are familiar with the food pyramid that helps balance diets, as supplied by the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture of the federal government. The pyramid is understood by beginning at the bottom and then working our way toward the top. The different size areas of the pyramid is indicative of how much of each food category we are to eat each day. For example, it shows that we should eat more breads and cereals than we do meat and milk. Every food group has its value, because the chart is not necessarily about value, it is about quantity.

To eat a balanced diet we are to eat 6-11 servings of breads, cereals, rice and pasta. Next we are to eat 2-4 servings each of fruits and vegetables. The next level means we are to eat 2-3 servings of milk, yogurt, and cheese, along with 2-3 servings of meat, poultry, fish, dry beans, eggs, and nuts. The top level of the food pyramid says that a person is to use fats, oils, and sweets very sparingly. Of all the levels in the pyramid, this is the least important (needed) level for good physical health.

The USDA Food Pyramid is a valuable guide to eating healthy. It attempts to limit the portions of certain foods and increase the portions of good foods. I believe this same concept can be used in our consumption of spiritual food--the Bible. Every word of the inspired Scriptures, from Genesis to Revelation is valuable and necessary (2Tim. 3: 16,17). In no way should we feel that certain parts of the Bible are "off limits" or unimportant. However, I do believe that certain parts of the Bible do deserve a greater amount of study and attention if we are to be eating a spiritual diet that is balanced and healthy.

Let me suggest that the first level of our Bible pyramid is that we should spend a great deal of time in the gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) to know all we can about the life, ministry, and death of Jesus. We should be "eating 6-11 servings a day" when it comes to knowing Jesus and the power of His resurrection.

The second level of the Bible pyramid is to spend a large portion of our Bible study time in the New Testament letters (Acts-Jude). Within these pages we find the pattern for sound worship and Christian living. We will know how to ready ourselves for the return of Christ. In the New Testament letters we learn how to grow in the Spirit, and say "no" to temptation. The early Christians took the letters and passed them around so that everyone could know more about being faithful to Jesus.

The third level is the Old Testament. Although we are not under the Law of Moses any longer, the Old Testament Scriptures provide powerful lessons on faith, obedience, and the trustworthiness of God the Father. The Old Testament scriptures may be read by every Christian for in them we find instruction, perseverance, encouragement, and hope (Rom. 15:4). We do not read the Old Testament for doctrinal practices, but for good examples to copy and bad examples to shun (1Cor. 10: 1,12).

The top level, is New Testament book of Revelation. Admittedly difficult to understand and properly apply, it is valuable, but should not be as large a part of our "spiritual diet" as many people want to make it. Just as the USDA Food Pyramid is about quantity more than quality, so is my point here. The book of Revelation is a valuable part of the New Testament, but I believe that the quantity (majority) of our Bible study time is better spent in other parts of God's word.

Good spiritual health, which comes from reading and studying God's word means reading and studying in a balanced way. Extremism in any area of life does not produce proper results. Since our time is so precious, and seemingly very limited for Bible study, make the most of your time by focusing on the areas that will help you grow the most.

How many servings of each area have you had today?

