

Women & More

Food...For Thought

Lesson 12: **November 19, 2015**—*stewardship*

There is not one woman in this room who does not need *some* food every day to live. The choice to eat three times a day, or twice a day or just once a day; the preference of some foods over others; the struggle with eating enough or eating too much or eating more of the ‘right’ foods are daily decisions. Some love to cook and prepare foods, while others struggle to decide what to fix and how to make it appealing. And because food is critical to living, Satan will vilify it and tempt us to use, misuse, and abuse food and eating to our detriment and shame.

We know that many women today are dealing with eating obsessions and preoccupations which are draining the ‘life’ right out of their eating experiences. Anorexia and Bulimia Nervosas are prevalent, as are food allergies and fetishes of various kinds. Many are counting every calorie they eat to gain weight, or more often to lose it, while some have literally made food and the consumption of it the center of their existence.

A familiar Bible passage (1 Timothy 6:10) is “*the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil,*” and we have visited that form of idolatry before—not money, but the *love* of it. Any thing that we spend the majority of our resources on and our time thinking about; any thing that we are consumed and obsessed with, and that is at the top of our attention and love list, we have made it a god to us. Where does that leave Jehovah God? And who would be in a position to—and of a purpose to—deceive us about food and its place in our lives? Be sure that while Satan is destroying some with famine, he is devastating others with food!

● Before ever God created man and woman in the Garden of Eden on the sixth day (Genesis 1:27), he had created food for them to eat on the third day in Genesis 1:11-12 “*Then God said, ‘Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds.’ And it was so. 12The land produced vegetation: plants bearing seed according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good.*” And he announced that this would be food for the humans and animals he had made in Genesis 1:29-30—“*Then God said, ‘I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air and all the creatures that move on the ground—everything that has the breath of life in it—I give every green plant for food.*” God made provision for every living thing to eat seed-bearing green plants, and trees that bear fruit with seed in it. Be sure that in the beginning, our powerful, purposeful, planning God outlined our menu—and it was a ‘green’ one!

So what happened? Genesis 2:9 records: *“And the LORD God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground—trees that were **pleasing to the eye and good for food**. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.”* Skip to verses 16-17: *“And the LORD God commanded the man, ‘**You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; 17but** you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for **when you eat of it you will surely die**.”* And then Genesis 3:6 *“When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was **good for food** and **pleasing to the eye**, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.”* Notice that **the reasons for eating have been ratcheted up**: the woman saw that the tree was **good for food** and **pleasing to the eye**—which God had already stated in 2:9—but now another reason surfaces: According to the deceiver it is **desirable for gaining wisdom**. And based on that third criteria, Eve went against the God of love who had warned against what they were not to eat...and ate it anyway!

Adam and Eve would die; and now because of sin animals would die too: First when God made coverings from their skins to cover man’s nakedness in Genesis 3:21, and then as God would require their blood as sacrifice for man’s sins as a foreshadowing of the ultimate blood sacrifice to come. Hebrews 9:14 *“How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, **cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death**, so that we may serve the living God!”* Verse 22b: *“...and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.”*

A couple more references to reiterate—Hebrews 13:11-12—*“The high priest carries **the blood of animals into the Most Holy Place as a sin offering**, but the bodies are burned outside the camp. 12And so Jesus also suffered outside the city gate to make the people holy through his own blood.”*

And Revelation 5:9 *“And they sang a new song: ‘You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, **because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation.**’”*

Back in Genesis, the last line in the last verse of Genesis 4 says *“At that time men began to call on the name of the LORD.”* But that wouldn’t last! While it took many, many years, it took only one Bible chapter to bring people to such a sinful state as to cause God to respond with the flood. And the staggering majority of human beings and animals would perish in this judgment. Feel God’s pain in Genesis 6:5-6—*“The LORD saw how great man’s wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time. 6The LORD was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and **his heart was filled with pain**.”* God to Noah in Genesis 6:21 *“You are to take every kind of food that is to be eaten and store it away as food for you and for them”— all the animals.*

And now the relationship between man and animals was changed forever, as animals became food after the flood in Genesis 9:2-4—*“The fear and dread of you will fall on all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air, upon every creature that moves along the ground, and upon all the fish of the sea; they are given into your hands. ³Everything that lives and moves will be food for you. Just as I gave you the green plants, I now give you everything. ⁴But you must not eat meat that has its lifeblood still in it.”* And verse 4 still holds: We are **not** to eat the ‘blood’ of anything. This Old Testament mandate has not been rescinded: We are not to eat blood! Leviticus 3:17 *“This is a lasting ordinance for the generations to come, wherever you live: You must not eat any fat or any blood.”* Sin that brought death to man and animal and the judgment of God to the whole earth by way of the flood began with food and eating—and that is certainly ‘food for thought’!

I. We are not to be gluttons or drunkards—but eat temperately and not waste.

Proverbs 23:2 “put a knife to your throat if you are given to gluttony”

Proverbs 23:21 “for drunkards and gluttons become poor”

Proverbs 28:7 “but a companion of gluttons disgraces his father.”

Matthew 11:19; Luke 7:34 “Here is a glutton and a drunkard”

Other than gluttony, notice well that the “sin” of eating or not eating is in causing someone else to stumble or fall!

