

BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVES ON NUTRITION

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ABSTRACT

This study analyzes the biblical principles related to nutrition, offering a comprehensive synthesis of the Bible teachings on food, health, and spirituality. The research examines the evolution of dietary regulations from the original Edenic diet to the Christian freedom of the New Testament, exploring the hygienic, spiritual, and ethical dimensions of these prescriptions. The methodology employs textual analysis of relevant biblical passages, historical and cultural contextualization, as well as contemporary application of the identified principles. The study demonstrates that the biblical perspective on nutrition is holistic, integrating physical, spiritual, communal, and ethical aspects. Fundamental principles include recognizing food as a divine gift, valuing simplicity and naturalness, promoting moderation, cultivating table fellowship, and practicing responsible stewardship of resources. The research reveals that although the New Testament proclaims Christian freedom in food choices, this freedom must be exercised with discernment and responsibility. The study offers practical applications for families, church communities, and Christian institutions, highlighting the relevance of biblical principles for contemporary nutritional challenges, including food waste, nutritional insecurity, and the ethics of consumption. The conclusions indicate that a biblical approach to nutrition promotes integral health - physical, mental, spiritual, and relational - providing a valuable framework for wise dietary decisions in today's context.

Keywords: *biblical nutrition, Christian dietetics, Mosaic dietary laws, biblical fasting, spirituality of food, food ethics, nutrition and spirituality, Christian freedom, table fellowship;*

INTRODUCTION

Nutrition is the human response to a fundamental necessity that ensures survival and cannot be replaced by anything else. Yet it is not limited to the simple fueling of the body; it represents a complex experience through which a person enjoys fulfillment, communion, and inner satisfaction. Alongside rest, eating becomes an act that completes the human being on multiple levels - biological, emotional, and spiritual - thus reflecting the profound connection between body, soul, and daily life.

Food is a recurring and significant theme throughout the biblical texts, from the first to the last book of the Holy Scripture. From the Edenic diet prescribed in Genesis, through the Mosaic dietary laws, and up to the Christian freedom proclaimed in the New Testament, the Bible offers a complex framework for understanding the relationship between food, health, and spirituality¹.

¹ Norman Wirzba, *Food and Faith: A Theology of Eating*. Cambridge University Press, 2011, pp. 23-45.

The purpose of this study is to analyze and synthesize the biblical principles related to nutrition in order to outline a contemporary approach to diet inspired by scriptural teachings. In today's context - marked by nutritional confusion, eating disorders, and sustainability challenges - the biblical perspective can offer a valuable framework for wise and balanced dietary decisions². The methodology adopted involves textual analysis of relevant biblical passages, their historical and cultural contextualization, as well as a discussion of contemporary applications of these principles³. The study does not aim to prescribe a single rigid "biblical diet," but rather to identify the fundamental principles that can guide Christians in their dietary choices.

1. BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS OF NUTRITION

The Original Diet and the Divine Plan

The Edenic Diet (Genesis 1:29) – the initial vegetarian model

In Genesis 1:29 we find the first divine directive regarding human nutrition: "Then God said, 'Behold, I have given you every herb that yields seed which is on the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed; to you it shall be for food.'"

God's original plan for humanity involved an exclusively vegetarian diet, based on fruits, vegetables, seeds, and grains.

This Edenic diet reflects the original harmony of creation, in which there was no death or shedding of blood⁴. It underscores the importance of a diet centered on plant-based foods, rich in essential nutrients and perfectly aligned with human physiology.

The Modification of the Diet After the Flood (Genesis 9:3–4)

After the flood, God expands the dietary permission to include meat: "Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. I have given you all things, even as the green herbs. But you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood" (Genesis 9:3–4).

This significant change comes with a clear restriction: the prohibition against consuming blood - a principle that remains constant throughout the entire biblical revelation.

The modification of the diet may be interpreted as an adaptation to the new post-flood conditions, possibly marked by climatic changes and reduced soil fertility, which may have made survival on a strict vegetarian diet more difficult⁵.

The Evolution of Dietary Regulations in Biblical History

Biblical history illustrates a gradual evolution of dietary regulations - from the simplicity of the Edenic diet to the complexity of the Levitical laws, and finally to the Christian freedom of the New Testament.

This evolution does not represent contradictions but rather adaptations to different stages of the Salvation history and to specific cultural and historical contexts⁶.

