

Food Part 1

* Food and water are needed for the physical well being of our bodies. We need to eat food so that we can go forward to live our lives for God and to serve Him. The fuel for our physical body is the physical food that we need to eat to receive calories. Therefore, food is important for a healthy life in order to achieve God's purpose in our lives. * But we don't live to eat, but eat to live.

* Why is it important to include the topic of food when we discuss about finances? Because many spend recklessly on food to satiate their palate. * The Scripture speaks about poverty visiting those who love to spend much on certain food rich in oil. *"17 He that loveth pleasure shall be a poor man: he that loveth wine and oil shall not be rich."* (Proverbs 21:17 KJV)

As we review the Scriptures below, we can see that the Lord supplied His people with food in order for them to gain strength to do His work.

I. "33 And while the day was coming on, Paul besought them all to take meat, saying, This day is the fourteenth day that ye have tarried and continued fasting, having taken nothing. 34 Wherefore I pray you to take some meat: for this is for your health: for there shall not an hair fall from the head of any of you. 35 And when he had thus spoken, he took bread, and gave thanks to God in presence of them all: and when he had broken it, he began to eat. 36 Then were they all of good cheer, and they also took some meat. 37 And we were in all in the ship two hundred threescore and sixteen souls. 38 And when they had eaten enough, they lightened the ship, and cast out the wheat into the sea." (Acts 27:33-38 KJV)

Food that was given to the passengers on board had strengthened their bodies; therefore they were able to, *"lightened the ship, and cast out the wheat into the sea."* (Acts 27:38 KJV) Here Paul mentioned to the people on board, *"34 Wherefore I pray you to take some meat: for this is for your health: for there shall not an hair fall from the head of any of you."* (Acts 27:34 KJV) So food is important for survival and strength. After fourteen days without food, they took their first meal. It was bread, which was simple, but nutritional in value and healthy to the body. That bread hadn't been baked recently. It was old bread because for fourteen days they were passing through a terrible wind in the middle of a raging sea. * These days very few opt for old bread. The excuses would be that it is spoilt or the date has expired or it is moldy. But for the passengers in the ship, the same old bread had been used by God to give strength to the passengers to move on to the next stage of their lives. * My point is not that we eat old food or spoiled food. The point here is that natural food carries a lot of nutritional value to strengthen our bodies to live so that we can continue to live our lives for God. * It is not the other things that are important like its taste or its freshness or its look.

* So when I need to purchase my food to eat I look at its nutritional value. That will help me to buy nutritional food at a low cost. I don't need to buy expensive bread, vegetables, or meat. I can still buy the less expensive brand of bread, vegetables, and meat and still receive the same nutritional value of food. * This is a good point for stewardship; we can save money that can be used for other noble purposes.

II. "1 And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the LORD God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these

years, but according to my word. 2 And the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, 3 Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan. 4 And it shall be, that thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there. 5 So he went and did according unto the word of the LORD: for he went and dwelt by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan. 6 And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening; and he drank of the brook." (1 Kings 17:1-6 KJV) The ravens brought the food to Elijah, the man of God. They have carried the bread and the meat in their mouths to Elijah and he ate them and drank water from the brook. If God did that to us today, will we be ready to eat such food? What will we tell God? Are we going to question God as to its cleanness?

Just imagine Elijah had to eat the same food morning and evening for a long time. He never questioned God. It is not mentioned that he said to the Lord, *'I don't like the same taste, Lord!'* or *'Why like that Lord?'* For his liquid intake, he drank the water from the brook, unlike us who quench our thirst with coffee, juices, or soft drinks. Elijah was thankful to God for being his provider. God was truly concerned about Elijah's diet and provided him with protein, fat, and carbohydrates.

* The point that we need to emphasize is that it's not the brand of food, its freshness, and its value in terms of money that is important. As long as it is nutritious, enhances our health, and enables us to serve God, it is good. * Many are so particular about certain brands of food and they will spend much money on particular foods just to get the taste they like. But cheaper brands have the same nutritional value and give the same benefits to our physical bodies. * We work and labor hard to earn our living and we need to direct what we earn into wise ways of spending. We need to tithe our income, spend wisely for food, accommodation, and our children's education and raise them up in a Godly way. Besides our savings, we also set aside money for God's work. Therefore the taste of expensive food isn't important.