II. We are not to cause our brother/sister to stumble by what we eat or drink.

Romans 14:1-6 *“Accept him whose faith is weak, without passing judgment on disputable matters. ²One man’s faith allows him to eat everything, but another man, whose faith is weak, eats only vegetables. ³The man who eats everything must not look down on him who does not, and the man who does not eat everything must not condemn the man who does, for God has accepted him. ⁴Who are you to judge someone else’s servant? To his own master he stands or falls. And **he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand.***

⁵*“One man considers one day more sacred than another; another man considers every day alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind. ⁶He who regards one day as special, does so to the Lord. **He who eats meat, eats to the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and he who abstains, does so to the Lord and gives thanks to God.”** Abstaining to the Lord would be a ‘fast’.*

Romans 14:14-23 *“As one who is in the Lord Jesus, I am fully convinced that **no food is unclean in itself.** But if anyone regards something as unclean then for him it is unclean. ¹⁵If your brother is distressed because of what you eat, you are no longer acting in love. Do not by your eating destroy your brother for whom Christ died. ¹⁶Do not allow what you consider good to be spoken of as evil. ¹⁷For **the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit,** ¹⁸because anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and approved by men.*

19“Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification. 20Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All food is clean, but it is wrong for a man to eat anything that causes someone else to stumble. 21It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or to do anything else that will **cause your brother to fall.**

22“*So whatever you believe about these things keep between yourself and God. Blessed is the man who does not condemn himself for what he approves. 23But the man who has doubts is condemned if he eats, because his eating is not from faith; and everything that does not come from faith is sin.*”

Tasting and eating are often used in the Bible to portray hearing and believing. God does not ask for anything from us that he has not already provided to us. What we do with our lives, how we occupy ourselves and how we oversee our eating and drinking will invariably either glorify God or it will not!

III. We are not to eat food we know has been sacrificed to idols, so that we would not cause another to stumble into error. I grew up in Japan where food would be sacrificed to Buddha or to ancestors—Shintoism—in an unbeliever’s home. If a believer knew that this was the case, they would not eat it as a witness. Remember that Daniel was determined not to defile himself with the king’s food or drink, so he asked permission from the chief official not to defile himself in Daniel 1:12b—“Let us be given vegetables to eat and water to drink.”

IV. We are not to worry about what we will eat or drink. Charles Spurgeon: “The cattle on a thousand hills will suffice for our most hungry feeding, and the granaries of heaven are not likely to be emptied by our eating.”

•Psalm 107:9 “...for he satisfies the thirsty and fills the hungry with good things.”

•Psalm 147:14 “He grants peace to your borders and satisfies you with the finest of wheat.”

•Mark 7:18-19 “‘Are you so dull?’ he asked. ‘Don’t you see that nothing that enters a man from the outside can make him “unclean”? 19For it doesn’t go into his heart but into his stomach, and then out of his body.’ (In saying this, Jesus declared all foods ‘clean.’)

•Luke 12:29-31 “And do not set your heart on what you will eat or drink; do not worry about it. 30For the pagan world runs after all such things...and your Father knows that you need them. 31But seek first his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well.”

♥On Friday, 30 July 2010, I sat down to take a break and turned on HLN for a special report about Calcium supplements: A new report says that they are causing heart attacks especially in women, and that we need to get our calcium through food and not with supplements anymore. Wow! Many have been using vitamins to get extra calcium for years, and now they’re saying “Stop it”?

V. We are not to eat foods for which we have not given thanks to God. This is critical, because we can not and do not know what is ultimately in the food we are about to eat. Will it nourish our bodies and provide what we need? Will it do us harm? What did Jesus do? At the Lord's Supper, and in the feeding of the 4,000 in Matthew 15:36 and the 5,000 in Luke 9:16, Scripture says that "*when he had given thanks, he broke them and gave*"—making the food fit for consumption.

Can we even imagine the miracle of a few fish and several loaves of bread feeding thousands. What caused that to happen? What did Jesus do to the food to allow the crowds to feed and be full? He thanked the Father for the food, and then he broke it, and **somewhere in the thanking and the breaking it was blessed by God**—making it fit for a feast. We should be careful to give thanks for God's blessing to us; to ask him to make fit to eat that which may otherwise be unfit, realizing that this act is a witness to our faith. 1 Timothy 4:4-5 "*For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is **received with thanksgiving**, because it is **consecrated** (blessed) **by the word of God and prayer.***" But we do not say "grace"—we cannot "grace" God. "Grace" is given to the unmerited and unworthy (that is us); by the Worthy, the Most Gracious (that is God)! Grace cannot go from **unmerited us** to **merited God**. Grace can come to us from God and we can pass it on to others. But we do not give God grace!

VI. We are not to consider physical food our "be-all, end-all" nourishment!

- Matthew 5:6 says "*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.*"

- John 6:27 "*Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you.*"

- John 4:32-35 (Jesus to his disciples) "*But he said to them, 'I have food to eat that you know nothing about.'* ³³*then his disciples said to each other, 'Could someone have brought him food?'*

³⁴*"My food," said Jesus, "is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work."* ³⁵*Do you not say, 'Four months more and then the harvest? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest.'*" It's not about the food, but about the spiritual wealth of the Lord Jesus Christ!

Herein is our strength: Believers are to feed on God's delectable Word! The Bible invites us to discover how to live a life that pleases God—even in our eating—and how to embrace His commandments for blessing others. Remember that the "love of eating—OVER love of God" was involved in the Genesis fall! Someone has said that we are what we eat. If that's true physically, then it's certainly true spiritually: What we are will be demonstrated in our stewardship of our food, **because of** what we are—and so very much is at *stake*, correction at **stake**!