This devotion certainly took a different route than what I initially intended.

Regarding fasting, today I am going to take a different approach, and discuss food.

Stay with me, as I trust this will be a benefit to you.

In today’s culture, food no longer is simply about survival; it is much more expansive than that. Today, people do not just eat to live, we live to eat. That’s a huge difference. We love to eat. We are passionate about food. Searching for good recipes, shopping for the right ingredients, the preparation of the meal, the presentation of the finished product, and the sharing of the meal with loved ones to cement relationships, or create new ones.

People’s relationship with food is interestingly unique. Consider the following thoughts on how deeply rooted food is in our culture…

## Food is Love

We don’t eat just to satisfy a physical need, but to share in an emotional connection with others. A relationship is getting serious when you are invited over for a home-cooked meal. When someone we know, a neighbor, a relative, or a friend suffers a loss; guaranteed we bring over a casserole or a favorite recipe. When a friend is heartbroken, we come to their aid to share in a binge of junk food. Preparing and sharing food with people you love solidifies the connection you have.

## Food is Memory

We apply so much emotional importance to food, therefore it becomes an important part of our memories. Studies have shown it’s easier to clearly recall memories, when they are intertwined to a physical sensation as well as an emotional experience. From the sounds of a sporting event, to the feeling of the first falling snow, using our five physical senses creates stronger memories. It is no wonder that so many memories are attached to food then. Food has the ability to activate multiple senses - smell, sight, texture and of course taste - to help us remember some of life's most meaningful and magical moments, whether large or small.

I’ll share a few personal favorites.

For Thanksgiving, my mom used to put the Turkey in the oven the night before and start cooking it on a low temperature. The result? The family would wake up the next morning with the entire house filled with the aroma of the cooking bird. What a precious memory!

For our current family at Christmas, kielbasa is a breakfast staple, along with eggs, and homemade cinnamon roles. Family members waking up to the smell of kielbasa cooking on the stove, not only brings back memories of Christmas’s past, but it creates anticipation for the events to come later that day. Food creates and brings to mind precious memories.

## Food is Identity

Culturally speaking each people group is typically associated with a unique type of food. It aids in establishing cultural identity. Food is an important way to identify who you are. Great Grandma’s recipes from the old country is a way to identify us with our heritage, who we are, and where we came from. It reminds us of our roots.

## Food is Connection

Eating alone is typically not anyone’s first option. If done so, it is because you are hungry and “have” to eat. The more preferred choice is to interact with someone by sharing a meal. Ever see someone eating a dinner alone at a restaurant? Does it bring to you a sense of sadness for that person, as you feel empathy over their “supposed” lonely situation? Meals are meant to be shared. Families, friends, or neighbors; gathering together to share a meal. Think about block parties.

All major social events seem to include food, from births to funerals. When going to see a baseball game, you suddenly feel the urge to have a hotdog and some peanuts. It’s a package deal.

What is the most likely situation for a first date? Dinner.

Connection and inclusion are important human needs. Isolation is known to be one of the top reasons for depression. Food is the glue that combines these two factors to keep us emotionally healthy.

## Food is Creation

Food is not simply about following a recipe. It is about creativity, experimentation, and presentation of the final product.

## Food is Joy

God didn’t design food just to be an act of survival that we have to check off on our list daily activities. However in the process, food not only makes us happy and satisfied but often generates joy.

Anyone ever bite into a cold watermelon on a hot summer day? This produces a sensation of joy. What about a bowl of hot soup on a cold rainy or wintery day? The enjoyment that it brings refreshes the soul.

Eating something that tastes so perfect that it makes you pause and appreciate all you have in your life - that is the unique joy and magic of good food.

So if you stayed with me to this point: you are probably wondering; where in the world am I going with this? Why torture us with all this discussion on the benefits of food? All you want to do now is call up a couple of friends and go share a pizza at your favorite place. What in God’s name does all this have to do with fasting? Well from my viewpoint; in God’s name (meaning His nature, and character) everything.

I am coming from the traditional definition of fasting which is choosing to abstain from food for a certain period of time; either for physical or spiritual reasons. But it can also apply to abstaining from personal favorite activities as well.

Since food is so integral with our daily lives, because of the importance and significance food has for each one of us; to lay it aside in order to seek God is something of a sacrifice, that if done with the right motive, pleases God. Isn’t that the desire of every child - to please their parents?

We choose fasting, when we decide that our appetite for God is greater than our desire for food. God, I love, I desire, and I enjoy food; but I lay it aside because I want You more. That reaches the heart of God and I believe that you then have His attention.

It has been said that fasting disconnects us from the world and prayer reconnects us to God. Remember that it is not just fasting, it is fasting and prayer.

Food involves our emotions, memories, and our five senses. Fasting disregards the input from our five senses (and the rumbling of our stomachs, and the fatigue that comes from fasting), in order to seek for more of that which only our eyes of faith can see.

Consider the following scripture:

Now faith is the assurance (the confirmation, the title deed) of the things [we] hope for, being the proof of things [we] do not see and the conviction of their reality

[**faith perceiving as real fact what is not revealed to the senses**].

Putting the bold section in a slightly different manner:

**faith comprehends as fact what cannot be experienced by the physical senses**. Amp

Fasting is laying side the desires produced by our five sense, to passionately pursue the greater things of the world we can’t sense outside of our faith. In other words, fasting is by faith laying aside the temporal in order to seek for more of the eternal.

Go for it. Stay the course. Besides yourself, someone might desperately need the breakthrough you may experience.