III. "7 And it came to pass after a while, that the brook dried up, because there had been no rain in the land. 8 And the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, 9 Arise, get thee to Zarephath, which belongeth to Zidon, and dwell there: behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee. 10 So he arose and went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city, behold, the widow woman was there gathering of sticks: and he called to her, and said, Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in a vessel, that I may drink. 11 And as she was going to fetch it, he called to her, and said, Bring me, I pray thee, a morsel of bread in thine hand. 12 And she said, As the LORD thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but an handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse: and, behold, I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it, and die. 13 And Elijah said unto her, Fear not; go and do as thou hast said: but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring it unto me, and after make for thee and for thy son. 14 For thus saith the LORD God of Israel, The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the LORD sendeth rain upon the earth. 15 And she went and did according to the saying of Elijah: and she, and he, and her house, did eat many days. 16 And the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake by Elijah." (1 Kings 17:7-16 KJV)

Here, Elijah was directed by God to have another source for living. God directed him to be fed by a widow. Elijah obeyed God, and therefore there was food for Elijah and for the

woman and her family. Just imagine eating every day a cake of bread and no other food. How will we feel about it if the Lord will do that to us? We need to be thankful for whatever God is providing us with. Elijah did not reject the offer of God to send him to a widow to feed him. Many will pridefully refuse if God will send them to certain people to feed them since there they will be forced to eat simple food. Jesus mentioned the story of Elijah in the New Testament, confirming that God was the one who had sent Elijah to that particular widow. *“25 But I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land; 26 But unto none of them was Elias sent, save unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow.” (Luke 4:25-26 KJV)* Nowadays, a good number of people boast in their lavishness of food and spend much on it when they are sent to the mission field.

There are certain times that people are provided free food, but instead of eating that food they will go and buy another food because they cannot accept the taste of the food that is repeated for many days. There are certain people who work in certain companies that provide free food. They need to be thankful to God because they don't have to prepare their own food and can save time, money, and effort.

IV. “1 And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and withal how he had slain all the prophets with the sword. 2 Then Jezebel sent a messenger unto Elijah, saying, So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by to morrow about this time. 3 And when he saw that, he arose, and went for his life, and came to Beersheba, which belongeth to Judah, and left his servant there. 4 But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree: and he requested for himself that he might die; and said, It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers. 5 And as he lay and slept under a juniper tree, behold, then an angel touched him, and said unto him, Arise and eat. 6 And he looked, and behold, there was a cake baken on the coals, and a cruse of water at his head. And he did eat and drink, and laid him down again. 7 And the angel of the LORD came again the second time, and touched him, and said, Arise and eat; because the journey is too great for thee. 8 And he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of God. 9 And he came thither unto a cave, and lodged there; and, behold, the word of the LORD came to him, and he said unto him, What doest thou here, Elijah?” (1 Kings 19:1-9 KJV) God was so caring to His servant Elijah. As he fled from Jezebel who was after him to kill him, God showed concern by providing for him the right food, to strengthen his body for the long journey that was ahead of him. *“8 And he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of God.” (1 Kings 19:8 KJV)* That was God's provision for him to take and eat. The angel of the Lord woke him up twice to eat and drink to be strengthened to go and continue his journey with the purpose of serving God. The Lord did not give him extravagant or exotic food but simple food to sustain him. **It is not important that we are provided with the best quality food, for even simple and less costly food can do much in our mission. What is more important is that we have strength in our body to fulfill our responsibility to God and the people.**

V. “1 Thou also, son of man, take thee a tile, and lay it before thee, and pourtray upon it the city, even Jerusalem: 2 And lay siege against it, and build a fort against it, and cast a mount against it; set the camp also against it, and set battering rams against it round about.

