

## ***Don't Forget your Vegetables***

Growing up my parents *strongly* encouraged me to eat my vegetables at dinner time. *Strongly* meaning I did not have much of an option. Being wise and experienced, my mother and father knew I needed to eat vegetables in order to stay strong and healthy. To this day I am grateful I had loving parents invested in my well being. They gave me joy, strength and security so I can pass on joy, hope and peace to those around me. Without them I would have fixed dinner myself from a menu consisting of donuts, sweets and candy.

We all need Godly relationships and people around us who are wise, mature and experienced to help us live to our potential. We rely on family, church and community to give us what we need so we can then pass on good things to other people. Sometimes if we make decisions based on how we feel or what we want rather than what is good for us and our family we will ingest toxins and poisons. These may not be physical substances rather it may be emotional, mental and spiritual 'pollutants' that invade our lives. These unhelpful substances may come in the form of the television shows we watch, music we listen to, behaviors we engage in and the effect we have on other people. All of us can test and examine our lives. Are we participating in life giving activities or are we killing those around us by our presence, words and behavior? What effect do we have on our family, friends and community? Do we bring life to our personal people or do we steal their joy and peace?

Hopefully we bring out the best in others and encourage them to be fully alive in Jesus Christ. If not, then it's due time we focus on *eating our vegetables*. This means we need to receive life from others so we can pass life on and live to our potential. Experiencing joy, peace, appreciation, love and faithfulness helps us grow up and exemplify qualities that are honorable. Thankfully we have a Good Shepherd to follow who can lead us on the path of life. The Shepherd tells us in John 10:10, *The thief's purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give life in all its fullness.* NLT