

Turning Grass into Greenbacks A Ranchers Challenge

I hate to be the one to break the news to you but, hamburgers don't come from McDonalds, milk from the grocery store, nor money from the ATM machine. Peace doesn't come from a sedative or an abortion, and success is not measured by wealth, being a supermodel, wearing a gun or driving a fast car.

No, the ultimate source of success is the ability in knowing how to turn grass into life. Getting a herd of horses or cattle on a good pasture and watching them graze brings a deep satisfaction to a rancher. There is something about the process that assures him that there is a hopeful future. These animals will prosper and do well. While the rancher cannot see the green grass transformed into raw energy, he does know that once the animal has an adequate food source normal digestion will provide sufficient energy for maintenance, growth, lactation and work.

A keen rancher keeps his eye out not just for the ingestion of food, but whether it is effectively being taken through the seven processes for effective results. He looks for stagnation or interruption to the digestion process, as this will not only jeopardize the animal's health, but the rancher's profits. The first two stages, prehension and mastication, are simply the process of mechanically biting the blades of grass from the original source and grinding them mechanically with the lips, tongue and teeth. In the break down the grass is given greater exposure to enzymes that exist in the saliva. Without the literal mechanical breakdown, the animal would either choke or starve to death. This basic skill simply depicts the basic disciplines of apprehending spiritual food for our lives. The only thing that drives an animal to the food source is the pain and appetite of genuine hunger. For us, this simply requires us to get out of bed, to place ourselves in front of the Word of God, to read it, re-read it, and begin to notice the basic grammatical structure and thought being conveyed to us. Biological breakdown of the food stuff begins with salivation, an enzyme is secreted in an animal's saliva as it begins to attack the raw vegetation and prepare it for greater digestion. Salivation is parallel to our asking questions about a portion of scripture. Noticing common or repetitive uses of words, correlations to other areas, and the order in which it is being addressed and the progression of that thought or teaching.

Digestion begins in the stomach where the chemical exposure rearranges the key particles into potentially absorbable materials. In our reading, this is where concepts and principles are drawn out, correlations are seen through cross referencing of scripture illustrated by old and New Testament references, where a truth or fact are being confirmed by two or three other points or witnesses in the scriptures. The result is an identifiable, unchangeable, truth upon which one may continually make a reference point to or build their life upon. The gross biological digestion that takes place in the stomach prepares the food-stuff for the small and large intestines, where the food-stuff is made ready to be absorbed into the blood stream. Remember, if the animal cannot get the raw material into the blood, it will perish.

There are many things that could jeopardize the animal's health & well being at this point, ranging from an inability within the animal to break down the food stuffs due to improper bacteria, parasites or blockage. No matter how much an animal eats if there

is an inability to absorb the nutrients into the bloodstream, it will cause the animal to be unthrifty. The animal could also suffer from malnutrition, blockages, extended bowels, constipation, gas build up or perhaps even death. The primary goal of all food-stuffs is to put energy into an absorbable form in the blood stream to be transformed into muscle, bone and energy.

We must remember that only when it is in the blood does it produce life. "For as for the life of all flesh, its blood is identified with its life" (Lev. 17:14). This is where knowledge is turned into power! The scripture tells us that it is not good for a man to be without knowledge, for it increases power. But, knowledge must be absorbed, made adaptable and useable in forms of wisdom and understanding. Without assimilation, there would be no physical change or signs of prosperous health. In like manner the word of God is meant to be expressly visible, through our lives as it is assimilated into expressions of good deeds, cheerful countenances, godly character, and strength to be steadfast and persevering. The inability to transform the word of God into usable energy forms cause the believer to suffer from depression, stagnation, weakness, discouragement and an inability to be resourceful and helpful to others. This is the primary way for the Holy Spirit takes the word of God into our lives and causes us to hear and receive instruction through conviction, comfort, and counsel in order to know how to respond. Ending the assimilation process, the nutrients are carried from the blood stream to the cell structure where new life is generated into either tissue or expendable energy, allowing for healthy growth and development.

Of vital importance to the rancher is the elimination process. Now this seems to be an undesirable part, however, it is of utmost importance for the rancher to gage the health of the animal and to learn how to reinvest the eliminated waste into new life sources. The ability to use the waste of food-stuff often determines the profits or losses of a rancher. First, if the animal is not healthy, it will be easily recognized by the lack of elimination or a change in the consistency in elimination. Furthermore, this organic waste is vital as a fertilizer towards the nourishment of new crops and additional lives that will benefit from it. Manure is a temporal product of seemingly little value. This waste will be the very thing that causes new grass to spring forth providing life for new generations.

In like manner, the believer has the privilege and responsibility to separate the eternal from the temporal and to distinguish that which is life from that which simply sustains life. Feed, time, money and other resources while temporal in nature are essential to sustain life. However, they in themselves are not life, nor do they measure success. But, if wisely used they can be the very means to connect with another life and transform a temporal existence into an eternal life. Until we as believers are able to transform the raw material of God's Word into life for ourselves and others through wisdom, love and service, we will not find the joy or fruit by which success is truly measured.

Joshua 1:8 "This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein; for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success." By learning to meditate on God's word we are learning to graze twenty four hours a day, seven days a week. Animals do best when they graze continuously on small amounts. In like manner our ability to feed continuously on the principles and truths of God's word will be the source of direction, joy and peace in our lives. The true

source of success comes from the ability to transform the grass of God's Word into the product of a God honoring life while leaving behind a name and inheritance that would provoke the appetites of others towards eternal values. – Lew Sterrett