3 Moreover take thou unto thee an iron pan, and set it for a wall of iron between thee and the city: and set thy face against it, and it shall be besieged, and thou shalt lay siege against it. This shall be a sign to the house of Israel. 4 Lie thou also upon thy left side, and lay the iniquity of the house of Israel upon it: according to the number of the days that thou shalt lie upon it thou shalt bear their iniquity. 5 For I have laid upon thee the years of their iniquity, according to the number of the days, three hundred and ninety days: so shalt thou bear the iniquity of the house of Israel. 6 And when thou hast accomplished them, lie again on thy right side, and thou shalt bear the iniquity of the house of Judah forty days: I have appointed thee each day for a year. 7 Therefore thou shalt set thy face toward the siege of Jerusalem, and thine arm shall be uncovered, and thou shalt prophesy against it. 8 And, behold, I will lay bands upon thee, and thou shalt not turn thee from one side to another, till thou hast ended the days of thy siege. 9 Take thou also unto thee wheat, and barley, and beans, and lentiles, and millet, and fitches, and put them in one vessel, and make thee bread thereof, according to the number of the days that thou shalt lie upon thy side, three hundred and ninety days shalt thou eat thereof. 10 And thy meat which thou shalt eat shall be by weight, twenty shekels a day: from time to time shalt thou eat it. 11 Thou shalt drink also water by measure, the sixth part of an hin: from time to time shalt thou drink. 12 And thou shalt eat it as barley cakes, and thou shalt bake it with dung that cometh out of man, in their sight. 13 And the LORD said, Even thus shall the children of Israel eat their defiled bread among the Gentiles, whither I will drive them. 14 Then said I, Ah Lord GOD! behold, my soul hath not been polluted: for from my youth up even till now have I not eaten of that which dieth of itself, or is torn in pieces; neither came there abominable flesh into my mouth. 15 Then he said unto me, Lo, I have given thee cow's dung for man's dung, and thou shalt prepare thy bread therewith. 16 Moreover he said unto me, Son of man, behold, I will break the staff of bread in Jerusalem: and they shall eat bread by weight, and with care; and they shall drink water by measure, and with astonishment: 17 That they may want bread and water, and be astonished one with another, and consume away for their iniquity.” (Ezekiel 4:1-17 KJV) This is a real incident and not just a fable. Ezekiel was asked by God to lie on his side 390 days and then on the other side 40 days, and he was asked to prepare very simple food from grains. The food and drink were rationed by weight and the amount was less than the intake of a normal man. He was asked by God to eat 20 shekels per day which is equal to 228.4 grams, and he was asked to drink one-sixth of a hin which is equal to 611 milliliters. The prophet obeyed the Word of God; he obeyed to be restricted in movement, he obeyed the method that God instructed to prepare his food and he obeyed to eat and drink the certain amounts that God described. **I am not telling that we need to eat and drink less but we need to be sensitive to the pattern of life that God would like us to live. What is the point in indulging in gluttony? Live and eat based on the pattern of life that God would like us to live.** Ezekiel could have lived and eaten better, but he abided by the instruction of God so that he could convey the message of God in a clearer way.

God requested Ezekiel to bake his food, *“15 Then he said unto me, Lo, I have given thee cow's dung for man's dung, and thou shalt prepare thy bread therewith” (Ezekiel 4:15 KJV)* * Nowadays, people are so satisfied with readymade food from restaurants which cost a fortune. They would rather drive to Pizza Hut, KFC, Burger King, and such places without thinking how much it would cost them. We need to cook and bake our food at home rather than eat processed food. * It is sheer laziness, worldliness, and carelessness if we opt for readymade food. Imagine people are sitting at home and they have all the facilities for cooking but still they will order sweets and junk food just for the sake of the special taste. I

can't say either that they don't have time. They are just lazy. * The homemade sweets and food are also especially tasty to those who are trained to cook and eat at their homes and who had committed themselves to be good stewards in God's sight.

Since some people are working, they feel they have the right to enjoy life by eating outside without going through the ordeal of cooking. But, if we live this way, then what are we teaching the people around us and the people under our care and our families and children? They will learn from us how to squander and live in debauchery, the same way the prodigal son lived and wasted the resources of his father. *"12 And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living. 13 And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living."* (Luke 15:12-13 KJV)

Those who live thriftily will pass a clear message to the people around them about the importance of stewardship and the need to preserve our resources so that we can invest into God's work.