² Don Colbert, *Ce ar mânca Isus: Redescoperirea dietei biblice* [What would Jesus be eating: The rediscovery of the biblical diet]. Editura Casa Cărții, 2014, pp. 15-28.

³ Nathan MacDonald, *What Did the Ancient Israelites Eat? Diet in Biblical Times*. Eerdmans, 2008, pp. 12-18.

⁴ Samuele Bacchiocchi, *Dieta biblică și sănătatea* [Biblical Diet and Health]. Editura Viață și Sănătate, 2012, pp. 45-62.

⁵ Nogah Hareuveni, *Nature in Our Biblical Heritage*. Neot Kedumim, 1996, pp. 78-92.

⁶ J.D. Douglas, *Dicționar Biblic* [Biblical Dictionary]. Editura Cartea Creștină, 2008, pp. 234-237.

Dietary Laws in the Old Testament (Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14)

In Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14, we find the most detailed dietary regulations in the Bible. These chapters classify animals as “clean” (permitted for consumption) and “unclean” (forbidden), offering specific criteria for each category:

- Among mammals, clean animals are those that have a split hoof and chew the cud (e.g., cattle, sheep, goats).
- Among aquatic creatures, only those with fins and scales are permitted.
- Many birds of prey and scavengers are declared unclean.
- Most insects are forbidden, except for certain types of locusts.

These laws represent a distinctive element of Israel’s identity and a means of separating the people from the practices of surrounding nations⁷.

Reasons for the Dietary Restrictions

Hygienic and Health Dimensions

Many of the animals declared unclean present increased health risks, being carriers of parasites or toxins⁸. Scavenging and predatory animals, for example, can accumulate toxins from their prey and transmit diseases. The commands regarding the proper handling of blood and fat also have health implications.

Spiritual and Identity Dimensions

The Mosaic dietary laws served as a “sign of the covenant” and a marker of identity for the people of Israel⁹. By observing these laws, the Israelites reminded themselves of their status as God’s chosen people and of their covenant with Him.

Symbolic and Separational Dimensions

The dietary restrictions created a symbolic and practical barrier between the Israelites and neighboring peoples, limiting social interactions that could lead to cultural and religious assimilation. As Leviticus 20:25–26 states: “You shall therefore distinguish between clean animals and unclean... You shall be holy to Me, for I the Lord am holy, and have separated you from the peoples, that you should be Mine.”

Dietary Reform in the New Testament

The Teachings of Jesus Christ on Food (Mark 7:14–19)

In Mark 7:14–19, Jesus challenges the rigid interpretation of ritual purity laws: “Nothing that enters a man from the outside can defile him... In saying this, Jesus declared all foods clean.”

The emphasis shifts from external purity to internal purity, from dietary regulations to the purity of the heart.

The Vision of the Apostle Peter (Acts 10:9–16)

Peter’s vision in Acts 10:9–16, in which he is told to eat animals previously considered unclean, marks a paradigm shift. Although the primary interpretation concerns the acceptance of the Gentiles, it also carries implications for dietary freedom.

Christian Freedom and Discernment (Romans 14; 1 Corinthians 8 and 10)

The Apostle Paul addresses dietary freedom extensively¹⁰. In Romans 14:14 he states: “I know and am convinced by the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself.”

⁷ Geoffrey W. Bromiley, *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, vol. 3. Eerdmans, 1988, pp. 445-451.

⁸ Julio César Acosta-Navarro, *Nutriție și credință: O abordare medicală a dietei biblice* [Nutrition and Faith. A Medical Approach of the Biblical Diet]. Editura Medicală, 2017, pp. 89-105.

⁹ J.I. Packer, M.C. Tenney, *Dicționar Biblic Ilustrat* [Illustrated Biblical Dictionary]. Editura Cartea Creștină, 2015, pp. 567-572.

In 1 Corinthians 10:25 he advises: “Eat whatever is sold in the meat market, asking no questions for conscience’ sake.”

Yet this freedom is balanced by responsibility toward “weaker brothers” and by the principle that all things should be done for the glory of God (1 Corinthians 10:31). Christian freedom does not mean dietary libertinism but discernment and responsibility¹¹.

2. PRACTICAL ASPECTS OF BIBLICAL NUTRITION

Principles of Food Combination

Specific Prohibitions

One of the specific prohibitions is: “Do not boil a young goat in its mother’s milk” (Exodus 23:19). This command, repeated three times in the Pentateuch, has been interpreted in Jewish tradition as the basis for separating meat from dairy products. Beyond its ritual and symbolic dimension, this prohibition may also reflect health-related principles concerning the combination of certain foods¹².

