

Does God Care What You Eat?

Kelly McDonald, Jr.

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A more comprehensive version of this free booklet can be found on our website, **www.hungryheartsministry.com**. When you go there, look at the resources section, and then go to store. The In this full length book, you will learn in-depth spiritual revelation on the dietary laws, and a detailed explanation of all the verses people use to say that the dietary laws are done away with. The title of the book is “Clean and Unclean: A Guide to Living the Holy Life”.

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Does God Care What You Eat?

In Leviticus 11, the Lord describes two types of animals: those that are clean and those that are unclean. He said that the clean animals are to eat and the unclean animals are not to eat. They are simply unclean. God distinguishes between these two types of animals based upon their biological characteristics. For instance, the animals with both a split hoof and that chew the cud are clean. This would include goats, lambs, and cows. If an animal only has one of these characteristics, it is unclean. This would include pigs and camels. To give you another example, sea creatures with fins and scales are considered clean. This would include fish such as tilapia. Sea creatures with only fins or scales would be unclean. This would include all shellfish. God asks us not to eat these animals because they were not made for the human body.

A common misconception about the dietary laws is that God is distinguishing between clean and unclean food. When you read the chapter, you will find out that God is distinguishing between clean and unclean **animals**. He only declares clean animals to be food. God gives four specific categories of clean animals in Leviticus 11 and six categories of unclean animals. God says the clean animals are for us to eat, but we are asked by God to neither **touch nor eat** the dead body of an unclean animal. Listed below are both categories of animals with specific examples and scripture references for each:

Four categories of clean animals that God says are ‘to eat’:

- 1) **Animals with a split hoof that also chew the cud** (cows, goats, lambs) Lev. 11:3
- 2) **Animals with both fins and scales** (bass, trout, salmon) Lev. 11:9
- 3) **Birds that are not prohibited in Leviticus 11:13-19** (chicken and turkey)
- 4) **Insects with four legs for hopping** (locusts and grasshoppers) Lev. 11:21-22

Six categories of unclean animals that God says we are not to eat or touch their carcasses:

- 1) Animals that do not chew the cud and that do not have a split hoof** (pigs and camels) Lev. 11:4-8
- 2) Sea creatures without fins and scales** (catfish, shrimp, lobster, and all other shellfish) Lev. 11:9-12
- 3) Certain types of birds** (eagles, ravens, vultures) Lev. 11:13-19
- 4) Flying insects that do not have jointed legs for hopping** (hornets and bees) Lev. 11:20-23
- 5) Animals that walk on paws** (panthers, dogs, cats) Lev. 11:27-28
- 6) Certain animals that walk on the ground or crawl on the ground** (rats, weasels, lizards, snakes) Lev. 11:29-31

(For a full list of clean and unclean animals, as well as a list of unclean cooking ingredients commonly found in packaged foods, please order the full-length book on this subject titled “Clean and Unclean: A Guide to Living the Holy Life”.)

In this chapter, God is not putting an unnecessary restriction on us. He is giving us a dietary guideline for a way of life that will give us physical and spiritual health. I want you to consider the following facts:

- If you eat too much (of anything), then you will get sick. This means you must limit the amount of food you eat.
- Too much time in the sun causes sunburn. This means we must restrict the amount of time we spend in the sun.
- If we stay in the cold weather too long, then we might lose feeling in our hands and feet or get sick. We must limit our time in the cold weather.

I use these examples to help you see that you already have restrictions you follow in your life. They really are not restrictions; you are simply living your life with guidelines that

benefit you. They are rules you follow for your personal health. These rules help you to feel good. In the same way, God gave us these dietary laws as a guideline to help us stay healthy physically. They also have tremendous spiritual benefits. This booklet will help you to understand why God gave these in the first place. You will greatly improve your physical health and achieve new spiritual growth by following these dietary laws. You will never regret it!

You can learn a lot from reading Leviticus 11. It will actually help you understand other things in the Bible. You are probably familiar with the story of Noah and the Ark. God commanded Noah to build an Ark so that his family would be protected from the flood. This flood was going to come upon the entire world. To save the animal life, God asked Noah to take some of every kind of animal with him onto the Ark. It is commonly taught that Noah took two of every kind of animal onto the Ark. In Genesis 7:1-2, we are taught that Noah was instructed by God to ““Go into the ark, you and all your household, for I have seen that you are righteous before me in this generation. Take with you seven pairs of all clean animals, the male and his mate; and a pair of the animals that are not clean, the male and his mate;”” We learn from these two verses that Noah was told to take with Him seven pairs of clean animals and two pairs of unclean animals. This is an important detail!

