

WHEN BITTER FOOD TASTES SWEET

TEXT: (Proverbs 27:7, GNT)

⁷ When you are full, you will refuse honey, but when you are hungry, even bitter food tastes sweet.

INTRODUCTION

1. “When you’ve stuffed yourself, you refuse dessert; when you’re starved, you could eat a horse” (Proverbs 27:7, MSG).
2. “Even honey seems tasteless to a man who is full; but if he is hungry, he’ll eat anything!” (Proverbs 27:7, TLB).
3. “If God gives such attention to the appearance of wildflowers—most of which are never even seen—don’t you think he’ll attend to you, take pride in you, do his best for you? What I’m trying to do here is to get you to relax, to not be so preoccupied with *getting*, so you can respond to God’s *giving*. People who don’t know God and the way he works fuss over these things, but you know both God and how he works. Steep your life in God-reality, God-initiative, God-provisions. Don’t worry about missing out. You’ll find all your everyday human concerns will be met.
“Give your entire attention to what God is doing right now, and don’t get worked up about what may or may not happen tomorrow. God will help you deal with whatever hard things come up when the time comes” (Mathew 6:30-34, MSG).

I. TOO FULL TO APPRECIATE

A. Solomon—the Wisest Man Ever

1. “The king, moreover, must not acquire great numbers of horses for himself or make the people return to Egypt to get more of them, for the LORD has told you, ‘You are not to go back that way again.’ He must not take many wives, or his heart will be led astray. He must not accumulate large amounts of silver and gold” (Deuteronomy 17:16-17, NIV).
2. “I will give you what you have not asked for—both wealth and honor—so that in your lifetime you will have no equal among kings. And if you walk in obedience to me and keep my decrees and commands as David your father did, I will give you a long life” (I Kings 3:13-14, NIV).
3. “Whoever trusts in his riches will fall” (Proverbs 11:28, NIV).
4. “As Solomon grew old, his wives turned his heart after other gods, and his heart was not fully devoted to the Lord his God, as the heart of David his father had been. He followed Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and Molek the detestable god of the Ammonites. So Solomon did evil in the eyes of the Lord; he did not follow the Lord completely, as David his father had done” (I Kings 11:4-6, NIV).
5. “Yet when I surveyed all that my hands had done and what I had toiled to achieve, everything was meaningless, a chasing after the wind; nothing was gained under the sun” (Ecclesiastes 2:11, NIV).
6. “We have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us” (II Corinthians 4:7, NIV).

B. The Prodigal Son

1. “The younger one said to his father, ‘Father, give me my share of the estate.’ So he divided his property between them.
Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living” (Luke 15:12-13, NIV)
2. “The young man became so hungry that even the pods he was feeding the pigs looked good to him. But no one gave him anything.
“When he finally came to his senses, he said to himself, ‘At home even the hired servants have food enough to spare, and here I am dying of hunger! I will go home to my father and say, “Father, I have sinned against both heaven and you, and I am no longer worthy of being called your son. Please take me on as a hired servant”’” (Luke 15:16-19, NLT).
3. “But they soon forgot what he had done and did not wait for his plan to unfold. In the desert they gave in to their craving; in the wilderness they put God to the test. So he gave them what they asked for, but sent a wasting disease among them” (Psalm 106:13-15, NIV).

C. Samson Toyed with Temptation

1. “Some time later, he fell in love with a woman in the Valley of Sorek whose name was Delilah” (Judges 16:4, NIV).
2. “The rulers of the Philistines went to her and said, ‘See if you can lure him into showing you the secret of his great strength and how we can overpower him so we may tie him up and subdue him. Each one of us will give you eleven hundred shekels of silver’” (Judges 16:5, NIV).
3. “With men hidden in the room, she called to him, ‘Samson, the Philistines are upon you!’” (Judges 16:9, NIV).
4. “So he told her everything. ‘No razor has ever been used on my head,’ he said, ‘because I have been a Nazirite set apart to God since birth. If my head were shaved, my strength would leave me, and I would become as weak as any other man’” (Judges 16:17, NIV).
5. “He awoke from his sleep and thought, ‘I’ll go out as before and shake myself free.’ But he did not know that the LORD had left him.
Then the Philistines seized him, gouged out his eyes and took him down to Gaza. Binding him with bronze shackles, they set him to grinding in the prison” (Judges 16:20-21, NIV).

II. A Day of Affluence

1. “I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God” (Matthew 19:24, NIV).

A. Never Satisfied

1. “The Israelites started wailing and said, ‘If only we had meat to eat! We remember the fish we ate in Egypt at no cost—also the cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions and garlic. But now we have lost our appetite; we never see anything but this manna!’” (Numbers 11:4-6, NIV).
2. “And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:7, NIV).

B. Hungry for God

1. "Covet earnestly the best gifts" (I Corinthians 13:31, KJV).
2. "Please show me your glory" (Exodus 33:18, ESV).
3. "As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, my God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God" (Psalm 42:1-2, 1-2, NIV).
4. "God—you're my God! I can't get enough of you! I've worked up such hunger and thirst for God, traveling across dry and weary deserts. So here I am in the place of worship, eyes open, drinking in your strength and glory" (Psalm 63:1-2, MSG).
5. "That I might know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings" (Philippians 3:10, KJV).

III. Great Gain

1. "But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it" (I Timothy 6:6-7, NIV).

A. Godliness

1. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God" (Matthew 5:8, NIV).

B. Contentment

1. "I've learned by now to be quite content whatever my circumstances. I'm just as happy with little as with much, with much as with little. I've found the recipe for being happy whether full or hungry, hands full or hands empty. Whatever I have, wherever I am, I can make it through anything in the One who makes me who I am" (Philippians 4:11-13, MSG).
2. "A devout life does bring wealth, but it's the rich simplicity of being yourself before God. Since we entered the world penniless and will leave it penniless, if we have bread on the table and shoes on our feet, that's enough" (I Timothy 6:6-8, MSG).
3. "This is ironic because godliness, along with contentment, does put us ahead but not in the ways some imagine. You see we came into this world with nothing, and nothing is going with us on the way out! So as long as we are clothed and fed, we should be happy" (I Timothy 6:6-8, VOICE).

CONCLUSION

1. "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing" (II Timothy 4:7-8, NIV).
2. "Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, 'Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you'" (Hebrews 13:5, NIV).