

To the Leader: Copy the reverse side of this sheet so that each person at the meeting has access to a copy for the devotional period. This side is your script for the meditation which is outlined for your participants. Read it at the appropriate time. This side is NOT to be copied.

2. A Taste of Life

Some cities have an annual festival at which many of the restaurants of the city offer their specialties for people to taste and to enjoy. The restaurateurs and chefs are hopeful that a taste will sell you on their famous recipes. So their invitation is, "Come, taste and see for yourself how good our food is."

The Psalmist David once said, "O taste and see that the Lord is good..." *Psalm 34:8f*. David goes on to say, "I sought the Lord, and He answered me; He delivered me from all my fears...The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and His ears are attentive to their cry....The Lord hears them; He delivers them from all their troubles."

Now back to the invitation to taste. It seems that following a recipe and preparing a dish have some similarities to living a life. Some of the ingredients of a recipe aren't very tasty in themselves. For example, have you eaten a spoonful or two of flour lately? Or how about a spoonful of baking soda? Or how about a scoop of Crisco? Or some pepper? Any one of these ingredients taken alone can hardly be called a wonderful taste experience. But when blended in the right proportions and subjected to the process of cooking or baking, the result is a wonderful experience plus nourishment.

Isn't that the way with the events and experiences of life? Some in themselves seem rather "hard to swallow". They are not very pleasant. We don't accept them very readily. Sometimes we might well refer to life as *a bowl of cherries*, but at other times we might think of it as *the pits*.

And what happens? In times of failure we forget the successes we have experienced. In times of sorrow we forget the many joys of life that we have had. In days of financial problems we forget the experiences of prosperity, and in times of sickness we are apt to forget the many days and even years of good health. Life, however, is a blending of all these ingredients. And this blending of the *bitter with the sweet* is good and, perhaps, more necessary than we realize or would admit.

Think about it: We could not properly appreciate rest if we had never known weariness. We could not properly appreciate joy without knowledge of sorrow. We could not properly appreciate light without the experience of darkness, or gain without familiarity with loss. And we will not appreciate our job unless we have experienced being unemployed.

This blending of experiences in life also makes it possible to enter sympathetically and helpfully into the circumstances and situations of our fellowman. Because we have had such experiences, because we have been there, we know. We can relate. We do understand. We can reach out to comfort and to help.

In *2 Corinthians 1: 3, 4* we read: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, Who comforts us in all our afflictions, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God."

Are you in the midst of a time of hurting? A time of trouble? If so, look back upon your life and see if this may not be just one of the ingredients, not tasteful now, but which will eventually prove to have been a necessary ingredient of a satisfying "tasteful" life, especially if through the troubling experience you have been drawn ever closer to Him of Whom the Psalmist says, "The righteous cry out, and the Lord hears them; He delivers them from all their troubles. The Lord is close to the broken hearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit. A righteous man may have many troubles, but the Lord delivers him from them all....The Lord redeems His servants; no one who takes refuge in Him will be condemned." *Psalm 34:17f*.

A Taste of Life

We Begin

Leader (L) and Group (G)

- L: I will extol the Lord at all times;
G: His praise will always be on my lips.
L: My soul will boast in the Lord;
G: Let the afflicted hear and rejoice.

We Search Scriptures - Psalm 34:8-10,15-19

Three Readers: (1), (2), (3)

- 1: Taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the man who takes refuge in him. -
2: Fear the LORD, you his saints, for those who fear him lack nothing.
3: The lions may grow weak and hungry, but those who seek the LORD lack no good thing.
1: The eyes of the LORD are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their cry; the face of the LORD is against those who do evil, to cut off the memory of them from the earth.
2: The righteous cry out, and the LORD hears them; he delivers them from all their troubles.
3: The LORD is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit. A righteous man may have many troubles, but the LORD delivers him from them all.

We Meditate

Follow this outline as the meditation is presented

- Food festivals: taste and enjoy
- Care for a taste of flour? Crisco? Pepper?
- Ingredients + proper mix + cooking = tasty food
- Some events in life seem "hard to swallow"
- The pits
- Life: a blend of bitter with the sweet, which helps us appreciate the sweet
Helps us sympathize with others
Helps us draw closer to God, our Helper

We Respond

- L: O taste and see that the Lord is good.
G: Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
L: The Father of mercies and God of all comfort,
G: Who comforts us in all our afflictions,
L: So that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction
G: With the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.

We Pray

O God of all comfort, sometimes our troubles overwhelm us. Sometimes they cause us to forget the abundance of goodness we have received from You. Give us wisdom to accept the bitterness of life as it is mixed with the sweetness of Your loving blessings. Enable us to trust the truth of Your Word which says that You work all things "for the good of those who love" You. Amen.