Why would Noah be told to take with him seven pairs of clean animals and only two pairs of the unclean? There must be a simple explanation. First of all, Noah later used clean animals to make sacrifices to God. In Genesis 8:20, the Bible reads, “Then Noah built an altar to the Lord, and took of every clean animal and of every clean bird, and offered burnt offerings on the altar” In Verse 21, the Bible tells us that God was pleased at this sacrifice. The clean animals were needed to please God. Secondly, Noah and his family ate meat. This means there needed to be more clean animals than unclean animals.

Noah lived about 1,000 years before God spoke the die-

tary laws in Leviticus 11. Noah knew about the dietary laws long before they were given! This is amazing! This means that in the beginning, the dietary laws were simply something everyone understood. The knowledge of it had been lost from Noah to the time Leviticus 11 was given. God had to restore the understanding of clean and unclean animals to the world since it had been lost. If it was so important that God had to restore it, then we need to understand it today.

Is it important for us today to understand these dietary laws? In the Western world, we have a pretty advanced culture. If you go back to the three facts earlier, they remain true in every country on the face of the earth. It does not matter if the country is civilized or uncivilized, advanced or primitive. These facts remain. In the same way, these dietary laws still apply. In fact, at the very end of the Bible, they are still mentioned. Revelation 18:2 reads, “And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird” (KJV). The difference between clean and unclean animals is so important that they are mentioned in the very beginning of the Bible all the way until the very end of the Bible.

The Apostle Paul was one of the early preachers of the church. He instructed us to stay away from unclean animals. In 2 Corinthians 6:17, he wrote, “Therefore come out from them, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch nothing unclean; then I will welcome you...” They are mentioned in between. This means they are very important to us today. It just takes some study for us to realize why they are still important today.

Are the Dietary Laws still Relevant Today?

There are some people that say Jesus, Peter, or Paul changed the dietary laws. They say that all of God's laws are not important since Christ died on the cross. Some even go as far as to say that it is wrong for us to not eat unclean animals! With all of these different ideas going around, what is the truth of the matter?

In the last chapter, we reviewed that the dietary laws were known by Noah. Paul instructed us to not touch any kind of unclean thing. In Leviticus 11, we are told not to even touch the dead body of an unclean animal. At the end of the book of Revelation, we see unclean animals being discussed. With all of these references throughout the Bible, it seems unlikely that God did away with the difference between clean and unclean animals.

Where did this idea come from that Jesus or anyone else did away with the dietary laws? Jesus made a very important statement in Matthew 5:17-18 that will help us understand this subject: "Think not that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets; I have come not to abolish them but to fulfil them. 18 For truly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the law until all is accomplished." The first five books of the Bible are sometimes collectively called the Law of God. Jesus tells us that He did not come to destroy or change the Law. In fact, He said that even when heaven and earth pass away, the Law will not be changed. Not even one letter will be changed! The Law includes the dietary Laws! This means Jesus only came to affirm what was spoken in the Old Testament. He came to reveal to us the real meaning.

In Matthew 15:1-20 and Mark 7:1-23, Jesus is confronted by the Pharisees. The Pharisees had a ritual hand washing that they performed before every meal. This was a man-made rule, not something found in the Law of God. Jesus and His disciples bypassed this ritual and just started eating. The Pharisees rebuked Jesus for eating with dirty hands. Jesus rebuked the Pharisees because they followed this man-made rule very strictly. However, they were

very lax in keeping God's commandments. Some have used these verses to say that Jesus was teaching against the dietary laws of Leviticus 11. Jesus concluded by saying, "These are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashed hands defileth not a man" (Matthew 15:20, KJV). The whole point He emphasized was that this man-made ritual did not make a person unclean. By reading the context, we see that Jesus actually upheld keeping God's commandments. His purpose in these two passages is to refute man-made teachings.

Peter and Paul and two other individuals that people have used to say that the dietary laws are done away with. Let's see what they had to say about this subject. In Jesus' time, most Jews believed that all Gentiles were unclean, so they did not fellowship or eat with them. The Bible does not say this, but it was simply a tradition of man. In Acts 10, Peter had a vision where God showed Him that he should not call Gentiles unclean (read verse 26). God has opened the way of salvation up to Jews and Gentiles. There should not be prejudice towards them. We do learn in this passage that Peter never ate anything unclean. In Acts 10:14, Peter said, "Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean." This event happened about 10 years after Jesus died and resurrected from the dead. So Peter never ate anything unclean. He also wrote two letters for believers. In the first letter, he instructs us to follow the dietary laws.

