

## **Biblical Eating** **By Doug Hamilton**

### Lesson Two: Understanding the Strategy

Over the last week you were probably experiencing a new perspective on how hunger can be head or stomach driven. As you have been waiting for hunger, hopefully you have seen how much of our hunger is being driven through lust rather than need. For many there is a great excitement while waiting for the God-designed mechanism with the result being a drop in weight. For others there may have been frustration as you struggled all week, waiting for stomach hunger, but giving into the hunger between the ears. Don't give up, for this is the reason for the class! Most people have practiced the art of lustful eating for years and to think that success will be without a struggle is self-deception. Do not lose track of this fact and begin castigating yourself for being weak in this area. It is in the struggles of life that battles are won, new perspectives are attained and successes are reached.

### The Proposition

Gluttony was defined in the last lesson as "*habitually eating to excess*". The results of this abuse have been increased weight, decreased health, damaged self-esteem and a weakened application of God's word. Our natural reaction to this problem in society has been to blame the food, the television or the glands, but we know better. There are two ways that we gluttonize: **1) Eating when not truly hungry 2) Continuing to eat when the hunger has been satisfied.** The aim of this course is to take these principles from the Bible and apply them to our hearts and minds, causing us to be more dependent on God rather than food. It is not a complex system or formula, but a simple God-designed plan concerning our eating. Therefore the pattern of the class will be a reiteration of the two above simple facts and incorporate them as a system of permanent Biblical behavior.



### Keeping the Focus

Jesus made a profound statement centering on His hunger in Matt 4:3-4 *And the tempter came and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread." 4 But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.'"* He had fasted for forty days and the hunger must have been severe. The devil was tempting Jesus to turn the stones into bread, which would cause Him to take His present focus off of God. The verse that Jesus quotes is from Deuteronomy 8:3 and reads as follows.

Deut 8:3 "And He humbled you and let you be hungry, and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that He might make you understand that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the LORD.

For forty years Jehovah took the people of Israel through the desert and fed them manna for the purpose of them trusting and yielding to Him. They had been in bondage for four centuries and needed to have their focus fine-tuned. It was here that they learned the meaning of *daily bread*. They were not eating two days worth in one day, for they could

## **Biblical Eating** **By Doug Hamilton**

only gather a day's worth at a time, except on the Sabbath, for that was the day of rest for the Jew.

Exod 16:14-24 When the layer of dew evaporated, behold, on the surface of the wilderness there was a fine flake-like thing, fine as the frost on the ground. 15 When the sons of Israel saw {it,} they said to one another, "What is it?" For they did not know what it was. And Moses said to them, "It is the bread which the LORD has given you to eat. 16 "This is what the LORD has commanded, 'Gather of it every man as much as he should eat; you shall take an omer apiece according to the number of persons each of you has in his tent.'" 17 And the sons of Israel did so, and {some} gathered much and {some} little. 18 When they measured it with an omer, he who had gathered much had no excess, and he who had gathered little had no lack; every man gathered as much as he should eat. 19 And Moses said to them, "Let no man leave any of it until morning." 20 But they did not listen to Moses, and some left part of it until morning, and it bred worms and became foul; and Moses was angry with them. 21 And they gathered it morning by morning, every man as much as he should eat; but when the sun grew hot, it would melt. 22 Now it came about on the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for each one. When all the leaders of the congregation came and told Moses, 23 then he said to them, "This is what the LORD meant: tomorrow is a sabbath observance, a holy sabbath to the LORD. Bake what you will bake and boil what you will boil, and all that is left over put aside to be kept until morning." 24 So they put it aside until morning, as Moses had ordered, and it did not become foul, nor was there any worm in it.

God told the people of Israel that He would be taking care of them, but the nation still grumbled. They left Egypt and all the other gods behind, but kept looking back. Jesus said in *Luke 9:62* "*No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.*" God had to re-desensitize them back to obedience and submission. The method that He used to get their attention was through the food/stomach relationship. They had taken their minds off the promises of God and placed it on things of the world. Yes, they needed to eat, but they needed to have their minds in the proper eating mode. Their stomachs were taking precedent over the word of God. The Lord was reminding them that His word was good and to stop complaining. They needed to keep the focus on God and His plan.

