

Lesson 20 - Bible Health Principles for an Abundant Life

One of the most wonderful things about God is the fact that He cares for you! And whether you're rich, poor, black or white, educated or uneducated, God cares for you! He demonstrated His love and care on Calvary, and Jesus said in **Matthew 7:11**, "**If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?**"

While God has an inexpressible desire to see us saved out of this world, He also is interested in our lives here on earth. He desires us to have a good and abundant life! **John 10:10**, "**The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.**" The devil wants to steal, kill, and destroy you. God wants you to have an abundant life! It's amazing that so many choose the devil's ways! God is interested not only in your salvation, but also your physical health! **Third John 1:2**, "**Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.**" Just as your spiritual health is important, so is your physical. God promised His people that if they obeyed and followed His ways that they would have the blessings of health and life. **Exodus 15:26**, "**And said, if thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the LORD that healeth thee.**"

Now in this promise, it's obvious that laws are involved. What you sow you reap! If a Christian and non-Christian run through a red light and are headed for a wreck, God will not suspend the law of motion to stop the Christian's car while the non-Christian has a wreck. We all must reap what we sow. There's no use in getting

mad at God for allowing your new car to get all messed up if you ran a red light! Yet there are a lot of people today who will not follow God's laws of health, and then when they get sick and diseased, they blame God. People say, "Oh why is God allowing me to die of emphysema?" Yet they have smoked like a chimney for 30 years! That's not God's fault. God is reasonable. He says, "If you obey, you will prosper and have no disease." In Psalm 84:11 God says He will withhold "no good thing" from us. Let's illustrate it this way.

When Mercedes-Benz makes a fine automobile they put it through hundreds of tests. And when all the results come in they publish it in a book called the *Owner's Manual*. This manual will tell you what oil and gasoline to use, and give you all the information needed to make your Mercedes run at peak performance. Let's imagine you own a fine 300 SD turbo diesel. One day as you drive along you decide you're going to put gas in instead of diesel--it's cheaper, you know, and a higher octane, 95 proof. So you fill it up and drive away. All of a sudden you notice the car has a fever, its temperature is up in the red, and it begins to backfire, get shaky, and after awhile it blows its head. You're stuck on the highway. Soon the car ambulance takes your Mercedes into the car hospital and there they operate on it. After being hung over a few days it comes out fixed, but weaker, and with a big bill to pay. The Mercedes mechanic informs you: "The *Owners Manual* says to use *diesel*, not regular gas. *Read the book!*"

And friends, today, it's the same way. God has an owners manual. He made the human body and knows what makes it run. But the owners manual (the Bible) has been neglected, and our hospitals

are full. Today we have more disease than ever. And now you know why.

I'm happy to tell you today though that it's not the same in all churches. You see, back in the mid 1800s as the Bible was being printed, many Christians read, and became aware of this great Bible truth of good health. In the three angel's message (**Revelation 14:7**), it said to "give glory to God." How can we give glory to God they thought? One answer they found was by "keeping God's commandments." but Christians read on and found another way. First Corinthians 10:31, "Whether therefore ye *eat*, or *drink*, or whatsoever ye do, *do all to the glory of God.*" Give glory by eating and drinking right. **First Corinthians 6:19-20 says why. "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."** God wants to dwell in you, but He cannot dwell in a defiled body, it's not our body, it's God's to use for His glory. God then gets very explicit in this area. **First Corinthians 3:16-17, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are."** God says if we willfully defile the body, He will destroy us! One of the Christian churches that discovered these Bible principles of health was the Adventist Church. As its members began to live by these health principles we find today after many years the results are with us. Adventists are the healthiest people around! Notice these few quotes from leading North American magazines and news reporters.

The Saturday Evening Post,

"Seventh-day Adventists are the healthiest group of people in the country.

Adventist have supplied the world with some rather impressive medical statistics: Male Seventh-day Adventists aged 35 to 40 have a 6.2-year longer life expectancy on The average than the general population. Female members have a 3.1-year greater life expectancy.

Male subjects 55 and over who eat meat six times a week or more are twice as likely to die of heart attacks as are some of the Adventist vegetarian men, as shown by surveys.

Not only do Seventh-day Adventists have fewer heart attacks, they also have less cancer-50 percent less than the general population. The rate of lung cancer is only 21 percent of the expected rate and their colon-rectal cancer is 60 percent of expected.

Education, medical as well as general, receives strong support from Adventists. Three times as many members have completed college compared to the general population."

