



# Connecting With God For a Strong Finish

*So we'll be Ready when the Time Comes*

## PART 2

### How to Connect with God for Strength

#### CHAPTER 7

#### Eat for Strength Tempted by Satan

From the beginning, God bound the destiny of the human race with food. Before Adam and Eve sinned, He defined their menu saying:

*“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”.* (Genesis 1:29 NIV)

One exception held fatal consequences for Adam and Eve and their offspring. The Lord commanded:

*“You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but **you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die.**”* (Genesis 2:16-17 NIV)



“The Fall of Man” Hendrik Goltzius (Dutch) 1616

Food consumed by Adam and Eve not only sustained their strength, it revealed their heart. The Bible emphasizes three words while describing this deliberate act of rebellion: eat, eaten, and ate (used seventeen times in Genesis 3).

Satan executed two menacing temptations involving food; each held long term and widespread consequences. First, Satan targeted Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. Much later, he targeted Jesus in the wilderness.<sup>1</sup>

Slithering on his stomach, Satan weaponized an edible fruit. No other weapon has destroyed more people than this infamous snack taken from “*the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*”. Eating from Satan’s menu killed Adam and Eve—and their offspring.

*Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not **eat** from any tree in the garden'?" The woman said to the serpent, "We may **eat** fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, 'You must not **eat** fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.'" "You will not surely die," the serpent said to the woman. "For God knows that when you **eat** of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." 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. (Genesis 3:1-6 NIV)*

Satan manipulated food into a deadly weapon while engaged in a high stakes spiritual battle. He targeted the bond of trust that joined Adam and Eve with their Heavenly Father. Enticed by her own desire, the first woman separated herself from God by accepting Satan’s deception. In one heedless act, Eve disregarded her creator and betrayed her descendants. James summarized this recurring saga of temptation, desire, sin, and death:

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<sup>1</sup> Adam and Eve in Genesis 3 and Jesus in Matthew 4 and Luke 4

*But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death. (James 1:14-15 ESV)*

Pursuing self-determination with pride, Eve noticed that the fruit growing in the center of the garden was “good for food”. She also noticed its beauty. Craving more than calories and flavor, this pleasing sight fueled an ungodly appetite. Eve did not eat to fill her stomach; she ate to satisfy her desire for power. Intending to gain wisdom through knowledge, Eve implemented a defiant impulse. She ate herself to death by attempting to fill a power void.

### **From Superior Strength to Terminal Weakness**

Eve’s appetite for power convinced her to eat a forbidden fruit. Her motive for eating went beyond culinary curiosity. She craved control—and that is what Satan exploited. Eve wanted to choose for herself what she put in her own body. She also wanted to know privileged information, which distinguished good from evil. Eve pursued self-centered power derived from self-serving knowledge. Under Satan’s nefarious influence, she tried to enhance herself with wisdom—the earthly, natural, and demonic variety mentioned in James 3:15, rather than the wisdom from above.

Attempting to be more like God than she already was, Eve harvested a fruit that He was not offering. She bought Satan’s recipe for mass destruction, paying for it with her life and the lives of her extended family. Eve consumed an illicit meal to feed an arrogant ambition. She learned the hard way that pursuing power apart from God has fatal consequences.

Adam and Eve forfeited God’s premium produce harvested from His elite garden. More importantly, they lost access to the tree of life. Eve aimed her appetite toward superior strength but she hit the bulls-eye of terminal weakness.

## We need more than Food to Stay Alive

In contrast to Eve's self-indulgence, Jesus refused Satan's hasty hunger fix. After fasting forty days in the wilderness, He rejected a fast food scheme, which turned stones into bread. Jesus fought Satan on an empty stomach and won because neither food nor power controlled His appetite. Jesus delayed gratification because His Father dominated His ruling passion.

*Jesus answered [Satan], "It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"*  
(Matthew 4:4 NIV)



Israeli Wilderness near the Dead Sea 2014

In contrast to Eve's defiant independence, Jesus addressed His critical hunger by relying on His Heavenly Father. Jesus refrained from using supernatural power in a self-serving way. He did not compromise His rescue mission by eating an inferior meal based on Satan's advice.

Because the Word of God provides power and life, demonic short cuts failed to snare our Savior. The Son of God, A.K.A. "the Word of God", set His hunger aside until angelic partners attended Him. No doubt, they celebrated this victory with a meal fit for the occasion—so much better than bread made from stones.

*Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.*

(Matthew 4:11 NIV)

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