When someone is struggling with overeating, they are not staying focused on the planned design that God has for us. He designed the stomach to call for food when the body needs it. He gives us cravings for the specific nutrients that our system may be calling for. He made it that the flavor of food diminishes as the hunger is being satisfied. This is the design of the Master Builder and He intends for us to be obedient. When we violate the natural design of the Father, we are not following the word and the will of God in that area of our life. When we submit to God in this area, not only does our focus change concerning food, but in all other areas of kingdom living.

### Dispelling some of the myths

We live in a world that has taught us a few detrimental falsehoods concerning the consumption of food. Many of these were taught by parents and are accepted as expected.

## Biblical Eating By Doug Hamilton

Many times these unwritten rules are imbedded deep in our minds never to be called into question until this very moment. We will therefore discuss a few of these food myths in order to head them off at the start.

### Three Squares a Day

Society has taught us that we are to have three squares a day, one in the morning, one at noon and one at evening. Oh yes, we are also entitled to have snack before bed because of the extremely hard day at the job. It sounds innocent, but is this is one of the primary contributors to gluttony in our society.

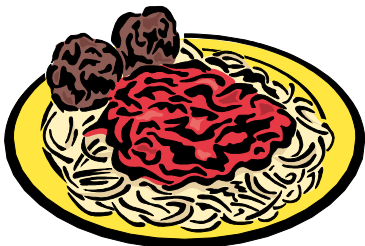


We get up in the morning and have the Grand Slam at Denny's. While at work on the job, with the breakfast meal still digesting, the lunch break begins. Perhaps a co-worker asks, "Where do you want to go for lunch today?" Without a second thought, a restaurant is mutually chosen, resulting in a *Run for the Border*. As you wolf down a couple of burritos and the medium Coke, the flavor of pancakes and sausage from the breakfast still lingers. Nevertheless, the remainder of the afternoon is spent trying to finish the digestion process of the two meals already eaten. With it now time to go home and make supper for the family, the opportunity comes again. The eating traditionalist rationalizes "Oh yea, I didn't eat my supper yet." Even though there was no hunger, the meal is justified for everyone is entitled to supper! This is usually the largest meal of the day, capping off the hard day's work. The next morning, the same routine is carried out.

What seems to be the problem with this picture? There were three meals eaten because there were three meals expected. Just because society says there needs to be three squares a day does not mean that God was in the decision to eat the three meals. In Acts 10:10 it says of Peter "*And he became hungry, and was desiring to eat; but while they were making preparations, he fell into a trance*". The preparation of the food seemed to be the result of the hunger, not the other way around. Hunger is determined on the clock that God put in us and not by the clock on the wall or the watch on our wrist. The three squares a day theory does not lineup with the Bible. We must be willing to wait for true hunger.

### Eat Everything on the Plate!

This is the one that mother taught us concerning the eating, "Eat everything on your plate!" What if the plate is bigger than the stomach? Do we all have plates of food that are exactly the size of our stomach? I think not! It is okay to have some food left over when you are done eating.



In Matt 15:37 it says "*And they all ate, and were satisfied, and they picked up what was left over of the broken pieces, seven large baskets full.*" They chose to store the food in baskets and not the stomach. They stopped eating when their stomachs were filled and then began to fill the baskets. They did not try to put all the

## **Biblical Eating** **By Doug Hamilton**

bread in one basket, but seven, for there was seven baskets full of bread. The same applies to us concerning the stomach. We do not try to put two stomachs full of food in one stomach. When we cherish the myth of “Eat everything on the plate!” rather than “Eat until you are satisfied”, we then step outside the plan of God.