Here is another quote from Paul Harvey news, commenting on a survey by the United States Public Health Service in California.

"Judging from the records, Seventh-day Adventists have a life expectancy five to six years greater than other Californians, 75 percent fewer Adventists die from all types of cancer, 68 percent fewer from respiratory diseases, 88 percent fewer from TB and 85 percent fewer from pulmonary emphysema.... Perhaps as a by-product of abstinence from alcohol, Adventists have only about one third as many accidents."

Now that is really wonderful! Statistics prove that God's way is the best way. So let's go on and see what God's Book recommends us to put in or not to put in our bodies, so we can lead a healthy life, free from disease.

Dr. Richard Walden of California got tired one day of hearing his patients say, "Doc, give me another pill for my aches and pains" while they just continued their bad habits. So the Doctor decided to print a little pamphlet titled "I'll Tell You How to Die Younger" and placed it in his waiting room.

The first suggestion Dr. Walden's pamphlet made was: "If you want to die younger, smoke heavily." What about smoking? People say, "the Bible doesn't say, Thou shalt not smoke." That's true. The Bible also doesn't say "Thou shalt not shoot heroine, or sniff cocaine ! " We have to see the principle. God said "If you destroy the body temple, God will destroy you!" It doesn't take someone very intelligent to realize that smoking is one of the most mind and body destroying habits in the world. The surgeon general puts that warning on every tobacco product. There are 18 active poisons in tobacco, the prominent one being nicotine. A half a drop of raw nicotine placed on the back skin of a rabbit will kill it. In every cigarette there are two and a half drops of nicotine. If the body didn't absorb it slowly a man would be dead from one cigarette. But it sooner or later catches up. Since 1933 the United States death rate from lung cancer has quadrupled, in exactly the same proportion as cigarette consumption increased. Sadly, 700,000 people a year will die of cigarette smoking related diseases, 100,000 of these being cancer. God does not want you smoking! Now how do you break the habit? Following is God's five minute plan for victory!

GOD'S 5-MINUTE PLAN FOR VICTORY OVER SMOKING

1. You must be willing to let God give you the victory and choose to quit. Then claim the three following promises.

2. **First Corinthians 15:57, "But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."** God has given you the victory. Take it, it's done. You don't have to worry about it or struggle to quit, God has already given you the victory.

3. **Romans 6:11, "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord."**

Reckon that you are dead to cigarette smoking. Believe you're dead to it because God said so, it's done. If a person is dead, they can't smoke. As far as smoking is now concerned you're dead.

4. **Romans 13:14, "But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof."**

Your part is to not plan to fail, don't hide any cigarettes, get rid of everything. Then God can work a miracle!

Remember Peter (Matthew 14:22-29). Jesus said, "Come to Me on the water." That's humanly impossible! But Peter believed what God said and then Jesus performed the miracle--Peter actually walked on water!

Quitting cigarette smoking is humanly impossible for many, so *let go*, and *let Jesus*, believe and the miracle will be done.

PRACTICAL HELPS WHEN CLAIMING THE VICTORY

A. Quit caffeine, it and nicotine are related poisons.

B. Drink lots of liquid (fruit juice especially).

C. Get lots of fresh air by walking and breathing deeply.

D. Bathe morning and night for the first four days.

E. Chew gum or enjoy some candy--it gives your mouth something to do!

The second thing Dr. Walden wrote in his pamphlet, *How to Die Younger* was: "Drink alcohol even in moderation." It's alarming today to see so much of this evil in the Christian Church! One hundred years ago, the Christian Church would never allow its members to drink any alcohol. Yet today, Christians drink freely with the world, and alcohol has become the number-one drug problem in the world. Alcoholism costs Americans 43 billion dollars a year in lost work, medical expenses, and auto accidents alone. Ninety-five thousand deaths a year in America are the direct result of drinking, 800,000 car crashes resulting in 25,000 traffic deaths are the result of drinking. Now you tell me, can a person drink to the glory of God? Absolutely not!

