

Bible Study 7

Topic: **God Provides Food in Abundance - Part I**

Transitioning from the Sermon

A. The Main Points of the Sermon

1. God's abundance comes in unexpected ways
2. God's abundance may be immediate, or it may wait for generations
3. God's abundance is not to be wasted

B. Conclusions of the Sermon

Let us celebrate our food and our faith together. Let us see how we can partner with others in our congregations and communities in effective agricultural techniques. Yes! Let us honour the God who provides food in abundance for us by improving food security. When we do that, we are also improving health and wellness in the process.

Scripture Readings

1 Timothy 4:4-5

⁴ For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected, provided it is received with thanksgiving; ⁵ for it is sanctified by God's word and by prayer.

Psalm 136:25

who gives food to all flesh,
for his steadfast love endures forever.

Learning Objectives

The congregation will be able to:

1. Describe the classification of food and the healthy plate
2. Describe the specific benefits related to the many varieties of food – Fruits, Nuts and Seeds
3. State select foods which are linked to certain types of cancers

Material Needed

1. PowerPoint Presentation
2. Laptop
3. Projector and Screen
4. Zoom account or other online platform such as Microsoft Teams if studies are conducted online

Introduction

Creation was called “very good” by God. This was before modern genetic engineering, food processing and production. Through these modern processes, food is often genetically engineered, fed with synthetic fertilizers and protected by chemical pesticides and reduced to harmful by-products, e.g., wheat made into white wheat flour which is (processed; bleached and enriched) and thus today considered “NOT GOOD” and unhealthy.

There is evidence of this “goodness” of natural food all throughout nature. One source of “good” which we often take for granted is the food market. It is astounding to realize the variety and quantity of food which is produced by our farmers and brought to the market for our consumption. Before you eagerly plunge into purchasing, next time you go to the market, take a moment to survey this ‘city of food,’ most of which would have been produced organically and come straight from the farm, and appreciate the wonder that it is.

In this lesson we will take a look at the classification and variety of fruits, nuts and seeds. In our look at **classification**, we hope to briefly examine the many types of foods and their contents. In our look at **variety**, we will survey the different occurrences of the same foods in our food systems. An important note is the fact that colour is often an important feature of variety. However, we will see that colour is also indicative of nutritional value. For example, we will note that yellow foods are usually rich in certain nutrients called carotenes. Variety also refers to taste, as foods in the same group may have differences in the amounts of various contents and hence have a different effect on our taste buds; sour, savoury, sweet (and sweeter!).

Exposition of the Text

The letter of Paul to Timothy was written to provide advice for leadership in the church. One of the issues which Paul raised was the matter of false teachings. A complex system of false teaching had developed which among other teachings, commanded abstinence from food. This was based on the fundamental belief that the material world was evil. This however was in stark contrast to God’s assessment of creation. In Genesis 1:31, God said the creation was “very good.” This is a fact which Paul reiterates in the text and goes a step further by asserting that “nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving;” the abundance of food is given for the abundance of life. The foods which God created come in the abundance of nature, an inestimable quantum of resources intended for human flourishing. We do well to acknowledge the value of this provision, and unlike the false teachers in Timothy’s day, we can examine, appreciate and appropriate this knowledge to our great benefit.

The point being made in Timothy is supported by the reading in the Psalms. The Psalmist sees the provision of the variety of food as an expression of God’s constant and unconditional love for

humanity. In that regard, the wide variety of food/fruits available must be appreciated and enjoyed as a gift from God.

In this lesson we will explore many of the varieties of fruits, nuts and seeds which are provided for our consumption and well-being.

Application

The food group with the widest variety is that of fruits. It is estimated that there are around 2000 types of fruit around the world. Let us give some attention to the types of fruits which we find commonly around us.

Selecting fruits

To maximise nutrients and appeal, buy and serve different types of fruits. Try to buy fruits that are in season, and choose for freshness and quality. You should:

- Eat with the seasons – this is nature’s way of making sure our bodies get a healthy mix of nutrients and plant chemicals
- Try something new – try new recipes and buy new fruit as part of your weekly shopping. (Try something BIBLICAL!!!! Try to eat the foods that people in the bible ate: organic, wholesome and not processed. The most popular processed food, however, in the Biblical times, which is mentioned from the beginning of the Bible Gen. 3:19 and as many as 338 times, far more than any other type of food, is BREAD.)
- Let colours guide you – get different combinations of nutrients by putting a ‘rainbow’ of colours (green, white, yellow-orange, blue-purple, red) on your plate.¹

We can enjoy the benefits of fruits even when they are out of season by making fruit preserves such as jams, jellies and chutneys. Additionally, fruits can be frozen or dried in order to extend their lives. Of course, all of these processes may alter the taste, when compared to the having the fruit fresh from the tree or the market.

