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CHAPTER 12

Eat for Strength

King Solomon promised a nationwide blessing when royal leaders ate at the right time and with the right motive. Begotten from nobility, they ate for strength rather than self-indulgence.

*Blessed are you, O land, whose king is of nobility and whose princes **eat at the appropriate time—for strength, and not for drunkenness.** (Ecclesiastes 10:17 NAS)*

King David acknowledged God’s role as provider. He is faithful, dependable, and timely:

The eyes of all look to You, And You give them their food in due time [at the proper time, NIV]. (Psalm 145:15 NAS)

“It's Not What You're Eating, It's What's Eating You”¹

In her book, “It's Not What You're Eating, It's What's Eating You” Janet Greeson addresses food addiction, i.e., bondage to food. Spiritual, emotional, and physical dynamics influence what we eat, why we eat, and how much we eat.

When confronted by God, Adam blamed Eve for his act of disobedience and Eve blamed the serpent. We need forgiveness as much as we need to forgive others and ourselves. Forgiveness liberates us from anger, strife, and resentment; it empowers us with grace so we might dispense mercy.

Jesus offered a proactive remedy that’s well suited for adversarial contention. He loaded this response with transforming power, converting bitterness and animosity into sentiments of peace and joy. In Matthew 6:27-28, Jesus states:

- **Love your enemies**

¹ Janet Greeson PhD, It's Not What You're Eating, It's What's Eating You, Pocket Books, 1990

- ***Do good*** to those who hate you
- ***Bless*** those who curse you
- ***Pray for*** those who mistreat you

Each response activates a supernatural provision for justice in the courts of heaven and restoration on earth. It propels our faith toward God’s mercy where He exerts transforming grace. As we express love, goodness, blessing, and prayer, God heals our heart, renews our mind, and restores our soul. By forgiving those who sin against us, we embrace life-building possibilities, which were previously dormant. When we collaborate with our Heavenly Father, He orchestrates redemptive outcomes contrary to Satan’s intention for evil.

Eating for Strength

Heavenly Father, please
Forgive us our debts
As we have forgiven our debtors

In “The Gift of Health”, Richard Dominguez, explains how our diet “affects—in fact, causes—most of the major health concerns of our age.”² Ongoing research confirms this claim. Mental and physical ailments come from overindulgence, underindulgence, flawed meal plans, and toxic ingredients. Like the thorns and thistles that curse the ground, these challenges motivate us to rely on our Heavenly Father for daily sustenance.

While food created by God is good, food invented by humans may or may not be healthy. Much of the food industry caters to the flesh; food moguls benefit from over consumption as it competes for sales. Leading us into temptation improves their profit margin.

What then should we eat and drink and how shall we establish healthy parameters in our diet? Paul asserts:

All things are lawful, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful, but not all things edify [build up or strengthen]. (1 Corinthians 10:23 NAS)

Being filled with His Spirit, God expects us to consult with Him concerning dietary choices. Food and prayer share a high priority bond. Biblical menus may sug-

² Dominguez, The Gift of Health, David Cook, 1987, p. 20.

gest guidance for God's provision today. Though we lack certainty in dietary understanding and confidence in will power, His grace is sufficient.

Jesus introduced the Lord's Prayer with a reminder attached. He said, do not pray like an unbelieving Gentile who babbles with meaningless repetition, "*for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him*".³ Because our Heavenly Father knows exactly what we need, He leads us in targeted prayers for provision, forgiveness, guidance, and deliverance. Unlike Adam and Eve who took a forbidden fruit seeking to enhance their wisdom, we ask God for wisdom and believe that He freely gives it.

But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. (James 1:5 NAS)

James clarified this request, distinguishing between God's wisdom from above and earthly, natural, and demonic wisdom.⁴ He links jealousy and selfish ambition with disorder and evil.⁵ Overcoming disordered eating habits starts with a dynamic connection with God for strength to apply His wisdom.

But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy. And the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace. (James 3:17-18 NAS)

Biblical Examples where Food and Drink Generated Strength

- In the wilderness, God fed the Israelites with an unknown substance, which they called 'manna'. It literally means, "what is it". God used this supernatural meal to humble, test, and to do good for them in the end.⁶

The house of Israel named it manna, and it was like coriander seed, white, and its taste was like wafers with honey. (Exodus 16:31 NAS)

- Samson derived strength by drinking water supplied supernaturally by God

*But God split the hollow place that is in Lehi so that water came out of it. **When he drank, his strength returned and he revived.** Therefore, he named it En-hakkore, which is in Lehi to this day. (Judges 15:19 NAS)*

³ Matthew 6:8 NAS

⁴ James 3:15

⁵ James 3:16

⁶ Deuteronomy 8:16 NAS

- Jonathan gained strength by eating honey after battle despite Saul's curse on anyone who ate before evening

Now the men of Israel were hard-pressed on that day, for Saul had put the people under oath, saying, "Cursed be the man who eats food before evening, and until I have avenged myself on my enemies." So none of the people tasted food. All the people of the land entered the forest, and there was honey on the ground. When the people entered the forest, behold, there was a flow of honey; but no man put his hand to his mouth, for the people feared the oath. But Jonathan had not heard when his father put the people under oath; therefore, he put out the end of the staff that was in his hand and dipped it in the honeycomb, and put his hand to his mouth, and his eyes brightened. Then one of the people said, "Your father strictly put the people under oath, saying, 'Cursed be the man who eats food today.'" And the people were weary. Then Jonathan said, "My father has troubled the land. See now, how my eyes have brightened because I tasted a little of this honey. (1 Samuel 14:24-29 NAS)

- King Saul found strength from a piece of bread provided by a witch at Endor

*Then Saul immediately fell full length upon the ground and was very afraid because of the words of Samuel; also **there was no strength in him, for he had eaten no food** all day and all night... So now also, please listen to the voice of your maidservant, and let me set **a piece of bread** before you that you may **eat and have strength** when you go on your way." (1 Samuel 28:20, 22 NAS)*

- An angel fed Elijah bread cakes with water to strengthen him for a journey and a forty-day fast (1 Kings 19:6-7)

*So he arose and **ate and drank, and went in the strength of that food** forty days and forty nights to Horeb, the mountain of God. (1 Kings 19:8 NAS)*

- Paul ate bread and was strengthened after a three day fast following his conversion

*and he **took food and was strengthened**. Now for several days he was with the disciples who were at Damascus (Acts 9:19 NAS)*

- After fourteen days without food in a storm, Paul encouraged 275 sailing companions to eat bread for their preservation

Until the day was about to dawn, Paul was encouraging them all to take some food, saying, "Today is the fourteenth day that you have been con-

*stantly watching and going without eating, having taken nothing. Therefore I encourage you to **take some food, for this is for your preservation**, for not a hair from the head of any of you will perish. Having said this, **he took bread and gave thanks to God** in the presence of all, and **he broke it and began to eat**. All of them were encouraged and **they themselves also took food.**" (Act 27:33-36 NAS)*

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