The Principle of Simplicity

Leviticus 19:19 forbids the mixing of different types of seeds, animals, and materials: “Keep my decrees. Do not mate different kinds of animals. Do not plant your field with two kinds of seed. Do not wear clothing woven of two kinds of material.”

Although these laws refer to various aspects of life, they suggest a principle of simplicity and respect for the natural order, which can also be applied to nutrition.

Examples of Biblical Diets

Daniel’s Diet (Daniel 1:8–16)

Daniel and his friends refused the royal food and wine, choosing instead a simple diet based on vegetables and water. After ten days, they appeared healthier than all the young men who ate the king’s rich foods. This example highlights the benefits of a simple diet predominantly based on plant foods.

The Diet of John the Baptist (Matthew 3:4)

“John’s clothes were made of camel’s hair, and he had a leather belt around his waist. His food was locusts and wild honey.” John the Baptist’s diet exemplifies simplicity and sustainability, relying on local and accessible resources.

Meals in the Apostolic Community (Acts 2:46)

“They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts.” The early Christians practiced table fellowship, sharing meals in a spirit of joy and gratitude.

Fasting, Abstinence, and Moderation

Fasting in the Old Testament

In the Old Testament, fasting frequently appears as an act of repentance, spiritual preparation, or intensified prayer¹³. Moses fasted for forty days on Mount Sinai (Exodus

¹⁰ John Rogerson, *Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation*. SCM Press, 2005, pp. 234-238.

¹¹ Traian D. Stănculescu, *Alimentația în Biblie: Între raționalitate și spiritualitate* [Food in the Bible: Between Rationality and Spirituality]. Editura Sapientia, 2018, pp. 156-178.

¹² Gillian Feeley-Harnik, *The Lord’s Table: The Meaning of Food in Early Judaism and Christianity*. Smithsonian Institution Press, 1994, pp. 67-89.

¹³ Randy Alcorn, *Principiul dărniceiei* [The Principle of Generosity]. Editura Kerigma, 2018, pp. 123-145.

34:28). The prophet Elijah also fasted for forty days on his journey to Mount Horeb (1 Kings 19:8). In the Book of Jonah, the inhabitants of Nineveh fasted as a sign of repentance (Jonah 3:5–9).

The Teachings of Jesus on Fasting

Jesus did not abolish the practice of fasting but criticized the ostentation and hypocrisy associated with it: “When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do... But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, so that you will not be obvious to others that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen.” (Matthew 6:16–18)

He also indicated that fasting would remain a legitimate practice for His disciples after His ascension (Matthew 9:14–15).

The Spiritual Discipline of Fasting in Apostolic Practice.

In the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles, fasting appears as an integrated practice in the life of the early Church. The leaders of the Church in Antioch fasted and prayed when they were instructed to send Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey (Acts 13:2–3).

Self-Control as a Christian Virtue

Scripture consistently promotes moderation and self-control, including in matters of food¹⁴. Proverbs 23:20–21 warns: “Do not join those who drink too much wine or gorge themselves on meat, for drunkards and gluttons become poor, and drowsiness clothes them in rags.”

In the New Testament, “self-control” is listed among the fruits of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:23).

Hygiene and Health

Food Hygiene Regulations in Leviticus

Leviticus contains numerous provisions for food hygiene, including:

- Proper handling of blood (Leviticus 17:10–14)
- Rules for handling the meat of sacrifices (Leviticus 7:15–18)
- The prohibition against eating animals found dead or torn by wild beasts (Leviticus 17:15–16)

These regulations, advanced for their time, provided protection against foodborne diseases.

The Body as the Temple of the Holy Spirit

In 1 Corinthians 6:19–20, Paul states: “Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit...? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies.”

This powerful metaphor implies a responsibility to care for the body, including through healthy dietary choices.

Balancing Freedom and Responsibility for Health

The New Testament affirms Christian freedom in food choices, but this freedom must be exercised responsibly with regard to personal health and the well-being of others. The principle stated in 1 Corinthians 10:23 is relevant: “All things are permissible, but not all things are beneficial; all things are permissible, but not all things build up.”

¹⁴ Teodor Popescu, *Biblia și nutriția: O perspectivă ortodoxă* [The Bible and Nutrition. An Orthodox Perspective]. Editura Basilica, 2016, pp. 89-112.