Nuts and seeds

There is an ample variety of nuts and seeds. They are usually highly nutritious and provide great benefits to health. (Refer to Bible Study 6 for chart on nutritional benefits of nuts and seeds.)

A nut is a simple dry fruit consisting of one or two edible kernels inside a hard shell. Nuts include:

- almonds
- Brazil nuts
- cashew nuts

¹ Adapted from <https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyliving/fruit-and-vegetables#selecting-fruits-and-vegetables>.

- hazelnuts
- macadamias
- pecans
- pine nuts
- pistachios
- walnuts
- coconuts
- peanuts (these are legumes, however, they are often classified as nuts due to their similar characteristics to other tree nuts).

The nutrient profiles of seeds are also very similar to those of nuts. Common seeds include:

- pumpkin seeds
- flax seeds
- sesame seeds
- poppy seeds
- sunflower seeds
- chia seeds.

Video

Cancer-causing foods and how we can fight cancer with the benefits of fruits, nuts, seeds etc.

Activities

Activity 1

Consider the components of a health plate and complete the activity in this link:

<https://www.healthyeating.org/products-and-activities/games-activities/myplate>

Activity 2

Some of the fruits which are borne in wide variety are, apples, berries, mangoes, citrus fruits and plums. Let us take a closer look at mangoes, one of the favourites in Jamaica. Mangoes are a sweet and fleshy fruit with an enclosed seed. The nutritional benefits of mangoes are many.² Use the letters of the alphabet to see if you can make a list of all the types of mangoes that you know. You can try using this website to help:

<https://jamaicans.com/jamaicanmangonames/> Another website which emphasizes the many names by which mangoes are known in Jamaica is: <http://simplylocal.life/jamaican-mango-names/>

² <https://www.webmd.com/diet/health-benefits-mango>

Food Fact

Mangoes have a glycemic index (GI) score of 51, which means it's a low GI food. GI is a value assigned to a food according to the way it influences blood glucose levels. Foods that have a low value are thought to foster weight loss. Mangoes rank lower than watermelon (76) and [pineapple](https://www.everydayhealth.com/diet-nutrition/diet/mangoes-nutrition-benefits-types-and-more/) (59), and above dates (42). <https://www.everydayhealth.com/diet-nutrition/diet/mangoes-nutrition-benefits-types-and-more/> (see also <https://glycemicindex.com/gi-search/>)

Testimonial

“Since my return to Jamaica in 2012 I started to do my own bread using only two ingredients: flour and water and a spoon of sea salt for seasoning. Using the old grains mentioned in the bible I made slowly “sour-dough starter (leaven)” from fermented dark rye flower and water over 5 days, then added three measures of flower (Spelt, Wheat and Rye) like in the Gospel parables (Matt. 13:33 & Lk. 13:21 and mixed it with water (about 2.5 measures) and let it raise for one full day or more in a cool place (slow-rise) and then bake for an hour in hot oven and let it rest for a couple of hours. The best and most healthy bread that you cannot buy in supermarkets. I learned it from my mother (with possible Jewish ancestry) when I was a child and bread was made at home according to this ancient tradition. Time and slow process of preparing bread is of essence here.

It made me understand while biblical Feast of Unleavened Bread lasts 7 days – because it takes as much 7 days to make a good, healthy bread.

Even, if the doctors today discourage eating bread, the bread made from organic whole multi-grain flour and water and only salt as seasoning with a slow raise the bread is really healthy and tasty. I do it on 7-day intervals.

The other food that is often mentioned in the Bible are leeks and lentils which have a great nutritional value.

*Prof. Bernard Latus
St. Michael’s Seminary, Kingston, Jamaica”*

Conclusion

There is a vast variety of naturally grown foods that are good for human consumption. The nutritional value and health benefits of these foods are ideal. The advice of one expert is to consume at least five kinds of fruit each day. It is now a well-established fact that consuming significant amounts of fruits helps to protect against cancer, diabetes and heart disease. The opposite is that the processed food that is readily available to us is not as life-sustaining as they ought to be. We should exclude these from our diets in favour of the wholesome, natural, nutritious and indigenous foods which are abundantly available to us.

What other conclusions can you draw from this lesson?

Closing Prayer

Gracious God,

*We thank you for your abundant provision of healthy food and for the life-sustaining benefits which we receive from them. Help us to diligently develop lifestyle practices which will lead to our health and wellness. Help us to discern the value and importance of healthy eating and its relationship to healthy living and longevity of life. May we honour you in the ways we eat and care for our bodies, in the name of Jesus Christ we pray,
Amen.*