

## How Shall We Then Eat?: God's Guidelines for Eating for Today's Believers

Gen 1:29-30 – And God said, "See, I have given you every herb [that] yields seed which is on the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed; to you it shall be for food.<sup>30</sup> "Also, to every beast of the earth, to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, in which [there is] life, [I have given] every green herb for food"; and it was so.

Biblically, what you eat is not all that important. God does give some limitations (which we will look at next week), but these limitations relate more to how your eating *may affect others*. There is so much in the Bible about food and eating, but here are a few clear truths from Scripture about food.

### Basic Bible Food Facts:

- Regarding PERMISSION – Every Creature Is Good for Food

*For every creature of God [is] good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving; for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer. (1 Timothy 4:4-5) [This seems to relate to "meat," not plants per se. Some plants are poisonous, and plants were not the object of OT regulation. The broad scope of "every" creature reflects what Noah was told.]*

- Regarding PURITY – Food Itself Doesn't Defile (Dirty) a Person

*So Jesus said, "Are you also still without understanding? Do you not yet understand that whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and is eliminated? But those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and they defile a man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies. These are [the things] which defile a man, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile a man." (Matthew 15:16-20; cf. Mark 7:15-23) [Note that Jesus said this while under the Law. There were restrictions placed on people by God regarding clean and unclean food. However, the Law seemed to be a "schoolmaster" in this area as well. Based upon the open nature of eating meat given to Noah, the point of the Law was not one's food so much as it was something that revealed one's heart in the eating. The OT Law restrictions were more of a test of obedience – a lesson in holiness and separation. God just used food, a daily necessity, as part of this "lesson."]*

- Regarding POSITION – Food Itself Does Not Bring Us Closer to God, Nor Does It Push Us Away from God

*But food does not commend us to God; for neither if we eat are we the better, nor if we do not eat are we the worse. (1 Corinthians 8:8)*

- Regarding PURPOSE – Food Is Primarily for Nourishment (Health), Not for Enjoyment (Hedonism)

*<sup>29</sup> And God said, "See, I have given you every herb [that] yields seed which [is] on the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed; to you it shall be for food.<sup>30</sup> "Also, to every beast of the earth, to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, in which [there is] life, [I have given] every green herb for food"; and it was so. (Gen 1:29-30)*

*Remove falsehood and lies far from me; Give me neither poverty nor riches-- Feed me with the food allotted to me; Lest I be full and deny [You], And say, "Who [is] the LORD?" Or lest I be poor and steal, And profane the name of my God. (Proverbs 30:8-9)*

*<sup>17</sup> Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them. <sup>18</sup> For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple. (Rom 16:17-18)*

*<sup>18</sup> For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, [that they are] the enemies of the cross of Christ: <sup>19</sup> whose end [is] destruction, whose god [is their] belly, and [whose] glory [is] in their shame-- who set their mind on earthly things. (Phi 3:18-19)*

## **Some Key Teachings of Jesus Regarding Food:**

- **Live by the Word of God Rather than the Wants of Your Body**

*Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. <sup>2</sup> And when He had fasted forty days and [forty] nights, afterward He was hungry. <sup>3</sup> Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread." <sup>4</sup> But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'" (Matt 4:1-4)*

- **Rest in the Provision of God Rather than in Worry About the Pursuit of Needs**

*Give us this day our daily bread. (Mat 6:11)*

<sup>25</sup> *"Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? <sup>26</sup> "Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? <sup>27</sup> "Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? <sup>28</sup> "So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; <sup>29</sup> "and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. <sup>30</sup> "Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, [will He] not much more [clothe] you, O you of little faith? <sup>31</sup> "Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' <sup>32</sup> "For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. <sup>33</sup> "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. (Matt 6:25-33)*

<sup>25</sup> *And when they found Him on the other side of the sea, they said to Him, "Rabbi, when did You come here?" <sup>26</sup> Jesus answered them and said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled. <sup>27</sup> "Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him." <sup>28</sup> Then they said to Him, "What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?" <sup>29</sup> Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent." (John 6:25-29)*

- **Be Directed by the Father, Rather than by Food**

<sup>31</sup> *In the meantime His disciples urged Him, saying, "Rabbi, eat." <sup>32</sup> But He said to them, "I have food to eat of which you do not know." <sup>33</sup> Therefore the disciples said to one another, "Has anyone brought Him [anything] to eat?" <sup>34</sup> Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work. (John 4:31-34)*

- **Use Food as a Way to Serve Others, Rather than just the Way to Stay Alive**

<sup>34</sup> *"Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: <sup>35</sup> 'for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; <sup>36</sup> 'I [was] naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.' <sup>37</sup> "Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed [You], or thirsty and give [You] drink? <sup>38</sup> 'When did we see You a stranger and take [You] in, or naked and clothe [You]? <sup>39</sup> 'Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' <sup>40</sup> "And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did [it] to one of the least of these My brethren, you did [it] to Me.' <sup>41</sup> "Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: <sup>42</sup> 'for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink; <sup>43</sup> 'I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.' <sup>44</sup> "Then they also will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?' <sup>45</sup> "Then He will answer them, saying, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do [it] to one of the least of these, you did not do [it] to Me.' <sup>46</sup> "And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life." (Matt 25:34-46)*