

# A Long and Healthy Life

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*For who can eat and drink apart from God? (Ecclesiastes 2:25)*

The many restaurants available today indicate that eating is one of the great pleasures of people today. Overeating is quite common and can also be a neurotic response to frustrations of daily life. When overeating is coupled with the wrong kinds of food the body slowly suffers and deteriorates more quickly than it should. Can we relate this problem of overeating to spiritual conditions in our society? Scripture passages written several thousand years ago do shed light on the problem.

*You shall eat, without being satisfied, food that will leave you empty. (Micah 6:14)*

Before this passage, the prophet Micah tells the people that

- ❖ they are involved in greed and injustice, and
- ❖ how low the well-off stoop in swindling the poor.

*They shall eat but not be satisfied (Hosea 4:10)*

In the context of this passage, Hosea gives warning to priests as well as the people in regard to their unfaithfulness. The priests fail to teach as they ought and there is a moral corruptness present. The people are looked upon as subordinate partners in the priests' guilt. In fact, the peoples' sinfulness is tolerated and they in turn seem to be compelled to bring even more generous offerings to the priests. And yet, in both situations, there is plenty available but satisfaction is clearly missing. The message contained in these scriptures tells us to

- ❖ replace greed by generosity,
- ❖ replace injustice by justice,
- ❖ be especially sensitive to the needs of the poor and set fair prices as a business man,
- ❖ never be subordinate partners to less than adequate moral teaching,
- ❖ not give from a guilty conscience, rather clear my conscience first and then give generously.



These virtues will help bring about the kind of strong will needed to reduce the amount of food we eat in the sense of feeling satisfied. The prophet Elijah was content with the bread each morning, the meat each evening brought to him by the ravens and satisfying his thirst from a stream. (1Kings 17:4-6)



In chapter 9 of Proverbs, Wisdom calls to those who are "simple", i.e., those who need more education and teaching, to come to her banquet. The food and drink offered are symbols for the gift of divine guidance and the graces related to virtues, all of which impact upon a person's quality of life. The bodily health mentioned many times in this book is a reward for a virtuous life and may be understood literally or figuratively. There are a number of references:

*...forget not my teaching, keep in mind my commands; for many days, and years of life, and peace, will they bring to you. (Prov 3:1-2)*

*...this will mean health for your flesh and vigor for your bones. (Prov 3:7-8)*

*... and receive my words, and the years of your life shall be many. (Prov 4:10)*

*...for by me your days will be multiplied and the years of your life increased. (Prov 9:11)*

*...the fear of the Lord prolongs life. (Prov 10:27)*

The conditions for a long life revolving about these scripture passages include:

- ❖ fearing the Lord,
- ❖ trusting in the Lord,
- ❖ forsaking foolishness,
- ❖ forgetting not the Lord's teaching,
- ❖ being mindful of the Lord always,
- ❖ keeping in mind the Lord's commands,
- ❖ not being wise in your own eyes,
- ❖ being receptive to the Lord's words,
- ❖ seeking Wisdom to gain understanding.

We can summarize all of this with

*You have been told, O man, what is good, and the Lord requires of you:  
Only to do the right and to love goodness, and to walk humbly with your God. (Micah 6:8)*

*You shall eat and be filled and shall praise the name of the Lord, Your God...(Joel 2:26)*

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