

APPLES TO APPLES

Fall has arrived, bringing with it, the promise of a bountiful harvest. All around us we see combines in fields, and semis filled to the brim with freshly picked corn. We see ripe pumpkins laying in the fields, awaiting their turn to contribute to the harvest. We can smell the freshly harvested grain, mixed with the rich aroma of the earth which has just given birth to her crop. Amidst the harvest of pumpkins, corn and beans, comes the harvest of the apple.



Orchards are brimming with juicy red, green and yellow apples. Tis the season for Red Delicious, Honeycrisp, Jonathon, Gala, and so on. There are over 7500 different varieties of apples throughout the world; and 2500 of those grow right here in the U.S. It's apple picking time! Time for apple pie, apple crisp, apple dumplings and apple cakes and breads. Let's not forget about applesauce and apple butter – and who can resist dipping an apple wedge in caramel sauce and sprinkling it with nuts. Mmmm-yummy. And there's nothing like biting in to a fresh, ripe, crisp, sweet apple, or taking a drink of chilled apple cider. Apples are loaded with vitamins and minerals. They are fat free, sodium and cholesterol free, and full of fiber and antioxidants. What's not to love about the apple? No wonder Americans eat more apples than any other fruit. They are grown in all 50 states - and available to us all year long. According to the U.S. Apple Association, the #1 most popular variety of apple in the U.S. is: Gala, with Red Delicious coming in at #2. Apples come in a variety of tastes and colors. Most are sweet and red in color however, apples can be tart, and some green varieties can be sour. Apples can be red, green, yellow, and some are even black. The state of Arkansas grows the variety named, "The Black Diamond", which is black in color, but perfectly safe to eat. The rarest apple in the world is the: "Bardsey Island Apple", which is medium-sized, sweet and juicy, and has a unique lemon aroma. It is grown off the coast of Wales. And the most expensive apple is: "Seki Ichi Apple"– native to Japan, which is the largest apple-with some weighing in at 2 pounds and selling for as much as \$21.00 per apple. And just think, our God created all these apples. Each apple variety is unique to its own. Honeycrisp apples are always sweet and crisp. Granny Smith apples are always green and tart. The seed of a Gala apple will always produce Gala apples. God has kept his promise to us from Genesis 1:11, each seed bears the fruit of its own kind. We can depend on God to be faithful and keep His Word.

God cares for 7500 varieties of apples world-wide. And that's just apples. He cares for sparrows and lilies. He controls the temperature of the sun and the Arctic. He holds the earth on its axis and controls the depths of the seas. He changes the seasons and the direction of the wind. He numbers the grains of sand and the hairs on our head. He is Lord of everything. He is the God of details and variety. And he cares about you! 1 Peter 5:7 NLT says, "Give all your worries and cares to God, for He cares about you." God cares about what matters to you-every single detail. Why else would He create so many different varieties of apples? He knew we would all like something different. We humans have a lot in common with apples. Sometimes we are sweet and sometimes sour. Just as the apple comes in different colors, so do we. And God's Word reminds us that we are all one in Christ - Galatians 3:28. Regardless, if we are native to Japan - like the Seki Ichi Apple, or come from Arkansas, like The Black Diamond Apple - God loves us all the same. Acts 17:25-28 says that God made all races and nations, all of us by one blood for His purposes. John 3:16-for God so loved the world-Jesus died for all of us. One thing we can be sure of is that we are all unique - we are rare like the Bardsey Island Apple. God created each of us to be one of a kind. Each of us is special to God and He loves us so much that He gave up His only Son to die for us.

One thing to remember: the apple has an enemy - it's the Codling Moth. The moth lays its eggs at the base of newly formed apples, so that when the eggs hatch, the worms can enter the apple and feed on it - which, in turn, destroys the fruit. The end result is a wormy, rotten apple. We, too, have an enemy. The devil, and his name, is Satan - and he seeks to destroy us - John 10:10. He desires to ruin the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23) in our lives. But be of good cheer because our God is greater than that worm, Satan. 1 John 4:4 assures us that: You dear children are from God and have overcome them, because the One Who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world. Amen! So the next time you eat an apple, of any variety, may it serve as a reminder of God's great love and care for you. After all, you are, the apple of His eye.

God bless,

The Christian Center Staff