In I Peter 1:13-16, he wrote, "13 Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed. 14 As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. 15 But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; 16 for it is written: 'Be Holy, because I am holy.' " In verse 15, Peter says to be holy in everything because our Heavenly Father is holy. That means we should be holy in all aspects of our lives. This means we must be holy in the way we think, speak, work, and even the way we eat. In verses 15-16, he said, "But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; **for it is written:** 'Be Holy, because I am holy.'" The phrase "Be

Holy because I am holy” is a direct quote from Leviticus 11:44-45. Leviticus 11 is the chapter on the dietary laws! Peter’s own testimony teaches us that he never ate anything unclean. He also taught other believers to follow the dietary laws.

Now, Paul was the Apostle sent mainly to the Gentiles. Some have said that He taught against the dietary laws. One placed that is quoted to argue that Paul taught against the dietary laws is I Timothy 4:1-6. Let’s take a look at these verses to see what he said: “1 The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and **things taught by demons**. 2 Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron. 3 They **forbid people to marry and order them to abstain from certain foods**, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and who know the truth. 4 For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, 5 because it is consecrated by **the word of God and prayer**. 6 If you point these things out to the brothers, you will be a good minister of Christ Jesus, brought up in the truths of the faith and of the good teaching that you have followed.”

I have highlighted some details that I think are important to understanding what Paul is saying. The detail that is important for us to understand is that the false teaching Paul is addressing comes through a demon. Did a demon speak the dietary laws in Leviticus 11? Absolutely not! The Bible says that God spoke them. This eliminates the possibility that this hypocritical teaching refers to the dietary laws!

Next Paul addresses the two false teachings: 1) forbidding people to marry and 2) ordering them to abstain from certain foods. Now, Paul said that this false teaching forbids people from eating “certain foods, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and who know the truth” (verse 3). What is truth? Jesus said that the Word of God is truth (John 17:17). What are the foods that were created to be received with

thanksgiving? Clean animals! We can see in Leviticus 11 that one purpose for these animals was for human consumption.

Paul then says that these animals God created are sanctified by two things: the word of God **and** prayer. Many have simply read the prayer part, and forgotten about the rest. In the word of God, pigs, shellfish, and other unclean animals were never set apart for humans to eat. The word sanctified simply means to be set apart. Prayer will not make a pig chew the cud or a shrimp grow fins and scales because God did not make those animals that way. Clean animals are set apart by the Word for humans to eat.

So what is the false teaching that Paul is referring to in I Timothy? Only one church, the Catholic Church, teaches that certain people (their priests) should not marry **and** that believers should not eat any meat on Friday (other than fish). I know many Catholic people who are very good moral people. I am not speaking against them as people. They did not start these teachings. I am simply pointing out that these two teachings are not Biblical. God never said to abstain from meat on Fridays in the Bible, and the Bible does not prohibit marriage for ministers. Priests in the Old Testament were always allowed to marry (Leviticus 21:1-15). Christ, our Lord and High Priest, is going to marry a bride (Eph. 5:22-32, Rev. 19:1-8). If you do not know God's truth that marriage is permissible for believers and that clean animals cannot be forbidden by man, then you will be deceived by this teaching. Noah is called a righteous man in the Bible. If a righteous man knew the difference between clean and unclean animals, it is important for Christians today to know them as well.

Why Did God Give The Dietary Laws?

Finally, it is important for us to understand why God gave us the dietary laws. He did not give them for us to be like Jews or anyone else. There are really three reasons why God gave the dietary laws. One, He wants us to be more like Him. That is the express desire of God for His Children. Two, He wants us to be physically healthy. Three, He wants us to have spiritual health. Jesus came to give us life and give it more abundantly (John 10:10). Our Father in Heaven does not want us to just live life barely making it. He does not want us to be physically sick or spiritually immature. He wants us to have the best physical and spiritual health possible.

The first and foremost reason that God gave us the dietary Laws is to be holy. We discussed in the last chapter that Peter quoted Leviticus 11:44-45 in I Peter 1:15-16. Holy means to be set apart for a specific purpose. We are not just set apart for our own purpose or for any one else's purposes. We are set apart to serve God, who is our Father in Heaven. To be set apart means we must live life differently from the rest of the world, who are not set apart for Him. By being set apart, we will be more like God and learn to walk with Him on a deeper level.