I'm amazed to hear some people say Jesus drank alcohol. That's just another lie the devil has invented to accommodate people in their sin. Let's see what the Bible says. **Proverbs 20:1, "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise."** Now what we need to understand is the fact that "wine" in the Bible has several meanings. There are two types of "wine." The new wine--fresh grape juice; or the fermented wine--alcohol. Both are simply called "wine" in the Bible. Here we see "strong drink" or alcohol is condemned. We can read of the fermented again in **Proverbs 23:29-32, "Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at**

the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine. Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright, At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder." God condemns this wine. In fact God says when pure grape juice has become alcohol, we are not to even look at it, much less partake of it. **Isaiah 5:20-22, "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight! Woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink."** God places a woe on those who drink wine and strong drink. **Verse 24** goes on to say those who do will burn in hell! **"Therefore as the fire devoureth the stubble, and the name consumeth the chaff, so their root shall be as rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as dust: because they have cast away the law of the LORD of hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel."** That's clear!

Well then, what kind of wine is okay? Let's quote this same author, Isaiah, and see. **Isaiah 65:8, "Thus saith the LORD, As the new wine is round in the cluster, and one saith, Destroy it not; for a blessing is in it: so will I do for my servants' sakes, that I may not destroy them all."** The "new wine" as found in the cluster. Pure grape juice, there's a blessing in it! Do you remember what Jesus said in some of His last words? **Matthew 26:29, "But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."** I drink it "new" with you. It only makes sense. Can you imagine arriving in heaven only to find a distillery by the river of life with the angels busy producing beer, wine, and vodka? No, only that which is pure will be in heaven. All people in our world today know that even one drink

destroys brain cells, harms the liver, and leads to drunkenness.

Three out of 10 who start out as "light drinkers" end up as alcoholics. Peter tells us in **1 Peter 1:13 to be sober. "Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ."** Again in **1 Peter 5:8** he repeats this. You see, one drink does not make you drunk, but you're not sober either! Let's choose to abstain from alcohol so our bodies can be pure, holy, and undefiled.

While we're on this subject, we should mention another harmful product that just recently has received national attention--the use of caffeine. Thirty-five million pounds of caffeine are consumed each year by Americans in coffee, tea, and cola drinks. Caffeine use is responsible for many of the diseases we suffer today. Caffeine is linked to birth defects, breast disease, and high blood pressure. It causes much heart disease, cancer of the bladder and pancreas, and a 20 percent memory loss for the average user.

Now, we have one more area to cover and that's the refrigerator! What about the food we eat? You see, in the beginning God gave to man the best diet. Genesis 1:29, "And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat." God gave a simple diet of fruits, grains, nuts and later vegetables. After the flood, man began to eat meat. But note these amazing facts. The first eight generations before the flood living on God's original diet lived a long time. Adam lived 930 years, Seth lived 912 years, Enoch lived 905 years, Canaan lived 910 years, Mahaleel lived 895 years, Jared lived 962 years and Methuselah lived 969 years.

Now look at generations after the flood--after they began eating meat. Shem lived only 600 years; Peleg lived 239 years, and eight generations later Nahor lived only 148 years. So a rapid deterioration is apparent. God's original way is the best way! Many people today are vegetarians and statistics have proven its value. Let's be clear though, the Bible is not saying you can't eat meat. There are meats God created to be eaten with thanksgiving. However, with all the disease in animals today, many are finding that God's original diet is the best. For those who are becoming vegetarians, it's best to make a gradual change. God does, however, have laws regarding some meats which He says we should not eat. Basically it is formed of one group. The "scavengers" of the earth, or you might say, the land and sea creatures that are living "garbage cans." Turn to **Genesis 7:1-2**, "**And the LORD said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark; for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation. Of every clean beast thou shalt take to thee by sevens, the male and his female: and of beasts that are not clean by two, the male and his female.**" As God foresaw the destruction of the earth by water resulting in no plant life after the flood, He made provision for Noah to eat meat. But note, there were clean animals and unclean. Notice this was established long before Moses law and the Jews. You may say, "How do we know the difference between clean and unclean?" **Leviticus 11:2-8**, "**Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, These are the beasts which ye shall eat among all the beasts that are on the earth. Whatsoever parteth the hoof, and is cloven footed, and cheweth the cud, among the beasts, that shall ye eat. Nevertheless these shall ye not eat of them that chew the cud, or of them that divide the hoof: as the camel, because he cheweth the cud, but divideth not the hoof; he is unclean unto you.**

And the coney, because he cheweth the cud, but divideth not the hoof; he is unclean unto you. And the hare, because he cheweth the cud, but divideth not the hoof; he is unclean unto you. And the swine, though he divide the hoof, and be clovenfooted, yet he cheweth not the cud; he is unclean to you. Of their flesh shall ye not eat, and their carcase shall ye not touch; they are unclean to you."