VI. *"4 And the same John had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey."* (Matthew 3:4 KJV) John ate locust and honey everyday and he was happy to serve God and preach His Word and admonish the people to follow God. The food that God had given him was enough to sustain his body for His service. That food was free and available to him so he used it to his benefit. **Sure God is providing similar resources for us but do we thank God and humble ourselves before Him and eat what He has given us without grumbling?**

VII. *"1 And Naomi had a kinsman of her husband's, a mighty man of wealth, of the family of Elimelech; and his name was Boaz. 2 And Ruth the Moabitess said unto Naomi, Let me now go to the field, and glean ears of corn after him in whose sight I shall find grace. And she said unto her, Go, my daughter. 3 And she went, and came, and gleaned in the field after the reapers: and her hap was to light on a part of the field belonging unto Boaz, who was of the kindred of Elimelech. 4 And, behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem, and said unto the reapers, The LORD be with you. And they answered him, The LORD bless thee. 5 Then said Boaz unto his servant that was set over the reapers, Whose damsel is this? 6 And the servant that was set over the reapers answered and said, It is the Moabitish damsel that came back with Naomi out of the country of Moab: 7 And she said, I pray you, let me glean and gather after the reapers among the sheaves: so she came, and hath continued even from the morning until now, that she tarried a little in the house. 8 Then said Boaz unto Ruth, Hearest thou not, my daughter? Go not to glean in another field, neither go from hence, but abide here fast by my maidens: 9 Let thine eyes be on the field that they do reap, and go thou after them: have I not charged the young men that they shall not touch thee? and when thou art athirst, go unto the vessels, and drink of that which the young men have drawn. 10 Then she fell on her face, and bowed herself to the ground, and said unto him, Why have I found grace in thine eyes, that thou shouldest take knowledge of me, seeing I am a stranger? 11 And Boaz answered and said unto her, It hath fully been shewed me, all that thou hast done unto thy mother in law since the death of thine husband: and how thou hast left thy father and thy mother, and the land of thy nativity, and art come unto a people which thou knewest not heretofore. 12 The LORD recompense thy work, and a full reward*

be given thee of the LORD God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust. 13 Then she said, Let me find favour in thy sight, my lord; for that thou hast comforted me, and for that thou hast spoken friendly unto thine handmaid, though I be not like unto one of thine handmaidens. 14 And Boaz said unto her, At mealtime come thou hither, and eat of the bread, and dip thy morsel in the vinegar. And she sat beside the reapers: and he reached her parched corn, and she did eat, and was sufficed, and left. 15 And when she was risen up to glean, Boaz commanded his young men, saying, Let her glean even among the sheaves, and reproach her not: 16 And let fall also some of the handfuls of purpose for her, and leave them, that she may glean them, and rebuke her not. 17 So she gleaned in the field until even, and beat out that she had gleaned: and it was about an ephah of barley. 18 And she took it up, and went into the city: and her mother in law saw what she had gleaned: and she brought forth, and gave to her that she had reserved after she was sufficed." (Ruth 2:1-18 KJV) Ruth decided to work in order to provide food for herself and for her mother in law. She decided and was willing to glean after the harvesters and to pick the leftover that was allocated by God for the poor. She knew where to find her food based on God's Word. *"9 And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not wholly reap the corners of thy field, neither shalt thou gather the gleanings of thy harvest. 10 And thou shalt not glean thy vineyard, neither shalt thou gather every grape of thy vineyard; thou shalt leave them for the poor and stranger: I am the LORD your God."* (Leviticus 19:9-10 KJV) *"22 And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not make clean riddance of the corners of thy field when thou reapest, neither shalt thou gather any gleanings of thy harvest: thou shalt leave them unto the poor, and to the stranger: I am the LORD your God."* (Leviticus 23:22 KJV) *"21 When thou gatherest the grapes of thy vineyard, thou shalt not glean it afterward: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow."* (Deuteronomy 24:21 KJV) What was allocated to her and to her mother in law as the portion of food was to be collected by gleaning after the harvesters.

