

How Shall We Then Eat?: God's Guidelines for Eating for Today's Believers (Part 3)

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.³⁰ "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. Much more important is why you eat, and how your eating affects others.

Basic Bible Food Facts:

- Regarding PERMISSION – Every Creature Is Good for Food (1 Tim 4:4-5)
- Regarding PURITY – Food Itself Doesn't Defile (Dirty) a Person (Matt 15:16-20; cf. Mark 7:15-23)
- Regarding POSITION – Food Itself Does Not Bring Us Closer to God, Nor Does It Push Us Away from God (1 Cor 8:8)
- Regarding PURPOSE – Food Is Primarily for Nourishment (Health), Not for Enjoyment (Gen 1:29-30, Pro 30:8-9; Rom 16:17-18; Phil 3:18-19)

Some Key Teachings of Jesus Regarding Food:

- Live by the Word of God Rather than the Wants of Your Body (Matt 4:1-4)
- Rest in the Provision of God Rather than in Worry About the Pursuit of Needs (Matt 6:11, 25-33; John 6:25-29)
- Be Directed by the Father, Rather than by Food (John 4:31-34)
- Use Food as a Way to Serve Others, Rather than just the Way to Stay Alive (Matt 25:34-46)

8 "Key Questions" that Define Our Responsibility Regarding Food Today

1. PURPOSE – Why Am I Eating? (cp. Jesus and Stones; Daniel) (God's goal is not necessarily to keep us fed!)

Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. (1Co 10:31)

¹⁵ Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶ For all that is in the world-- the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life-- is not of the Father but is of the world. (1Jo 2:15-16)

²⁵ Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep; ²⁶ in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; ²⁷ in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness-- ²⁸ besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches. (2Co 11:25-28; cf. 2Co 6:4-6)

¹⁰ But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at last your care for me has flourished again; though you surely did care, but you lacked opportunity. ¹¹ Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: ¹² I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. ¹³ I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. (Phi 4:10-13)

2. PEOPLE – What Impact Does It Have on Others? Will eating help or hinder anyone?

• Enhancing fellowship with believers (Acts 2:42-27)

And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. (Act 2:42)

• Excluding fellowship with believers who walk in sin (1 Cor 5:9-13)

But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner-- not even to eat with such a person. (1Co 5:11)

• Encouraging or deferring to weak believers and confused unbelievers (Rom 14:1-21; 1 Cor 8:4-13)

²⁰ Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All things indeed are pure, but it is evil for the man who eats with offense. ²¹ It is good neither to eat meat nor drink wine nor do anything by which your brother stumbles or is offended or is made weak. (Rm 14:20-21)

• Exemplifying Christ's concern for the Body (1 Cor 11:25-34)

²⁹ For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. ³³ Therefore, my brethren, when you come together to eat, wait for one another. ³⁴ But if anyone is hungry, let him eat at home, lest you come together for judgment. And the rest I will set in order when I come. (1Co 11:29, 33-34)

3. PROCLAMATION – What _____ Is It Sending to _____ ?

²⁴ Let no one seek his own, but each one the other's *well-being*. ²⁵ Eat whatever is sold in the meat market, asking no questions for conscience' sake; ²⁶ for "the earth is the LORD'S, and all its fullness." ²⁷ If any of those who do not believe invites you *to dinner*, and you desire to go, eat whatever is set before you, asking no question for conscience' sake. ²⁸ But if anyone says to you, "This was offered to idols," do not eat it for the sake of the one who told you, and for conscience' sake; for "the earth is the LORD'S, and all its fullness." (1Co 10:24-28)

4. PURCHASE – What Does It _____ Me?

⁷ For you yourselves know how you ought to follow us, for we were not disorderly among you; ⁸ nor did we eat anyone's bread free of charge, but worked with labor and toil night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, ⁹ not because we do not have authority, but to make ourselves an example of how you should follow us. ¹⁰ For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat. ¹¹ For we hear that there are some who walk among you in a disorderly manner, not working at all, but are busybodies. ¹² Now those who are such we command and exhort through our Lord Jesus Christ that they work in quietness and eat their own bread. ¹³ But *as for you*, brethren, do not grow weary *in doing good*. ¹⁴ And if anyone does not obey our word in this epistle, note that person and do not keep company with him, that he may be ashamed. ¹⁵ Yet do not count *him* as an enemy, but admonish *him* as a brother. (2Th 3:7-15)

5. PROVISION – Am I _____ with What God Has _____ ?

⁶ Now godliness with contentment is great gain. ⁷ For we brought nothing into *this world*, and *it is* certain we can carry nothing out. ⁸ And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. ⁹ But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and *into* many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. ¹⁰ For the love of money is a root of all *kinds of evil*, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. ¹¹ But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness. (1Ti 6:6-11)

6. PROTECTION – What Is My Authority? Is It True to What the _____ ?

¹ Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, ² speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, ³ forbidding to marry, and *commanding* to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. ⁴ For every creature of God *is good*, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving; ⁵ for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer. ⁶ If you instruct the brethren in these things, you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished in the words of faith and of the good doctrine which you have carefully followed. ⁷ But reject profane and old wives' fables, and exercise yourself toward godliness. ⁸ For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come. (1Ti 4:1-8)

7. PARTICIPATION – What Does It _____ Me To?

¹⁴ Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry. ¹⁵ I speak as to wise men; judge for yourselves what I say. ¹⁶ The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? ¹⁷ For we, *though* many, are one bread and one body; for we all partake of that one bread. ¹⁸ Observe Israel after the flesh: Are not those who eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar? ¹⁹ What am I saying then? That an idol is anything, or what is offered to idols is anything? ²⁰ Rather, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to demons and not to God, and I do not want you to have fellowship with demons. ²¹ You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the Lord's table and of the table of demons. ²² Or do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than He? ²³ All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful; all things are lawful for me, but not all things edify. (1Co 10:14-23)

"Both the great and the small shall die in this land. They shall not be buried; neither shall men lament for them, cut themselves, nor make themselves bald for them. Nor shall [men] break [bread] in mourning for them, to comfort them for the dead; nor shall [men] give them the cup of consolation to drink for their father or their mother. Also you shall not go into the house of feasting to sit with them, to eat and drink." (Jer 16:6-8)

8. PERSUASION – Am I _____ If I Should Eat? (Am I Convinced That It Is OK?)

¹⁴ I know and am convinced by the Lord Jesus that *there is* nothing unclean of itself; but to him who considers anything to be unclean, to him *it is* unclean. (Rom 14:14)

²³ But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because *he does* not eat from faith; for whatever *is* not from faith is sin. (Rom 14:23)