3. THE SPIRITUAL DIMENSION OF NUTRITION

The Theological Significance of Food

Food as a Divine Gift and Human Dependence on the Creator

The Bible consistently presents food as a divine gift, emphasizing humanity's dependence on the Creator. In Psalm 104:14–15, the psalmist declares: “He makes grass grow for the cattle, and plants for people to cultivate - bringing forth food from the earth: wine that gladdens human hearts, oil to make their faces shine, and bread that sustains their hearts.”

This perspective generates gratitude and responsibility in relation to food.

Blessing the Meal and Gratitude

The practice of blessing food - exemplified by Jesus Christ in the accounts of the multiplication of the loaves and at the Last Supper - expresses gratitude toward God as the source of all good things¹⁵. This attitude transforms eating from a mere act of consumption into a spiritual act of communion with God.

Parallels Between Physical and Spiritual Nourishment

Manna in the Wilderness and the Word of God

In Deuteronomy 8:3, Moses explains: “He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna... to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.”

Jesus cites this verse during His temptation (Matthew 4:4), emphasizing the primacy of spiritual needs.

Christ as the “Bread of Life”

In John 6:35, Jesus declares: “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.”

This profound metaphor highlights Christ's role in satisfying humanity's spiritual hunger.

The Meal as a Communal and Spiritual Experience

Hospitality in Biblical Culture

Hospitality - including the sharing of meals - is a fundamental value in biblical culture¹⁶. Abraham offers a meal to the three visitors (Genesis 18), and in the New Testament, hospitality is listed among essential Christian virtues (Romans 12:13; Hebrews 13:2).

The Meals of Jesus Christ as Spaces of Communion and Transformation

The Gospels frequently portray Jesus participating in meals with various social groups - from Pharisees to “tax collectors and sinners”¹⁷. These meals go beyond mere eating, becoming spaces of communion, healing, and spiritual transformation.

The Lord's Supper - Its Significance

In Luke 22:14–20, Jesus Christ institutes the Holy Eucharist at the Last Supper, using bread and wine as elements of His Body and Blood. This sacramental meal becomes the center of Christian liturgical life, continually re-presenting and commemorating the sacrifice

¹⁵ Norman Wirzba, *Food and Faith*, pp. 145-167.

¹⁶ Gillian Feeley-Harnik, *The Lord's Table*, pp. 123-145.

¹⁷ Nathan MacDonald, *What Did the Ancient Israelites Eat?*, pp. 156-178.

of Christ and anticipating the banquet of the Kingdom of God. It is experienced as the Mystery of the world to come, the Supper at the table of the Kingdom¹⁸.

“Breaking of Bread” in the Early Church

The early Christians practiced the “breaking of bread” (Acts 2:42–47) as an expression of their communion in Christ. These communal meals (agape feasts) combined sacramental and social dimensions, nourishing both the body and the spirit of the community.

The Psycho-Spiritual Dimension of Eating

The Connection Between Fasting, Prayer, and Spiritual Clarity

Fasting is presented in Scripture as a means of intensifying prayer and attaining spiritual clarity¹⁹. In Acts 13:2, fasting precedes an important revelation from the Holy Spirit for the church in Antioch.

Gluttony and Other Food-Related Sins

In Philippians 3:19, Paul identifies a category of people “whose god is their stomach.” This reference to the idolization of food pleasures highlights the spiritual distortion that occurs when bodily nourishment becomes the primary goal of life.

Healing One’s Relationship with Food as Part of Christian Discipleship

Christian discipleship involves the transformation of all aspects of life, including one’s relationship with food²⁰. Renouncing gluttony and cultivating moderation are part of this transformative process.

4. BIBLICAL FOOD ETHICS FOR THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD

Stewardship of Food Resources

The Principle of Avoiding Waste

After the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves and fish, Jesus instructs His disciples: “Gather up the fragments that remain, so that nothing is lost.” (John 6:12)

This anti-waste principle is particularly relevant today, in a world marked by massive food waste.

Food waste, in the context of global hunger, represents a major ethical problem with theological implications²¹. It contradicts the biblical principle of responsible stewardship of resources and the Christian virtue of temperance.

The Resting of the Land (Sabbatical Years) and Sustainability

The concept of the sabbatical year, during which the land was to be left to rest (Leviticus 25:1–7), represents a remarkable principle of agricultural sustainability. This practice protected soil fertility and prevented the exhaustion of resources.

Contemporary Applications of Biblical Stewardship Principles

Biblical principles of responsible stewardship can guide modern agricultural and food practices, promoting sustainability, resource conservation, and respect for creation²².