The Lord led her to the right farm to glean and she worked hard from morning till evening, every day in the same place, on the farm of Boaz. *"23 So she kept fast by the maidens of Boaz to glean unto the end of barley harvest and of wheat harvest; and dwelt with her mother in law."* (Ruth 2:23 KJV) We can see in the passage below what kind of food she ate during her lunch break. *"14 And Boaz said unto her, At mealtime come thou hither, and eat of the bread, and dip thy morsel in the vinegar. And she sat beside the reapers: and he reached her parched corn, and she did eat, and was sufficed, and left."* (Ruth 2:14 KJV) Her food was bread, vinegar, and corn, and her drink, plain water, *"and when thou art athirst, go unto the vessels, and drink of that which the young men have drawn."* (Ruth 2:9 KJV) When she ate her fill, she had food left over that which she brought back for Naomi, her mother in law. *"18 And she took it up, and went into the city: and her mother in law saw what she had gleaned: and she brought forth, and gave to her that she had reserved after she was sufficed."* (Ruth 2:18 KJV) Ruth reserved the leftover food and gave it to Naomi because she believed that was God's provision for her mother in law. The meaning of Naomi is 'blessed', and it is blessed to eat the leftover and learn how to save and become a good steward. **Those who preserve the leftover food are wise people. In doing so, they provide food for another mouth.**

Those who are good on keeping the leftovers are good at saving.

But

Those who are good at throwing the leftovers are poor at saving.

My Dear and Beloved: All the characters in the Bible mentioned above, accepted not only the food God had given them but also God's plan and will for their lives. The same should be in our case. We must resign ourselves to God's provision, will, and plan with thanksgiving in our heart and serve Him. It is better we humble ourselves before God before He humbles us. Let us ask God forgiveness for all our sins especially our grumbling against food and against His good plans for us. Instead of grumbling, let us ask God to give us patience, self-control, and perseverance to accept the discipline that He has meted out to us and endure it so that His plan in our lives will be fulfilled. Let us pray

My Prayer: *Father God I come before you in the name of Jesus who died on the cross for my sins who was buried and rose from the dead on the third day to give me eternal life. Lord thank you for the instruction that I received from your Word about food, and thank you for the kind of food that you are providing daily for me to eat. Lord thank you for all the correction, the rebuke and the admonition that we received today from your Word.*

Confess and renounce now all your sins. Confess your grumbling against God and others, being so choosy about the food you are eating. Confess your bad stewardship and wasting much money on food just for the taste. Repent of wasting much money by not cooking at home but buying readymade food and eating in restaurants. Confess and renounce doing your own will and not the will nor the plan nor the style of life that God had ordained for you to live. Confess and renounce your pride and your worldliness. Confess and renounce your non willingness to suffer for Christ and to serve God in the way that He wants you to serve Him. Lord forgive me, I repent of the following sins _____.

Lord I commit myself to the teaching and to the principles that I received in this message from you. Lord I commit myself to be thankful and accepting the daily food that you give me and the style of life that you want me to live for you. Lord I commit myself to eat the leftover food, to avoid eating expensive food, to cook at home and to avoid buying readymade food and eating in restaurants. Lord I commit myself to go to the places that you are sending me to minister to the people.

Lord thank you for my Brothers and Sisters who committed their lives to you and are willing to go along the teaching that we received in this message. Lord continue to provide for them, sustain them, and sustain their families and ministries so they will continue to serve you.

Lord we as your church, we commit ourselves to implement the teaching we received in this message, to eat the food that you had provided for us and to avoid spending much on expensive, readymade food and eating in restaurants. Lord we commit ourselves to set good example to others to follow you. Lord refill us with the Holy Spirit and give us the spiritual gifts that we need to go and evangelize, and make new disciples and train new workers to go and plant more Bible studies and congregations for the church. Lord fulfill the vision of the church, 'Multiplication in peace with implementing the whole will of God.' Lord bless us, enlarge our territory, let your hand be with us and free us from harm so that we will not feel pain. May the grace of the Lord Jesus and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all in Jesus name, Amen.

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