

How to Get on God's Diet Plan

Patients often ask me if God wants humans to be vegetarians. The answer is yes and no. Originally, vegetarianism was His design for all people and animals (see Gen. 1:29-30). That plan changed when the Lord said to Noah: "'Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. I have given you all things, even as the green herbs'" (9:3). The only exception was this was: "'But you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood'" (v. 4).

But in Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14, the Lord gave instructions through Moses about how to eat healthily. He said which animals, birds and fish to eat. For example, the Israelites were allowed to eat only animals that chewed cud and had split hoofs, such as cows, sheep and goats.

The Jews lived under God's dietary rules for centuries, and their bodies were strong and disease-resistant. The Bible says none were feeble among all 2 million Jews in the wilderness (see Ps. 105:37).

Jesus abided by these same rules, never eating pork, shellfish, catfish or other restricted foods. He was certainly not a vegetarian, but as an observant Jew He would have followed the dietary laws God gave to Moses.

After Jesus' death and resurrection, the dietary rules radically changed. People are no longer under the law but under grace. Paul made this clear when he wrote to Timothy: "For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving; for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer" (1 Tim. 4:4-5).

The apostles and elders gave recommendations about not eating food that has been sacrificed to idols, or eating blood or the meat of animals that have been strangled (see Acts 15:28-29). But they did not insist that the Jews follow the former

dietary laws.

As a Christian, you are free to eat anything you want. Your diet will not keep you from heaven—but if you continually eat unhealthy foods, you will get there much sooner. As Paul wrote, “All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful” (1 Cor. 6:12). You must choose a diet that is good for you.

If God is the same yesterday, today and forever, as Hebrews 13:8 says, then what is the wisest diet for us to follow? I believe God’s initial plan for vegetarianism should carry a lot of weight with us. I don’t promote strict vegetarianism—and neither does God. After all, He told Peter, “‘Rise, Peter; kill and eat’” when Peter had a vision of various animals and birds (Acts 10:13). But I do note that vegetarians live longer and may have lower incidences of heart disease and cancer.

The Bible gives a real-life example of vegetarianism’s benefits in the story of Daniel. Daniel and three other Jewish youths in the king’s palace in Babylon were to be nourished for three years on the king’s rich food and wine. But Daniel asked if they could eat vegetables, grains and legumes instead. At the end of 10 days, they looked better and healthier than all the other youths.

That’s a pretty good testimony for eating meat-free. But I am not advocating cutting meat out entirely. When people command you to abstain from certain meats, realize that every creature of God is good, and you can have it as long as you bless it (see 1 Tim. 4:1-4).

The key is to practice balance and moderation, especially when eating meats. Also realize that this Scripture refers to foods God created. The foods that are causing disease and killing Americans are processed foods, fast foods, and foods high in sugar and toxic man-made fats and oils. Eating the right foods

makes you physically healthy and wise. Eat the wrong foods, and you open the door to degeneration, disease and an early death.

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