Food Justice and Care for the Needy

¹⁸ Alexander Schmemmann, *Eucharistia, Taina Impărăției* [The Eucharist. The Mystery of the Kingdom], translated by Fr. Boris Răducanu, Ed. Anastasia, București, 1992, pp. 73-74; Nicușor Tucă, *Post-Spovedanie-Euharistie* [Fasting-Confession-Eucharist]. Ed. Arhiepiscopiei Tomisului, Constanța, 2025, *passim*.

¹⁹ Traian D. Stănciulescu, *Alimentația în Biblie* [Food in the Bible], pp. 201-223.

²⁰ Norman Wirzba, *Food and Faith*, pp. 189-210.

²¹ Michael Pollan, *In Defense of Food: An Eater's Manifesto*. Penguin Press, 2008, pp. 78-95.

²² Nogah Hareuveni, *Nature in Our Biblical Heritage*, pp. 134-156.

The Laws of Gleaning

Leviticus 19:9–10 stipulates: “When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. Do not go over your vineyard a second time or pick up the grapes that have fallen. Leave them for the poor and the foreigner.”

This practice, illustrated in the Book of Ruth, ensured that marginalized people had access to food.

Sharing Food with the Hungry

Isaiah 58:7 includes sharing bread with the hungry among the actions that express the true fast pleasing to God. In Matthew 25:35, Jesus identifies the act of feeding the hungry with direct service to Himself: “I was hungry and you gave Me something to eat.”

Equity in the Distribution of Food Resources

These biblical principles support fairness in the distribution of food resources and solidarity with those in need, challenging economic models that perpetuate inequality and food insecurity²³.

Comparative Analysis of Biblical Dietary Laws and Modern Nutrition

Benefits of Avoiding Certain “Unclean” Foods

Modern research confirms the sanitary rationale behind many biblical prohibitions²⁴. For example: Pigs (forbidden in Mosaic law) present a high risk of parasitic infections, also Shellfish (also forbidden) tend to accumulate toxins from marine environments.

Contemporary Interpretations of Biblical Dietary Principles

The underlying principles of biblical dietary laws can be applied today by promoting: a predominantly plant-based diet, moderate consumption of ethically sourced meat and avoidance of ultra-processed foods²⁵.

Scientific Studies Relevant to Understanding Biblical Restrictions

Numerous modern nutritional studies validate the benefits of the Mediterranean diet, which shares many similarities with the biblical diet of the New Testament period - characterized by whole grains, vegetables, fruits, olive oil, fish, and moderate meat consumption²⁶.

5. CONTEMPORARY APPLICATIONS

Stewardship of Food Resources

Modern Diets Inspired by the Bible

The Daniel Fast

Inspired by the experience of Daniel and his companions (Daniel 1), the modern Daniel Fast involves a 21-day period of abstinence from meat, dairy, alcohol, and processed foods, focusing instead on vegetables, fruits, whole grains, and legumes²⁷. Many Christians adopt this approach as a form of physical and spiritual purification.

The Mediterranean Diet and Its Connections to Biblical Eating

²³ Randy Alcorn, *Principiul dărniceiei*, pp. 178-201.

²⁴ Randy Alcorn, *Principiul dărniceiei*, pp. 178-201.

²⁵ Joel Fuhrman, *Eat to Live: The Amazing Nutrient-Rich Program for Fast and Sustained Weight Loss*. Little, Brown and Company, 2011, pp. 123-145.

²⁶ Mario Mancini, Paolo Rubba, *Dieta mediteraneană: origini științifice și implicații culturale* [The Mediterranean Diet: Scientific Origins and Cultural Implications]. Editura Medicală Română, 2020, pp. 67-89.

²⁷ Don Colbert, *Ce ar mânca Isus*, pp. 189-212.

The Mediterranean diet - recognized for its health benefits - shares many features with the diet of the biblical world: olive oil, whole grains, vegetables, fruits, fish, and moderate consumption of meat and wine²⁸. These similarities suggest the validity of biblical dietary principles.

Contemporary Christian Approaches to Nutrition

Various Christian communities today have developed specific approaches to nutrition: fasting practices in the Orthodox tradition, vegetarian diets in Adventism, or the “creation care” movement promoting ethically and sustainably produced foods²⁹.

