

# Potatoes and Daily Faith

Potatoes are interesting vegetables. Despite what doctors say about them, they have been essential to survival and culture for centuries. They may cause high cholesterol and raise carbohydrate levels, but sweet potatoes, French fries, and a good baked potato sure taste good! Like anything else, moderation is key.

A quick look at faith, and using the words potato and faith interchangeably in many cases, maybe we can find a little of what God wants us to learn as we spend this little time together. Potatoes and faith can bless the world no matter what life may bring.

“What I say,” writes A.A. Milne, “is that, if a fellow really likes potatoes, he must be a pretty decent sort of fellow.”

Yes, faith makes people better. It gives them fullness and love. It makes them more tolerant of others, and open to adventures that God has in mind.

Potatoes can make us what we want to be. Faith can do the same, but we must know how to eat because it is the right thing rather than do it because we have given up! Dolly Parton said, “Every single diet I ever fell off of was because of potatoes and gravy of some sort.”

I like the way she talks. Simple, direct, and to the point. We can describe and pontificate all day long around the point that faith is important. But the simplest is the best. We need tasty faith. Think about it!

Another thing about potatoes, and faith, is that God gives us such sweet combinations of both that bless us and others. “Taste and see that the Lord is good”, writes the Psalmist. Grow to know that we are not the only opinion in town, and in fact the best opinions are the ones that God makes with others. The church, our country, the world needs this.

Marlo Thomas, star of the 50’s tv show “That Girl,” agrees. “For me, it’s the unexpected and surprising combinations of produce that are the most exciting and lure me into the kitchen for a little bit of experimenting. Apples and sweet potatoes together? Who knew? Carrots with grapes? Okay. I may not be Julia Child, but I can do pretty well with a simple recipe and a lot of enthusiasm.”

It is those sweet combinations of faith that God adds along the way which make it new and wonderful. From childhood to youth adventures, from middle to older age, God always reserves a few things to give us to make faith sweet. We start with the basic faith that we believe in Jesus. And God gives us the rest of the recipe day by day.

**Just this week a friend told me a wonderful story about potatoes and exercise. Here it goes.**

Begin by standing on a comfortable surface, where you have plenty of room at each side.

With a 5-lb potato bag in each hand, extend your arms straight out from your sides and hold them there as long as you can. Try to reach a full minute, and then relax.

Each day you'll find that you can hold this position for just a bit longer. After a couple of weeks, move up to 10-lb potato bags.

Then try 50-lb potato bags and then eventually try to get to where you can lift a 100-lb potato bag in each hand and hold your arms straight for more than a full minute. **(I'm at this level, he says.)**

After you feel confident at that level, put a potato in each bag.

Did you see that coming? Does your bag of faith have one potato or two? Is it filled with the wonder and joy that God can put there? Is it the same as it was when you first got it? Or is it bursting at the seams, with unexpected results, like the end of the story above?

We must always see the richness which can happen when we recycle faith again and again, in different ways, with the same basic ingredient. Sometimes, for instance, an old classic hymn sung for the first time by a child can produce something new and different in them. Like classic twice-baked potatoes.

Let us never underestimate the value of plain, simple faith. Just like potatoes, it is always the same yet always new for the situation at hand. God will never let us down, is always ready to bake that faith again.

“These hard times,” says the scripture “are small potatoes compared to the coming good times, the lavish celebration prepared for us. There's far more here than meets the eye. The things we see now are here today, gone tomorrow. But the things we can't see now will last forever. II Cor. 4:17, The Message:

Get off the couch, where couch potatoes live, and find the richness and wonder that God gives his people on the move. Whether we pray or preach, support or hammer, teach or worship, it's all part of that great potato soufflé God is in the midst of making!