

## *Nutrition in the Garden: Physical & Spiritual Health*

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I have felt rather sheepish about addressing the issue of how food can cause a fellowship to lose their focus on Messiah (See *Fellowship vs. "Social-ship"* at [www.set-apart-ministries.org](http://www.set-apart-ministries.org)) until I realized that food was a focal point of the great sin in the Garden that led to separation between mankind and our Creator. Is it possible, then, once knowing this, to underestimate the importance of addressing food and nutrition as part of our physical AND spiritual health?

Many voices today speak about the scientific aspects of nutrition and healthy food for our physical bodies. A few also relate this matter to our faith and spiritual growth. Since we know our Creator to be all wise and all knowing we can be assured that His Word will contain what we need to know about living. Still, with so many people claiming to have the corner on understanding, the many interpretations of what that Word actually means is confusing! Since Elohim, our Mighty God, declares the end from the beginning, it seems best to go back to the beginning to understand (*Isaiah 44:8,46:10.*)

Hardly anyone would argue that fear of God is the beginning of Wisdom (*Job 28:28, Psalm 111:10; Proverbs 1:7, 9:10 and 15:33.*) We can see that fearing or honoring Him first and believing what He had said would have saved mankind a lot of trouble; it would have been wise for Adam and Eve to remember His instruction and obey it! Instead, they listened to the whisperings and innuendos of the evil one who insinuated that God was holding out on them; keeping something back from them that was desirable. Eve was deceived, and judged with her eyes and ears. Adam followed her lead.

They trusted their senses more than they did YHWH's Word. Few of us could rightly claim that we have not made the same mistake. This has everything to do with choosing the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil over the Tree of Life. As I have studied these two trees in the past year, it has become clear that our Creator used them, in part, as a test to see whether we would walk in obedience or disobedience. Just as He separated the light from the darkness, and the upper and lower waters, so is He separating those who will walk in His ways from those who refuse. The two trees are an early picture metaphor of the separation of the sheep and the goats that Messiah related to His disciples. Which tree will we eat from all the days of our lives?

(See also: *Take and Eat: This Do in Remembrance of Me*; January. 2023)

The Tree of Life refers to Messiah and is mentioned throughout Scripture and is present once again at that final Garden. On the other hand, the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil is not mentioned again by specific name but makes its appearance by references to the behavior that follows “eating” from it. Generally, this is when we make our own judgments by our own understanding rather than leaning into Him. Our Messiah, Yeshua, is described by Isaiah as not judging by the sight of His eyes or the hearing of His ears but with righteousness (Isaiah 11: 3-5) We understand then, that we are to make judgments, including about our food and nutrition, based in what He tells us rather than by our own vision and hearing. This demonstrates our spiritual wisdom, and accordingly, our righteousness or lack of it.

Most prominently demonstrated in our selection of foods, we can lean too heavily on one food group or another, sweets over nutritious food, carbs over protein for examples. Lack of balance in diet leads to so many health problems they couldn’t be easily listed. Clearly, it is not wise to eat what we understand is harmful to us yet many do this daily. Since the consequences are not generally immediate, we just go along. Our spiritual life is like this too. If we miss our daily prayer and time in the Word, the consequences aren’t usually immediate but rather subtle. (See “He Gives us Bread for Each Day: Are we Taking it?” At [www.set-apart-ministries.org/articles.html](http://www.set-apart-ministries.org/articles.html) )

Another aspect to this obedience is not popular among most Believers to address. It has to do with trusting what our Creator said is actually food rather than judging by the sight and hearing of mankind’s reasoning. In Leviticus 11, our Father describes and defines what He considers food for His people as well as what He says NOT to eat. Since He is the same from age to age, and since Messiah Yeshua was the One through Whom all of Creation came, I no longer have any doubt about what is considered food and have become obedient to what HE said it is. (Malachi 3:6, Daniel 7:25)

This, too, opens up a proverbial can of worms! Rabbinical Judaism teaches these food laws and adds much to them, usually recognized as *kashrut*, or kosher food requirements. In their desire to obey the Word, they have **added** to it; something we are told NOT to do-- (Deuteronomy 4:2, Revelation 22: 18-19.) We might call this **legalism**, rigid adherence to the letter of the Law but not the spirit of it, though more correctly it is an addition to the commandments. I do not regard these Rabbinical additions as Scripture, or binding requirements.

On the other hand, Christians have taught that these definitions of food no longer apply and want to throw the door wide open without limitations, in effect **subtracting** from the Word. We are instructed not to subtract from the Law either-- in the same places noted above. The story of Peter’s dream (Acts 10:14) is usually cited as the basis for this. When one reads the entire section of pertinent Scripture, Peter stated that he understood it referred to not calling any human being unclean rather than changing the definition of “food.” (Acts 10:28) According to Scripture, if any one changes what the Torah has taught, they are regarded as a false prophet so if Peter or

anyone changes such a definition of food, they are to be considered false. The question of “meat” and “food” is addressed several other places and would require more space than available to address; but each time, when taken in context of Leviticus, it will be seen that it is food that is dealt with; **not changing the definition of what is considered food**. The impression is given that the guidelines given by our Creator are somehow “holding out” on us so that we need to be **freed** from them. Our Messiah changed what was written in order to release us from the bondage of God’s ways.

### **Do you hear the whispering of the snake here? I do!**

Scientific study is confirming that some things we have considered food are not even good for our bodies, such as “bottom feeders” and pork. Man’s sight and reasoning is often that such things are really ok now. Some counter that pigs are fed more judiciously – “the other white meat.” It is good that there is such confirmation however, this is NOT the reason a person who follows Messiah Yeshua should choose as his foundation for decisions. Do we really think that God somehow overlooked that these changes would come in the course of time and that He just “forgot” to make such allowances?

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*Pure and simple, His test is whether or not we will look to our Creator for His Word, not the sight of our own eyes, or the hearing of our ears.*

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To reject the Scriptural definition of food and food laws is a part of **anti-nomianism**; which means to be opposed to our Creator’s Word, which equals our Messiah, the Living Word and the Tree of Life. It is not wise and it is not righteous. This position is every bit as harmful as legalism, but rarely understood today. However well-intentioned and knowledgeable a human being may be, if they tell you that the definition of food has been changed, they are false. However highly positioned they may be in a recognized church if they deny or change the directions given to us by our Creator, they are bearing the fruit of the wrong tree. To obey their voice is to choose the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil over the Tree of Life.

*Which fruit do you want in your life? Our physical and spiritual health is intertwined!*