

Day 4

Three Questions to Help You Eat Well

Throughout this devotional on aging well, we have seen the close connection between the spiritual and the physical dimensions of life. Food is no exception.

These devotionals will be read by people living in very different circumstances. Some live where food is abundant; others where it is scarce. So rather than focusing on *what* to eat, let's consider *how* we can eat in a way that honors God and helps us to age well.

Here are three questions worth asking.

1. Will I gratefully receive food as a gift from God?

Receive

Exercise is God's gift of movement. Sleep is God's gift of rest. Food is God's gift of sustenance.

In the simple yet profound prayer Jesus taught his disciples, we pray, "*Give us this day our daily bread.*" Notice what it teaches us.

Bread. Your Father cares about the ordinary necessities of life. Your next meal matters to him.

This day. We trust him one day at a time. It echoes his provision of manna and quail for God's people in the wilderness. Each morning there was enough for that day.

Give us. We pray not only for ourselves but for others. If God gives us two loaves, perhaps one is to be shared. His gifts are enjoyed most fully in thankful fellowship.

One practical way to cultivate gratitude is to pause before each meal. Jesus gave thanks before feeding the five thousand. Paul gave thanks even during a storm at sea. Why not simply pause each time you eat or drink, look heavenward, and say "Thank you Lord."

What difference might that make? It reminds us that every meal comes from our Father's hand. It helps us slow down, relax, and may even aid digestion. Above all, it teaches us to appreciate both the gift and the Giver.

2. Will I truly savor my food?

Enjoy

"What if the problem isn't that we enjoy food too much; but far, far too little."

Throughout the book of Ecclesiastes, the Teacher repeatedly interrupts his reflections on life's brevity to remind us to enjoy life, with refrains like:

"That each of them may eat and drink and find satisfaction in all their toil—this is the gift of God." (Ecclesiastes 3:13)

"So, I commend the enjoyment of life, ... to eat and drink and be glad." (Ecclesiastes 8:15)

"Go, eat your food with a joyful heart ..." (Ecclesiastes 9:7)

In many parts of the world, life moves at a relentless pace. "Fast Food" often describes not only how quickly meals are prepared but how hurriedly they are eaten.

Perhaps one of the healthiest habits we can cultivate is to simply slow down—to notice the flavors, aromas, and textures of God's good gifts.

Let's enjoy our food with grateful hearts.

3. Will my eating habits satisfy my deepest hunger?

Look Beyond

Jesus quoted Deuteronomy when he said,

"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God." We need more than bread, rice, or pasta. We need the living Word of God. Every meal can remind us that while our bodies need physical nourishment, our souls yearn for spiritual food.

Meals from the mouth of God do more than fill our stomachs—they satisfy our souls.

Feed on Christ, the Bread of life, and you will never hunger. Drink deeply of him and you will never thirst.

Bernard of Clairvaux expressed this longing:

We taste Thee, O Thou living Bread,
And long to feast upon Thee still;
We drink of Thee, the Fountainhead,
And thirst our souls from Thee to fill!

As we grow older, eating well is simpler than we can imagine. **Receive** God's gifts with gratitude. **Enjoy** God's gifts to the full. And **look beyond** God's gifts to God himself.

When we eat this way, every meal can be an act of worship.

Reflect & Discuss

1. Which of the three questions—**receive**, **enjoy**, or **look beyond**—do you most need to practice at this stage of life?
2. What simple habit could help you slow down and savor your meals this week?

3. How might pausing to give thanks before eating or drinking change the way you experience God's gifts?
4. Is there someone with whom you could share a meal—or share some of what God has given you—in the coming days?

Prayer:

Gracious Father, thank You for every meal You provide and for every good gift that comes from Your hand. Teach me to receive Your gifts with gratitude, enjoy them with joy, and always look beyond them to Christ, the Bread of Life. Nourish both my body and my soul, so that my life may bring glory to You. Amen.

Scriptures for Further Meditation

- Deuteronomy 8:1-3
- Ecclesiastes 8:14-15
- Romans 14:1-4
- 1 Corinthians 10:31-33