

THE HEALTHY CHRISTIAN

How to Thrive on a Plant-based Diet

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The Bible tells gives us the account of Daniel and the three Hebrew boys who were taken captives to Babylon. And because they were of royal lineage, they were brought to the King's palace to be trained for service in the courts of Babylon. "And the king appointed them a daily provision of the king's meat, and of the wine which he drank: so nourishing them three years, that at the end thereof they might stand before the king."

"But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself." "Then said Daniel to Melzar, whom the prince of the eunuchs had set over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah," "Prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days; and let them give us **pulse to eat, and water to drink.**"

"And at the end of ten days their **countenances appeared fairer and fatter in flesh** than all the children which did eat the portion of the king's meat." "**As for these four children, God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom:** and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams." Daniel 1:5,8,11-12,15,17 KJV.

Daniel requested pulse to eat and water to drink. The word pulse in the original Hebrew means "that which is sown or planted." — as food. Pulse is plant-based food. As a result, after just 10 days, their countenances were fairer and their body fatter or more muscular than their counterparts. The world has often scoffed at the plant-based diet for a lack of these visible benefits. People on a plant-based diet are often of lower body weight and not very vibrant in skin tone. But the Bible says that Daniel and his brethren were fairer and fatter. Is the Bible wrong or are we doing something not quite right on this diet? This subject is an interesting topic to discuss in this month's issue of *The Healthy Christian*.

Before we get into the subject there is something that we have to consider — our body was not thrown together by God, rather it was *fearfully* and *wonderfully* made. The word 'fearfully' means something to revere or inspire reverence. We are the crowning work of God's creative power. The wisdom and knowledge that He put into designing and making the human frame exceeds all His other creations, for we are made in His image and likeness. The human body is extremely complex and it is governed by particular laws, and our Creator wants us to learn and keep them by the grace which He will impart.

Let us reason for a minute, can anything exist without being governed by some law? To exist it must have form and structure, which are laws themselves. So can the human body, God's crown creation, exist without law? No. Therefore as rational beings that love life, we must have a keen appreciation for the laws that regulate our being. As we get to know our body, and learn of its laws, we will become more like David, who said, "**I will praise Thee; for** [because] I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are Thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well." Psalm 139:14 KJV. David praised God as he gained an appreciation of the thought and carefulness which God had put into making his body.

Understanding that we are fearfully and wonderfully made, and not in randomness, we can appreciate the fact that we cannot eat as we please and still have the benefits that our Creator intends. The Creator intends that we be strong physically, vibrant in skin tone and have increased mental and spiritual powers as did the Hebrew boys who received knowledge and skill in all wisdom and learning. This is the end of a plant-based diet *if* it is rightly done. Now let us consider a few principles which we can follow in order to thrive physically, mentally and spiritually as did Daniel and the three Hebrew boys.

Eat whole foods, unprocessed, and raw as much as possible

Our body is built up by the foods we eat, therefore our foods should have as much of the nutrients that they were made with, otherwise we will suffer loss. If the food is in its natural state then we will even have a greater relish for the food. Cooking destroys much of the flavours and nutrients.

Eat less carbs; more fruit and vegetables

Eat mostly fresh fruit and vegetables. These contain the vitamins and minerals that actually make up the body. Carbohydrates should be no more than a quarter of your intake because sugar does not build up the body but it is only a source of fuel. Excess sugar in the blood is very detrimental to blood circulation and mental health.

Don't forget the nuts and seeds

Nuts and seeds are crucial to a plant-based diet because they contain a lot of our protein. Eat and enjoy a handful each day, preferable with vegetables and raw because they aid in the absorption of the fat soluble vitamins which we need us to build and retain muscles. They also help to give the skin that vibrant colour which the Bible speaks about.

Take Sunlight Daily

Sunlight gives us vitamin D which helps us to have strong bones and muscles.

Exercise daily

Exercise will give tone and strength to the muscles. It will also improve digestion and increase assimilation so that you can get more nutrients from the foods you eat.

Drink plenty of water

A hydrated body is very important for good digestion. Our body is between 55-60% water therefore we need to have plenty of water to give vigour and strength to the cells.

Avoid habits that prevent good digestion

Avoid drinking water with your meals, do not sit or lay down after each meal but do some manual tasks for about an hour. Taking a little walk after each meal is very good for blood sugar management.

Eat simple foods, we don't need spices

Eat simple foods in their natural state, you will enjoy them more. Spices will mask the natural flavours that God made and they also irritate the gut making a person more irritable. Use fresh olive oil or coconut oil. Rancid oils such as vegetable oils and seed oils destroy the flavours in food. The kind of cookware also affects the flavours of your food, try clay pots.

Eat enough only to satisfy hunger

Do not over eat. It is not necessary because the excess will be a tax on the digestive organs, and will hinder digestion and cause brain fog, decreasing mental strength.

Eat variety, daily and at each meal

Eat something different at each meal and on each day as much as possible. This will prevent bloating and constipation. It is better to have fruit in the morning and then vegetables in the afternoon because insulin levels drop as the day progresses and fruit contains more sugar than vegetables. Thus we can prevent and reverse diabetes if we eat this way.

Lastly, while you eat maintain a calm and trustful spirit. Dwell upon the goodness of our God who filled this world with all that man needs to thrive or to "prosper and be in health!"