



"And this is the commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also." 1 John 4: 21

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**Sunday – March 17, 2024**

## **Heart to Heart...**

While visiting West Texas where I grew up, it was always a sight to see the cotton fields in the fall. White as far as one could see. It was a beautiful thing. Some of the dear families to us were farmers and I would listen to them talk about their cotton crop. Some would say how good it was and others not so good. I remember one farmer speaking that he had all stalk and little cotton. In all this talk, not once did I hear a farmer blame the stalk!

A cotton stalk, or any type of stalk will only produce in direct proportion to what it brings in. The intake from the soil determines the output. This is simply the nature of growth. The more nutrients are supplied, the better the produce. Even in a drought, it's not the stalk's fault for the stalk is always at the mercy of the intake. The intake determines the output!

Take some time and read Ephesians 3:14-21 and look at the intake offered. Notice strength to the inner person with power through the Spirit (v.16). We are called to allow Christ to dwell in our heart through faith (v.17). We are to be rooted and grounded in love (v.17). That's how the intake comes within us. The nutrients are supplied. Are we going to move in the right direction? His love is our motivation (v.18). The result is "*being filled up to the fulness of God*" (v.19). Imagine, we can take in so much from God that we can be fed His fulness within us!

In Ephesians 5:18 we are called to "*be filled with the Spirit.*" The word "*filled*" means to be influenced or controlled by. It's not some feeling that comes over you but allowing the Lord to have His way within you to have the proper output. Ephesians 6:10 speaks to us to "*be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might.*" His strength, His might, His power, His influence, His love are all available if we would allow the nutrient to flow within us. What do we find? Our intake will determine our output in every aspect of our lives!

What Jesus offers us is not a “self-help” program or a “self-improvement” course. It is God working within us to make us like Jesus. The question left for each of us is: How serious are you about growing?

The cotton stalk bears cotton because the nutrient is supplied. I have never heard of one stalk quit because it couldn't bear. Proper intake will make for proper output. Why do so many fail and give up? Why do some just sit in idle with little results? What do you think is missing? Think about it!!!

Brent