Contemporary Food Challenges and Biblical Perspectives

Processed Foods

Ultra-processed foods - characterized by chemical additives and denatured ingredients - contrast with the simplicity and naturalness of biblical foods³⁰. The biblical principle of stewardship supports consuming foods as close as possible to their natural form.

Excessive Meat Consumption

Although the New Testament permits the consumption of meat, the biblical model suggests a predominantly plant-based diet, with meat consumed in moderate quantities, often in festive contexts³¹. This contrasts with the excessive meat consumption characteristic of many contemporary Western societies.

Eating Disorders

The biblical perspective on the body as the temple of the Holy Spirit and on food as a divine gift can contribute to a healthy relationship with eating, countering both excessive restriction and compulsive consumption³².

Genetic Modification and Food Bioethics

Biblical principles of stewardship and respect for God’s creation can guide the ethical evaluation of modern food technologies, including genetic modification, promoting approaches that respect the integrity of creation and prevent unintended negative consequences³³.

Models for Implementing Biblical Principles

For Families

Families can implement biblical principles such as³⁴:

- blessing meals and cultivating gratitude
- fostering joy and fellowship at the table
- adopting periods of fasting or simplified eating
- practicing hospitality and sharing meals

For Church Communities

Churches can promote³⁵:

- communal meals (agape feasts) reflecting diversity and unity in Christ

²⁸ Rosemary Mahoney, *The Mediterranean Diet: Unlocking the Secrets to Health and Weight Loss*. CreateSpace, 2013, pp. 45-78.

²⁹ Samuele Bacchiocchi, *Dieta biblică și sănătatea* [The Biblical Diet and Health], pp. 201-234.

³⁰ Michael Pollan, *In Defense of Food*, pp. 134-156.

³¹ Nathan MacDonald, *What Did the Ancient Israelites Eat?*, pp. 201-223.

³² Drăgan Petre, Măncinicoschi Gheorghe, *Alimentația între medicină și psihoterapie* [Eating between Medicine and Psychotherapy]. Editura Medicală, 2016, pp. 123-145.

³³ Norman Wirzba, *Food and Faith*, pp. 234-256.

³⁴ Traian D. Stănculescu, *Alimentația în Biblie* [Food in the Bible], pp. 267-289.

³⁵ Teodor Popescu, *Biblia și nutriția* [The Bible and Nutrition], pp. 178-201.

- projects addressing food insecurity (food banks, community kitchens)
- education on biblical food ethics

For Christian Institutions

Christian schools, hospitals, and other institutions can³⁶:

- develop food policies based on biblical principles
- promote access to healthy and sustainable foods
- provide education on the relationship between nutrition, health, and spirituality
- model responsible stewardship of food resources

CONCLUSIONS

Synthesis of Biblical Principles on Nutrition

The biblical perspective on nutrition is holistic, integrating physical, spiritual, ethical, and communal dimensions³⁷. The fundamental principles include:

- recognizing food as a divine gift
- valuing simplicity and naturalness
- promoting moderation and self-control
- cultivating fellowship and joy
- practicing responsible stewardship of food resources
- demonstrating generosity and care for those in need

From Law to Freedom: A Christian Framework for Wise Dietary Decisions

The evolution from the strict dietary laws of the Old Testament to the Christian freedom proclaimed in the New Testament does not imply abandoning healthy nutritional principles, but rather a transition from external compliance to inner discernment guided by the Holy Spirit³⁸. The contemporary believers are called to exert this freedom with responsibility, making food choices honoring both the body and its Creator.

Integrating the physical and spiritual dimensions of food

From a Biblical perspective, food is never just a physical act, it is also an act with profound spiritual implications³⁹. Our relationship to food reflects our relation with God, with our fellows and with the creation. The harmonious integration of these dimensions leads to a food approach promoting holistic health - physical, mental, spiritual and relational.

In the context of the contemporary food challenges, the Biblical perspective offers a valuable framework for understanding and acting, inviting to a relationship with the food marked by gratitude, responsibility and reverence to the Giver of all good gifts⁴⁰.

³⁶ Randy Alcorn, *Principiul dărniceiei* [The Principle of Generosity], pp. 234-256.

³⁷ Norman Wirzba, *Food and Faith*, pp. 289-312.

³⁸ Gillian Feeley-Harnik, *The Lord's Table*, pp. 201-223.

³⁹ Traian D. Stănculescu, *Alimentația în Biblie* [Food in the Bible], pp. 312-334.

⁴⁰ Don Colbert, *Ce ar mânca Isus*, pp. 256-278.

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