### The Healthy, Well-balanced Diet

How many times have you heard that the quandary with our weight problem in this country is that the food we eat is not healthy? This is not good for all food that God gave us is good. *1 Tim 4:4-5 For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, 5 because it is consecrated by the word of God and prayer.* The body has the unique ability to process the food we eat into the nutrients that we need. A person can eat bread for the entire meal and still get the nutrients he or she needs. A person is not fat because they eat certain foods, but because they eat too much of certain foods. How did the Eskimos, who had no access to citrus fruits, survive in the frozen artic? How does someone that eats only vegetables and not meats survive? *Rom 14:3 Let not him who eats regard with contempt him who does not eat, and let not him who does not eat judge him who eats, for God has accepted him.*

We have to stop trying to make the food behave and start behaving ourselves. It is not the food that has the need to be obedient concerning the design of God, but us. It is far more important “when” we eat than “what” we eat. Food is the healthiest when it is taken in moderation.

### One Last Bite Won't Matter

How many times have you heard that saying? Whenever we take a bite when the body is not calling for food, it matters. One more gallon in the tank of your car when the tank is full will spill it on the ground and on your clothes. Why would it be any different in the realm of eating? If God says the tank is full, then we have to stop kidding ourselves. One bite is not obedience to the natural design and intention of God. *Job 23:12 "I have not departed from the command of His lips; I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my necessary food.*



### This week's pointers

- As you are being tempted to eat prior true hunger, it is wise to pray to God for strength. In Matt 6:13, Jesus informs us concerning the pattern of prayer that we are to request strength prior to the temptation to deal with it. *'And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil.* Pray many times of day to wait for the hunger that God designed your body to go through.
- Eat slower knowing that the food was given for our enjoyment. Remember that the flavor of the food will diminish the closer to satisfaction that one approaches. In order to acquire the true sense of fullness, it is necessary to eat a little and ask yourself if the hunger is over. When someone is eating fast, it is very difficult to gage whether that level of satisfaction has been achieved.

**Biblical Eating**  
**By Doug Hamilton**

- Make sure to eat only the best of the food from the plate. Since the object is not to clear the plate, but to fill the stomach to satisfaction, why not try and enjoy the best of the selection? Take for example French fries. Many times there are some really bad ones in the container and to waste your stomach space on the soggy ones simply does not make sense. Take the crispy, long, golden fry and savor each one individually.
- When you are finished eating, thank God for the blessing of the meal, for it was for your pleasure and nourishment, not His. This will put the blessing into the proper perspective. *Ps 34:8 "O taste and see that the LORD is good..."*

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Questions for Lesson Two

1) What was the purpose for the devil to tempt Jesus to eat?

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2) What was the primary reason that God gave manna to the people of Israel?

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3) What does the concept of “Daily Bread” mean to you?

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4) Why do think it is tough to wait for hunger?

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5) Which of the above myths have you bought into?

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6) What are some of the other myths have you bought into that are not listed?

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7) If God took away all our desire to eat, what might happen?

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8) Describe at least one thing you are doing differently concerning eating since beginning this class.

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**Biblical Eating**  
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Reflect this week, examining if you have been successful this week.

9) Did you eat whatever you wanted?

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10) Did you leave food on your plate this week? If so, then how often?

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11) Did you find the struggle easier or harder this week? Explain.

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12) Did the food you eat taste better this week? If so, why?

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13) Did anyone notice that you were eating differently this week? If so, what did they say?

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14) Did any of the pointers discussed in the class aid you in any way? Which ones?

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Daily Records:

Sunday

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Did you feel true hunger today?  
Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Did you stop eating when you were satisfied?  
Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Did you eat what you wanted to eat?

Monday

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Did you feel true hunger today?  
Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Did you stop eating when you were satisfied?  
Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Did you eat what you wanted to eat?

Tuesday

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Did you feel true hunger today?  
Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Did you stop eating when you were satisfied?  
Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Did you eat what you wanted to eat?

Wednesday

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Did you feel true hunger today?  
Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Did you stop eating when you were satisfied?  
Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Did you eat what you wanted to eat?

Thursday

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Did you feel true hunger today?  
Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Did you stop eating when you were satisfied?  
Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Did you eat what you wanted to eat?

Friday

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Did you feel true hunger today?  
Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Did you stop eating when you were satisfied?  
Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Did you eat what you wanted to eat?

Saturday

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Did you feel true hunger today?  
Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Did you stop eating when you were satisfied?  
Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Did you eat what you wanted to eat?