

THE HEALTHY CHRISTIAN

Variety, Perfectly Combined

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A 2015 article in the *New Scientist*, stated - "Of Earth's estimated 400,000 plant species, we could eat some 300,000, armed with the right imagination, boldness and preparation. Yet humans, eat a mere 200 species globally, ...and half our plant-sourced protein and calories come from just three: maize, rice and wheat."¹

This statement is not a hard one to accept, there could very well be up to 300,000 edible plants on the earth even though we consume so few of them. But we do know that God wants us to eat a variety of foods. He told the first pair in Eden that, "...Of **every tree** of the garden thou mayest freely eat:" Genesis 2:15-16 KJV. The Garden of Eden was a specimen of God's perfect work of creation, therefore we expect every plant and insect species to be in that garden; and it was there that God instructed the first pair to **eat of every tree** except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Therefore dietetic variation is necessary for human health since God instructed us to do so.

"And God said, Behold, I have given you **every herb bearing seed**, which is upon the face of all the earth, **and every tree**, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; **to you it shall be for meat.**" "...He giveth meat **in abundance.**" Genesis 1:29; Job 36:31 KJV. Nature is filled with His goodness and He wants us to know that there is no limit to His power and no meagerness in His charity. We only consume a small fraction of God's bounties and most of us do not spend much time in nature, therefore the goodness of God is only faintly realized, but nevertheless the breadth of His goodness is vividly painted by the cross of Christ; here we get a perfect picture of God's benevolence. Even if we do not get to eat all the goodness He has provided in nature, He bids us to make Christ our personal Saviour, that in Him we may "**taste and see that the Lord is good!**" Psalm 34:8.

In my Christian experience I have come to understand something about the Lord. What He instructs us to do, are not random or vain but are crucial for our longevity and happiness. In other words, the laws of health are **commandments that we need to live**. They are our life, to reject them is to choose death. "And He said unto them, **Set your hearts unto all the words which I testify among you this day**, which ye shall **command** your children to **observe to do, all the words of this law.**" "**For it is not a vain thing for you; because it is your life: and through this thing ye shall prolong your days in the land,**" Deuteronomy 32:46-47 KJV. Longevity is well sought after in the world, and here in the Bible the Creator gives us the secret of how this may be attained - keep the commandments, **including all the laws of health**. Not only will you live longer on this earth, but through these laws of health God will sanctify your entire being and fit you for heaven where you will live for eternity.

How does variety impact our health?

We need a variety because nutrients such as healthy fats, carbohydrates, proteins, vitamins and minerals are distributed across every grain, herb and fruit tree on the earth. Our gut microbiota also depends on a variety of plant-based foods to thrive. The microbiota, located within our Gastrointestinal (GI) tract is estimated to be 3×10^{13} (trillion) microbes. "**A plant-based diet appears to be beneficial for human health by promoting the development of more diverse and stable microbial systems.**" "Recent advancements in laboratory techniques have revealed functions of the human gut microbiota related to **immunity and the gastrointestinal, brain, and cardiovascular systems.**"²

In the case of our immunity, the microbes within our GI all compete for sites of attachment and for resources, therefore they make it difficult for pathogens to attach themselves to the gut lining and thence enter our bloodstream. The microbes also produce chemicals to destroy pathogens. Our microbiota carry-out certain metabolic processes that we are not able to or cannot do very efficiently. “They produce many vitamins, synthesise all essential and non-essential amino acids, carry out the biotransformation of bile; and help us to break down the resistant starches.”³ Lastly, scientist are discovering the intimate association between the health of our microbiota and how we respond to stress, anxiety and other brain related disorders. “Imbalance of the normal gut microbiota have been linked with gastrointestinal conditions such as inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) and irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), and wider systemic manifestations of disease such as obesity, type 2 diabetes, and atopy.”³

Variety yes, but how do we combine?

When we speak of variety, we are not advocating that there should be many different articles of food at one meal, but rather changing our foods at each meal and on different days. The use of too many kinds of food at one meal causes confusion in the gut. This is because each type of microbe responds differently to each food. To stimulate too many different microbes at a meal will cause a ‘war in the gut’ as they will begin to compete for resources and space along the GI tract. This will lead to indigestion, brain fog and confusion. The skill of properly combining our food is to be developed if we desire to have a healthy and peaceful gut. “And every man that striveth for the mastery is **temperate in all things**...”¹ Corinthians 9:25 KJV. This scripture lets us know that there is a safe limit in everything we consume, and scientific research has been expounding more on these recommended dietary limits of different foods for example nuts which is recommended as one handful per day.

The Lord makes a separation between food types when He outlined our diet in Genesis. He identifies the herbs separately from the fruits in Genesis 1:29. We should consume fruits and vegetables at different meals, **not together**. Fruits are those foods that have flesh surrounding a seed, and vegetables are herbs or leaves. Eating fruits and vegetables together confuses the gut because they are too diverse. Fruits are higher in sugar, therefore it is best to have them for breakfast when our insulin levels are higher. Vegetables are lower in sugar and thus they are better suited for the afternoon meal. There are foods that are neutral such as root vegetables, legumes and grains which are seeds, not distinctly fruit or vegetable therefore they can be eaten with either.

There are certain fruits that do not go well together. Fruits such as oranges and other citrus, do not digest well with fruits such as bananas that are higher in sugar. Fruits in the melon family must be eaten by themselves because of their high water content which disturbs the digestion of other foods. To prevent indigestion and bloating is not difficult, we need only the knowledge. Health is something we all desire, and God wants to grow in the knowledge of this subject that we may work with Him in healing our body, mind and soul. Let us praise God for His goodness, and by His grace let us all be *Healthy Christians*. “Behold, I will bring it health and cure, and I will cure them, and will reveal unto them the abundance of peace and truth. Jeremiah 33:6 KJV.

References:

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