

CHAPTER 3

Eating And Dressing

Eating and dressing are things that we do every day. These are basic and necessary parts of our daily living. We do these things so often that they have become habits to us and we do not even think about them very much. We get up in the morning and without giving much thought to it, we put on our clothes and sit down at the breakfast table to enjoy another meal.

Food is necessary for life and survival; clothing is necessary for a covering and for protection (from the weather, cold, rain, etc.). There are many things we can do without. Can you live without a bicycle? Can you live without a radio? Can you live without a toaster? Can you survive without a dishwasher? Can you survive without a fishing rod? Can you survive without a watch?

We may think that we need many different things to make us happy and content. Sometimes we might say, "If I only had this or if I only had that, then I could be happy!" But these things are not as important or as necessary as we think. How many possessions did you have when you came into this world (1 Tim. 6:7)? _____ How much will you bring with you when you leave this world (1 Timothy 6:7)? _____ God says that there are only two things that we really need to be content and happy in life. What are they (1 Timothy 6:8)?

1. _____
2. _____ (clothing)

Is the Heavenly Father able to feed you (Matthew 6:25-26)? _____ Is the Heavenly Father able to clothe you (Matthew 6:28-31)? _____ In this chapter we want to think about these two important necessities of life--food and clothing. What and how did people eat in Bible times? How did people dress?

Eating

What would life be like without candy, chocolate chip cookies, ice cream, spaghetti, pizza, bagels, waffles, French fries, potato chips, pudding, Jello and Coca-Cola? Could you survive? Suppose there were no such things as chocolate milk, hamburgers, hotdogs, Cheerios, Wheaties, peanut butter, milkshakes, sandwiches (of any kind), catsup and frozen orange juice? Would life be different without these things? In Bible times, people had **none** of these kinds of food, but they had to eat in order to live. How did they survive?

If you were living in Palestine in the days of Abraham, David or Paul, what would you eat? Well, the ordinary food for the average person was as follows: bread (this was the most important food of all), olive oil (this took the place of butter), milk and cheese from the flocks, and fruits and vegetables from the orchards and gardens. On special occasions you might have meat.

Those living near the Sea of Galilee would enjoy fish (see Luke 11:11). Thanks to the bees, there was H _____ (Deuteronomy 6:3) in the land of Palestine. They did not have sugar in Bible times so honey was the sweetest thing they had. The most common vegetables were beans and lentils (Ezekiel 4:9). Can you think of the name of a man in the Old Testament who really liked to eat lentils (Genesis 25:29-34)? _____ The common fruits were figs, grapes (and thus raisins) and a kind of fruit you may never have heard of: pomegranates (see Deuteronomy 8:8).

What would a meal be like without any knives, forks, spoons, napkins or plates? Would you be able to eat without these things? The people living in Bible times used none of these things. In fact, even today the Arabs say, "What does a man want of a spoon when God has given him so many fingers?"

Instead of silverware, people would use their hands to eat. Pieces of bread would be used to take the place of spoons and forks. With a piece of bread they could scoop up any food that was partially liquid (such as soups, sauces, or gravies). Each torn off piece of bread thus served as a spoon and was eaten along with the food it contains (see Ruth 2:14).

Hands were washed before and after each meal. They did not need to wash any silverware, but they did need to wash their hands. The only dishes that were used at mealtime were those in which food was placed. They did not have to wash as many dishes as we do today. Each person did not have his own plate. Often there was only one dish for the food, usually a basket or a copper tray placed in the center of the table. Jesus spoke of this dish in Matthew 26:23.

What kind of table did they have? Usually the table was simply a mat which was spread on the ground. The people would not use chairs, but would usually sit on the floor with their legs folded under the body or thrown back (as we do when we kneel).

The Jewish people would bless God and give thanks before eating. According to John 6:11, who gave thanks before eating? _____ According to Acts 27:33-35, who gave thanks before eating? _____ Often the Jews would say something like this: "BLESSED ART THOU, JEHOVAH OUR GOD, KING OF THE WORLD, WHO CAUSES TO COME FORTH BREAD FROM THE EARTH." Do you bless and thank God before eating? Sometimes the Jews would pray **after** the meal also. The reason they did this is found in Deuteronomy 8:10 (see also verses 12-14).

Sometime you and your family might like to try something different. Why not pretend that you are living during Bible times and when mealtime comes you can eat just as people used to eat long ago. Try to eat only the things mentioned in this chapter, and don't use any silverware or table or plates. Try it!

People living in Bible times did not brush their teeth after meals like we do (or should do) today. But they did not need to do this as much as we do because they did not eat sugar as we do today (candy, desserts, and many other foods that contain varying amounts of sugar). They probably had less cavities than we do even though they did not brush their teeth!

Two Kinds Of Food

The most important food of all was bread. For the people of ancient times, bread was the principal food. Bread is important to us too. We hardly ever go to the grocery store without buying a loaf of bread. But bread was even more important to the people in Bible times than it is to us today. If you were living then, bread would be the biggest part of your diet (in fact, many people lived almost entirely on bread).

Bread was made from wheat or barley flour. Usually the poorer people would use barley and those with more money would use wheat. Once a boy gave five loaves to Jesus. What were these loaves made from (John 6:9)? _____

Jesus once said, "I am the _____ of life" (John 6:35). The people who heard Jesus say these words knew how important bread was. They knew that bread was their life. They could not live without bread. People need bread to live. Jesus was saying, "I am the bread of _____. You need ME to live. If you want to live and have eternal life, then you must come to ME and believe in ME" (John 6:35). Just as bread satisfies man's physical hunger, so the Lord Jesus Christ satisfies man's spiritual hunger!

