

Recognizing Deceptive Foods—the Biblical Way

Proverbs 23 gives us a sober warning about food: Biblical wisdom says that you should choose foods that help you, not hurt you.

“When you sit to eat with a ruler, consider diligently what is before you; and put a knife to your throat, if you are a man given to appetite. Be not desirous of his delicacies, for they are deceptive food” (Prov. 23:1-3).

Many people are overweight today because they do not know about the warning in this Scripture.

Considering what we eat carefully applies to us too because we are the rulers; we control what we put in our mouths.

Our grocery stores are filled with deceptive foods—processed foods that appear nourishing to our bodies but are not.

Instead, these foods hijack our brain’s reward and calming systems: dopamine, serotonin and beta endorphin, primarily. We become addicted to them.

These foods interfere with our ability to eat with self-control. Self-control is a fruit of God’s spirit.

One additional fact complicates the issue: Some people who are suffering from emotional issues actually want food to hijack them.

To quote an old commercial, it is their “Calgon, take me away!” substance. Food becomes their escape from emotional pain.

As a result, part of them wants to continue eating deceptive foods, even though the overeating they cause is ruining their

health and quality of life.

I know this issue well. Deceptive foods hijacked my life for over 20 years.

But Proverbs 4:23 says, “Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life.”

God showed me that my heart issue needed addressing first. If I did not allow God to heal the emotional issues in my life, I would always be tempted to run back to deceptive foods as a means of escape.

The enemy could continue to deceive me in thinking:

- I can't live without certain foods in my life
- I'll die if I don't have certain foods
- I can't handle it if I don't eat a particular food

The primary method the enemy uses to control God's people is fear. Just as with Eve, the first woman, he uses the “fear of missing out” to keep you in bondage.

He had her focus on the one tree that would hurt her versus the hundreds, maybe thousands of trees that would help her.

His strategy is the same; he uses whatever means necessary to take God's people out of their purpose. He doesn't want us fulfilling the Great Commission.

But we have the power to stop this.

1 Corinthians 6:12 says, “‘All things are lawful to me,’ but not all things are helpful. ‘All things are lawful for me,’ but I will not be brought under the power of anything.”

While we can eat anything, we shouldn't eat everything. Each of us is unique.

It is wise to focus on the foods that are truthful with us rather than deceive us: Helpful foods look good, taste good

and help us to feel good so that we can go out and do good works with energy and vitality.

We were created to do good works to glorify God!

Here are five tips to identify deceptive foods that have hijacked your brain. By the way, I can write about this because I fell for every single one of these deceptions:

1. After you eat it, your mind becomes obsessed with it. It tasted good, but now your thoughts keep drifting back to where that food is. You keep thinking about when you are going to eat it again.

2. You have difficulty controlling the amount you eat of it. You aren't satisfied with one serving; you must have several in one sitting. You may tell yourself that you are only going to have a little, but you find yourself eating a lot and are unable to stop.

3. You fear giving it up. Feelings of deprivation are just fear in disguise. Here is an easy way to tell if a food has hijacked your brain: Imagine yourself never buying that food again. What feelings come up? If you don't have an emotional attachment to it, then you are fine. But if you feel a sense of loss and can't imagine life without that food, it has likely hijacked your brain.

4. You say that you are buying the food for others, but you are the one who eats it. You may have feelings of guilt buying the food, so you tell yourself that you are buying it for the kids, for your spouse or for guests who happen to stop by. But the truth is that you are buying it for yourself, because you are the one who eats most of it.

5. You got the food from the center aisles of the grocery store, in the freezer case, at the cash register, the convenience store or at the fast-food restaurant. While not every deceptive food lives in these areas, most of them do.

In summary, each of us must decide how we are going to show up for life. Do we really want to live our whole lives in a brain fog and miss the abundant opportunities the Lord gives us to experience daily peace and joy?

I hope, starting today, you decide to stop falling for the deception and eat nourishing foods that help you reach your best weight and feel good as you are doing good. {eo}

*Once 240 pounds and a size 22, **Kimberly Taylor** can testify to God's healing power to end binge-eating. She is an author and the creator of the Christian weight-loss website . Visit today for inspirational health and weight-loss tips.*

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