

Lifelines

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Topic: A Christian's Food

What Sustains You? By Dr. Ed Jordan © 2026

There is a joke among Baptist churches that “Baptists love to eat!” And we do, albeit that some of us eat healthier than others. One of our basic human needs is food on a regular basis. Eating is a gift from God; He built our human engines, and provided a bounty of foods to eat.

In John 4:1-45 we discover Jesus journeying to Samaria, and resting by Jacob's well, while His disciples went into the city to get food. What makes this story interesting, was that Jews had no dealings with Samaritans. They disliked each other, and the Jews refused to travel into, or through, Samaria. If they had to do so, as soon as they exited Samaria they would stop, hold their shoes over Samaritan soil, and shake the dust off of their shoes, in a symbolic decontamination.

So the story begins with Jesus sitting by the well, when a woman of Samaria comes out to the well, alone, and in the heat of noontime. This revealed a lot about her isolation from society. As she approached the well, Jesus asked her to give Him a drink of water. She reacted disdainfully, mocking that a Jew would even talk to her, and ask for a drink. Jesus had crossed two cultural walls by asking her for water. First, Jews avoided Samaritans, and Samaritans avoided Jews. Secondly, He asked for a bit of kindness from an unknown female. Jews typically didn't do either of these things.

She bristled and chided Jesus for His request. Jesus immediately responded, “If you knew who it was that was asking you for a drink, you would ask Him and He would have given you living water (4:10).” She then became more courteous, and called Jesus “Sir,” as she said: “You have nothing with which to draw water from a well; how can you give me living water?” Jesus commented that anyone who drinks water from Jacob's well will get thirsty again; but whoever drinks of the Living Water that Jesus gives, shall never thirst again, for the living water He gives will become a continuous artesian well of life-giving water, flowing into them and out of them. The practical side of the woman emerges as she says: “Give me your water so I will not have to come this far each day to get water and carry it back home.”

Jesus told her to go get her husband, and return. Turns out that Jesus was already aware of her history of marital relationships, and her response was to recognize Jesus as a prophet. Jesus even shared with her that the hour was coming when true worshipers would worship the Father in Spirit and in Truth.

She ran home, and Jesus' disciples returned with bread for Him to eat. They kept telling Him to “Eat! Eat!” We read Jesus' response in John 4:32-34 (NLT): “I have a kind of food you know nothing about.” Then Jesus explained: “My nourishment comes from doing the will of God, who sent me, and from finishing His work that He gave Me to complete.”

What gave Jesus the energy and strength to spend so many hours ministering to people? It was that He knew He was doing exactly what God sent Him to do. God created each of us with a specific purpose, gifts, and abilities to be placed under His control and gives the power with which we can be show others the love and reality of God. We are here to influence others to place their life into the hands of God. We are not just here to live for ourselves, aimlessly spending our whole life doing our

own selfish things. God has plans for each one of us, and brings people into our lives for whom we can be a godly influence to help them seek Him and serve Him with their and opportunities.

Jesus was reenergized by lovingly engaging with others, by encouraging them to discover and serve God. The Samaritan woman went back into town a changed person. She told everyone to hurry out to Jacob's well and "encounter a man who knew everything about me, yet still valued me! Come and see for yourselves!" And they did! A whole town of people went to the well to meet Jesus!

How about you? God put you here to fulfill His purposes for your life; are you sustaining yourself on His kind of food? Are you living off of earthly Fruit Loops, or are you getting the kind of spiritual nourishment that comes from living with Jesus and then serving Him with that spiritual fuel?

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