Without specific examples of holiness in the Bible, people might be lead to think that murder, sexual immorality, stealing, or eating unclean animals is somehow holy. The problem with choosing for ourselves what is holy is that we are making the decision. To be holy we must be like God. We must conform to His ways. If we want to know our Father on a deeper level and be more like Him, we must live a life that reflects His values. We must do the things He thinks is important. Amos 3:3 reads, "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?"

The second reason why god gave the dietary laws is for our physical health. It is a proven medical fact that pork products increase high blood pressure and cholesterol. High Blood Pressure causes your heart to have to pump harder to disperse blood to the

body. This leads to a higher risk for heart attacks. Eating this kind of animal meat can lead to an untimely death. I personally know a person who followed the dietary laws and within 3 months saw his blood pressure come down to a normal range and his cholesterol go down 100 points! That is just 3 months of following God's dietary guidelines.

Shrimp and other shellfish are proven to increase arthritis in the body. Arthritis is inflammation specifically in the joints of the body. This causes pain, sometimes severe pain. It also restricts your motion and can lead to the use of a wheelchair, cane, or walker. God does not want us to do things that harm our own bodies or increase the risk of personal harm. Jesus came to give us life and life to the fullest. Eating these animals restricts our own potential for success in life. When we are physically injured, it harms our potential to help God's Kingdom as well.

The third and final reason that God gave these dietary guidelines has to do with spiritual health. You have an enemy called the devil who wants to kill, steal, and destroy you. We can do things to protect our lives from the devil's influence. We can also do things that leave us vulnerable to his attacks. When we are walking with the Lord, reading our Bibles daily, and praying, it protects our hearts and minds from the devil. Did you know that following the dietary laws can do the same thing?

When God gave us the details on these animals, He called the animals we cannot eat unclean. The Old Testament was written in the Hebrew language. The Hebrew word translated as "unclean" is *tamai*. It means moral and religious uncleanness. Touching or eating the dead body of an unclean animal is a moral and spiritual issue in God's eyes, not an issue of physical uncleanness. In fact, God informs us that if we touch or eat an unclean animal, we will become *tamai*. This spiritual uncleanness will last until you wash with water and the next sunset is reached according to Leviticus 11:25 (sunset in the Bible marks the end of one day and the beginning of a new day).

There is a story in the Bible to help us better illustrate this point – it is found in Mark 5:1-13.

Mark 5:1-13

“1 They went across the lake to the region of the Gerasenes. 2 When Jesus got out of the boat, a man with an **evil** spirit came from the tombs to meet him. 3 This man lived in the tombs, and no one could bind him any more, not even with a chain. 4 For he had often been chained hand and foot, but he tore the chains apart and broke the irons on his feet. No one was strong enough to subdue him. 5 Night and day among the tombs and in the hills he would cry out and cut himself with stones. 6 When he saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and fell on his knees in front of him. 7 He shouted at the top of his voice, “What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? Swear to God that you won't torture me!” 8 For Jesus had said to him, “Come out of this man, you **evil** spirit!” 9 Then Jesus asked him, “What is your name?” “My name is Legion,” he replied, “for we are many.” 10 And he begged Jesus again and again not to send them out of the area. 11 A large herd of pigs was feeding on the nearby hillside. 12 **The demons begged Jesus, “Send us among the pigs; allow us to go into them.”** 13 He gave them permission, and the **evil** spirits came out and went into the pigs. The herd, about two thousand in number, rushed down the steep bank into the lake and were drowned.” (Emphasis mine throughout)

In Mark 5:1-13, Jesus encountered a man who was filled with evil spirits. Some translations will say that this man was filled with unclean spirits. The New Testament was written in Greek. The Greek word used for evil in the phrase “evil spirits” is *akathartos*. It also means spiritual uncleanness. Jesus sent these unclean spirits into a herd of unclean animals. The unclean spirits actually asked Jesus to be sent into the heard of swine. This is not a coincidence.

What does this mean for us today? Remember that eating an unclean animal makes you unclean until sunset. Eating these animals lowers our vessels to the state of uncleanness. The demons

in the story above asked Jesus to be sent into a herd of pigs! An unbeliever could be demon-possessed by eating unclean animal meat. A believer has the Holy Spirit, so they are guarded from demonic possession. However, a believer can be spiritually oppressed. Following these spiritual dietary laws protects you from unnecessary spiritual oppression! Eating unclean animals allows unclean spirits to more easily broadcast into our minds and spirits things that are not of God. It can be a hindrance to us experiencing the full power of God in our lives.