Yes, bread is important and food is important, and we cannot live without these things, but there is another kind of bread and food that we need. Jesus said, "Man shall not live by _____ alone, but (man shall live) by every _____ that proceedeth out of the mouth of _____" (Matthew 4:4!). Bread is important and we cannot live without it, but we need something more than bread and food. We need God's Word.

Physically we need to feed on bread and potatoes and other kinds of food. Spiritually we need to feed on God's Word so that our souls will be healthy and FAT. Job knew that bread and food were very important and necessary, but what did he consider to be even more important (Job 23:12)? _____

Can a person be well physically and very healthy, but be starving spiritually and very sick? _____ What does God want to feed you with (as a new believer--1 Peter 2:2; later, as a more mature Christian--1 Corinthians 3:2 and Hebrews 5:11-14)?

What are some of the ways we can feed on God's Word? (the first two are done for you)

I can read the Bible for myself
I can pay attention during family devotions

Good food can only help a person if the person's digestive system is working right. If the food is not being digested right, then it will be vomited up or it will pass right through the system without doing the body any good. Sometimes people read the Bible, hear the Bible taught at church, etc., but it does not do them any good. Why is this so? See James 1:22-25. How can we digest the spiritual food that we take in?

Dressing

How did people dress in the land of Palestine during Bible times? Did the men wear ties and jackets? Did the women wear dresses and skirts? Did they wear the same kind of shoes that we wear?

Inner Garment

The men and women would wear an inner garment or shirt next to their skin called a tunic. Usually this was without sleeves and reached down to the knees or sometimes all the way to the ankles. Wealthy people would wear tunics which had sleeves and which reached to the ankles.

When Jesus died on the cross, the soldiers cast lots for His tunic (John 19:24). This was the Lord's inner garment (not a "ROBE" as many think).

Usually the Jews of Christ's day had at least one change of clothing. A man would be considered poor to have only one garment (see what John the Baptist said in Luke 3:11). In Matthew 10:10 Jesus told His disciples not to take an extra undergarment with them.

Among the poorer people, the tunic was often the only clothing worn in warm weather. Wealthier people might wear the tunic alone inside the house, but they would not wear it without the outer garment outside the house. In the Bible the term "naked" is sometimes used of men who only have their tunic on (see John 21:7). To be dressed in such a scanty manner was thought of as "nakedness."

The Girdle

The girdle was like a wide belt (about four to six inches wide) which went around the waist. Without this girdle, the tunic would be loose and it would interfere with a person's ability to walk freely (this is why bathrobes have a strap that must be tied). Sometimes money was kept in a girdle (in a pouch) and sometimes the girdle was used to fasten a man's sword to his body.

In Bible language, "to be girded" means "to be ready for action." It means "let nothing keep you back or interfere with your progress as you run the race which is before you" (see Luke 12:35). What do you think the first part of 1 Peter 1:13 means?

The Outer Garment

The outer garment was called a mantle. It was like a large robe. The closest thing we have to it would be an overcoat. This mantle would shelter the person from the wind and the rain and it would also serve as a blanket at night. This is the outer garment or mantle which Elijah had and which became the property of Elisha (see 2 Kings 2:8-13).

But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content (1 Tim. 6:6-8).

Sandals

Most people in Bible times wore something that resembled sandals. They consisted of a sole made either of wood or leather which was fastened to the foot by leather thongs or straps. Peter was told to put his sandals on in Acts 12:8. See also what John the Baptist said in Mark 1:7 (latchet = thongs; shoes = sandals). Because the people wore sandals, their feet got dirty and this is why we read in the Bible about people getting their feet washed (see John 13).

The Difference Between Men and Women

Men and women wore the same kind of clothing, but it differed in detail. They both would wear an inner garment and a girdle and an outer garment, but the dress of the woman was more elaborate and ornamented. However, the women wore longer tunics and larger mantles than the men. Also the women would often wear a veil covering their face.

Even though men and women wore the same kind of clothes, there were differences which made it easy to tell the sexes apart. Even today men and women both wear shirts, but usually the blouse that a woman would wear is quite different than the shirt that a man would wear. In Bible times the garments of a woman were different than the garments of a man. In God's law we read, "The woman shall not _____ that which pertaineth unto a _____, neither shall a man put on a woman's _____" (Deut.22:5). It was a shameful thing for a man to dress like a woman or for a woman to dress like a man.

The same ought to be true today. Men should dress like men; women should dress like women; boys should dress like boys; girls should dress like girls. If God has made you a boy (male), then act like one, look like one and BE ONE! If God has made you a girl (female), then act like one, look like one and BE ONE!

Two Kinds Of Dress

What were the first clothes that man ever wore? Let us go back to Genesis chapter 3 and think about how Adam and Eve dressed themselves and then how God dressed them:

Adam And Eve How Can Our Sinfulness Be Covered? (Genesis 3)

FIG LEAVES (verse 7)	ANIMAL SKINS (verse 21)
Man's way	God's way
A covering which man provides for himself	A covering which God provides for man
Man trying to cover up his sins	God graciously covering man's sins
This covering required no shedding of blood.	This covering required the shedding of blood. Animals had to die (Hebrews 9:22).
The person is still sinful and naked in God's sight.	The person is forgiven and perfectly clothed in God's sight.

God wants every sinner to be clothed in the perfect righteousness of His Son, Jesus Christ. Often man tries to cover up his sinfulness by getting dressed in *his own clothes* (whatever we try to do in order to cover up our sins). Does this work (Isaiah 64:6; Titus 3:5)? _____ What are some things people do to try to cover up their sins?

God must clothe the sinner. What kind of clothes does God provide for those who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ (Revelation 19:8 and 3:17-18; 1 Corinthians 1:29-30)?

How does God see you? Does He see you naked in your sinfulness or clothed in the righteousness of Christ (2 Cor. 5:21)?
