



Nourishing Our Body, Soul and Spirit

CHRISTIANS AND THE LENTEN SEASON: Reflections on what we eat

Lent is a season of fasting, self-denial, spiritual growth, conversion, and simplicity. The word origin of Lent is derived from the Teutonic (Germanic) word for springtime. Lent can be interpreted and practiced as a spiritual spring-cleaning: a time for taking spiritual inventory and cleaning out those things which hinder our relationship with Jesus Christ.

In Christianity, Lent refers to the period of Ash Wednesday to Easter; a forty-day period which may include fasting and reflection. Jesus traveled to the desert to fast; ***“where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and at the end of them he was hungry”*** ([Luke 4:2](#)). Many Christians throughout the world observe Lent, including Catholic, Orthodox, and many Protestants. Christians benefit from this annual season of sacrifice and simplicity; as they reflect on their sins, ask God for forgiveness, and begin their life anew with spiritual growth. Some Christians will give up certain foods like chocolate and others may practice being more patient. The purpose of the sacrifice is to grow closer to God by ridding oneself of indulgences or negative behaviors. Even some non-Christians observe it as a period of improvement and reflection.(1)

Christians believe that “Jesus is the promised **Messiah**, the literal Son of the Supreme Being of all the universe”.(2) The Bible contains the Word of God that guides the Christian in all aspects of life including how to treat and care for oneself and others as they journey to eternal life.

REFLECTIONS ON WHAT WE EAT

By Irma Martinez, MSE, RD, IBCLC

People eat mostly when they are hungry, correct? However, have you felt hunger pain lately? Do you eat because you are tempted, enticed by others or by yourself craving for food? Are you driven to eat by feelings such as anxiety, depression or simply because you are bored? Have you considered messages from your parents or grandparents teaching us to “clean the plate”? This advice translates to “you shall finish **EVERYTHING** that was served on your plate”.

Eating healthy is a process and we need to learn to understand our body’s hunger and satiety cues. This process begins early in our life when we are born. We think that parents are required to teach the baby how to feed and how much, but it is the opposite. The babies are teaching **their** needs to the parents; when to feed and how to feed, and when it is time to do something different. Sometimes as parents we overlook hunger and satiety cues. As a result, the babies tend to accommodate according to what the parents are teaching them. We must allow the babies to teach us so that as parents we can accommodate the infant’s needs.

Likewise, we have internal signals or cues that are innate, and the Holy Spirit is the one that guides us, protects us and counsels us. Let us learn to hear that internal voice that is telling us what the right thing is to do in all the areas of our life, including healthy eating.

Are healthy principles part of the Bible?

YES, the Bible has several statements regarding health as the person's mind is interrelated with the body. When the body is not functioning well, it affects the mind and the spirit.

“Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers” [III John 1:2](#)

We shall follow the principle that our God is teaching us in [Luke 4:4](#) ***“and Jesus answered unto him, it is written, Man shall not live by bread alone”.***

We are discussing the whole grains and their benefits for our wellbeing.

Whole Grains

The whole grains consist of the endosperm, germ and bran in contrast to the refined grains that only contain the endosperm (starch).

Consumption of whole grains are linked to a lower risk of heart disease, diabetes, certain types of cancer and other health problems. The ***Dietary Guidelines for Americans*** recommend that half of the grains consumed shall be **whole grains**, since **they are a good source of B vitamins, iron, folate, selenium, potassium and magnesium.**(3)

“But as for you, take wheat, barley, beans, lentils, millet and spelt; put them in one vessel and make them into bread yourself”. [Ezekiel 4:9](#)



Theme from the Fruits of the Spirit: LOVE

“But the fruit of the Spirit is LOVE, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance; against such there is no law.” [Galatians 5:22](#)

Food Sharing as a Sacrament and Sharing is caring

Before Jesus was crucified, He introduced a way of eating together that Christians all over the world still participate, even until this day. Some churches call it the Holy Communion; others call it the Last Supper, others call it Eucharist, a Greek word that means “to give thanks”.(4)

“And day by day, continuing steadfastly, with one accord in the temple and breaking bread at home, they took their food with gladness and singleness of heart” [Acts 2:46](#)

What does it mean to break the bread? And why do we give thanks for it?

According to Dr. Michael Brown from the book: **“Breaking the Strongholds of Food”** *how we conquered food addictions and discovered a new way of living*, Jesus died for the sin of overeating. (5)

There shall be no condemnation and YES, He forgives the sin of overeating just like He forgives other sins too! Breaking the bread symbolizes the remembrance of Him!

When we renew our minds by confessing our sins to the Lord (like unhealthy eating), we receive his mercy, grace and **LOVE**.

“For we have not a high priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities (weaknesses); but one that in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore (with confidence) draw near with boldness to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.” [Hebrews 4:15-16](#)

We often do not think about food in spiritual terms. We eat three meals or more a day. We have gatherings, celebrations and fellowship around food. Likewise, most of us think about the unhealthy choices in non-spiritual ways. This is the reason we just accept it as part of our daily living and avoid accepting that food addictions are part of who we are.

Let us start changing our minds around food and focus more on reaching the purpose we have in God. We can choose other healthier options too, like going to a gym, going for a walk/jogging, and other types of exercises.

Verse of the day: *“There hath not temptation taken you but such as man can bear: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation make also the way of escape, that ye may be able to endure it” [1 Corinthians:10-13](#)*

REFERENCES:

1. <https://www.churchyear.net/lent.htm>
2. www.biblicaljesus.org
3. <https://www.hhs.gov/fitness/eat-healthy/dietary-guidelines-for-americans/index.html>
4. <https://www.faithhealthtransformation.org/resources-and-toolkits/health-topics/food-and-nutrition/just-eating-curriculum/> is a curriculum of Practicing our Faith at the Table
5. Book: "*Breaking the Strongholds of Food*" by Michael L. Brown © 2017