In II Corinthians 6:14-7:1, the Apostle Paul explains that not touching unclean things protects our bodies and spirits. **II Corinthians 6:17-7:1** - “Therefore come out from them and be separate,” says the Lord. “**Touch no unclean thing**, and I will receive you.” 18 “I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.” 7:1 Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.” (Emphasis mine throughout)

In this passage, we are directly commanded to abstain from touching unclean animals. In addition to this, we are not to eat them. Paul concludes this section of scripture by saying that we should “purify ourselves from everything that contaminates **body and spirit** so we can perfect holiness out of reverence for God.” Abstaining from unclean animals is protecting our body and spirit. We are preserving our physical health so we can live long and productive lives for God’s Kingdom. We are also protecting ourselves from unnecessary spiritual attacks in our lives.

Unclean animals do have a purpose in creation. When you study these animals, you will find that these animals are scavengers and carnivores. These animals were created to clean up the earth and help keep the cycle of life flowing for all creation. Since they clean up the earth, they take all of the waste of the earth into their bodies. This waste is absorbed into their meat. We definitely do not want to eat waste! These animals are good for creation, but **they were not created for the human body**. Diesel fuel is not fit

for a gas tank with unleaded gas. In the same way, unclean animals are not fit for the human body. This is very similar to some plant life that was not created for human consumption. Some berries can cause serious illness or even death if eaten.

God's Holiness, physical health, and spiritual protection is a three fold cord that is not easily broken. God is truly a wise and loving God to give us such great instructions on the dietary laws.

The way of God is easy. It is not hard to abstain from eating these animals. You are going to enjoy living by God's dietary instructions. You are going to have a mental clarity and spiritual clarity you have never experienced before. You will truly be living your life to the full.

A more comprehensive version of this free booklet can be found on our website, www.hungryheartsm ministry.com. When you go there, look at the resources section, and then go to store. In this full length book, you will learn in-depth spiritual revelation on the dietary laws, and a detailed explanation of all the verses people use to say that the dietary laws are done away with. The title of the book is "Clean and Unclean: A Guide to Living the Holy Life".

Meet the Author

Kelly McDonald Jr. is an ordained Evangelist at Hungry Hearts Ministries in Jackson, TN. For 21 years, Kelly attended Trinity Baptist Church in Bemis, TN, where he was saved in 1992. While at Trinity, a small independent Baptist church, Kelly learned boldness for the Kingdom of God and that being a Christian is an all or nothing experience. In June 2006, Kelly was called to his first ministry, going door to door in the Bemis community and inviting people to church. In September 2006, Kelly was called to begin a Christian men's group at his then college, Lambuth University. In February 2007, Kelly was called to preach. Less than a month later, he became introduced to Hungry Hearts Ministries.

Since becoming a member of Hungry Hearts, Kelly has taken on many roles to further the ministry's work, from going door-to-door to pass out booklets, preaching, administering the prison ministry, teaching Bible Studies, and starting churches. Due to his service in the ministry, he was ordained a Deacon during the Feast of Pentecost on May 31st, 2009. His spiritual growth and desire to serve God led to his ordination as an Evangelist during the Feast of Pentecost on May 25th, 2012.

Kelly has written for a local Christian magazine, *The Christian to Christian Connection*, and for the international Sabbatarian magazine, *The Sabbath Sentinel*. He currently writes for and serves as the Editor for the Ministry's magazine, *Pursuit*. Kelly has written five books on how to live a holy life. Kelly graduated *summa cum laude* from Lambuth University in Jackson, TN in 2009. He earned a Bachelor of Science with a double major in Political Science and Sociology with a minor in Legal Studies. As a Torah Observant/Spirit Filled minister, Kelly has spoken at several different congregations in four different states, and is available to speak at your church upon request.

Does God care what you eat? Some people think that God does not, while others think that He does. In Leviticus 11, God gave us instruction about the animals that were made for humans to eat and others that were not made for humans to eat. In this booklet, you will learn about the dietary laws of Leviticus 11. You will learn how they are relevant today and why God gave them. This booklet is a shorter version of the full-length book “Clean and Unclean: A Guide to Living the Holy Life”. The book is available on www.hungryheartsministry.com.



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