It must have a split hoof, and chew the cud to be clean. This then would include cattle, deer, lamb, goat, et cetera, as good clean meat. It *does not include*, the pig! You see the pig is a scavenger, he eats garbage. Even our medical world today is telling us the hog is unfit for food. Note what medical research has established about the hog. This quote is taken from the *Reader's Digest* article entitled, *Must Our Pork Remain Unsafe?* "A single serving of infective pork--even a single mouthful can kill or cripple or condemn the victim to a lifetime of aches and pains. For this unique disease, trichinosis, there is no cure. With no drug to stop them, the worms may spread through the muscular tissues of the entire human system. One of two things then happens, depending on the intensity of the infection. Either death ensues or a successful effort is made by nature to throw an enclosure, or cyst, around each of the teeming parasites, which then become dormant although they remain alive for years. ... Do not blame your doctor. All that the best doctor can do as yet is to conserve the patient's strength and try to relieve painful local symptoms as they appear. What these symptoms are, the layman had much better not worry about. Trichinosis can simulate in some degree almost any other malady. Physicians have confused trichinosis with some 50 ailments, ranging from typhoid fever to acute alcoholism. That pain in your arm or leg may be arthritis or rheumatism, but it may be trichinosis:

that pain in your back may mean a gall-bladder involvement, but it may mean trichinosis."

Autopsies show that one out of six Americans carry live trichinosis parasites in his muscles. The U.S. Department of Agriculture reviewed 24 cases of trichinosis, 22 of which came from pork. And according to an article in the Illinois Health Messenger they found one out of five pork products in the market had live trichina parasites in it. So the Bible rule is, if it divides the hoof and chews the cud it's okay to eat. If not, it's an abomination.

What about fish and sea food? The Bible continues in **Leviticus 11:9-12** to tell us how to know it's clean. **"These shall ye eat of all that are in the waters: whatsoever hath fins and scales in the waters, in the seas, and in the rivers, them shall ye eat. And all that have not fins and scales in the seas, and in the rivers, of all that move in the waters, and of any living thing which is in the waters, they shall be an abomination unto you: They shall be even an abomination unto you; ye shall not eat of their flesh, but ye shall have their carcasses in abomination. Whatsoever hath no fins nor scales in the waters, that shall be an abomination unto you."** It must have fins and scales. That includes a nice variety of fish, like trout, bass, salmon, et cetera. However, it also eliminates a lot of seafood lovers favorites--crabs, clams, oysters, shrimp, lobsters, and eels. Notice this article from ***Prevention Magazine*** establishing what God already told us.

"Why are shellfish so dangerous? Because they are many times more polluted than the filthy water they inhabit. Unfortunately they choose to live and love and multiply in estuaries along coastal regions. These estuaries are particularly subject to discharge of sewage, sewage effluent and other waterborne pollution ... the polluted aspect of their habitat is one danger. The fact that bivalve shellfish

are filter-feeders compounds the danger. Oysters, for example, because of their way of obtaining and absorbing food, have been found to concentrate polio virus up to 20 to 60 times the level of the surrounding seawater. No other animal food offered on the menu of your favorite eating place would be served to you along with its feces. Yet this is the case with seafood. It is served whole; complete with its intestinal tract."

Again we see that God created these unclean shellfish to clean up the ocean and its pollution. As with all unclean animals, the blood carries this disease into the meat, which when eaten, spreads the disease throughout the body. Thank God for the Bible which tells us these things!

What about fowl? Again it's basically the scavengers which God says are unclean. Leviticus 11:13- 19 lists most of them. Many of the fowl we eat today are clean--turkey, chicken, quail, et cetera. Now you may be thinking, is God really this serious about my body being His temple? You will find that God is serious about His plan for you. We read in Revelation that nothing will enter heaven that defiles. Isaiah makes it clear that no one who defiles their body with unclean things will enter heaven. **Isaiah 66:15-17, "For, behold, the LORD will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with names of fire. For by fire and by his sword will the LORD plead with all flesh: and the slain of the LORD shall be many. They that sanctify themselves, and purify themselves in the gardens behind one tree in the midst, eating swine's flesh, and the abomination, and the mouse, shall be consumed together, saith the LORD."**

In closing let's turn to **1 John 3:2-3, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure."** Here we see the gospel is a power to purify and prepare us for heaven. Today all God asks us is to give

up a few things that will only hurt and destroy us. He wants us to be healthy, happy and free from disease. And so He invites us in **Romans 12:1- 2** to present our bodies to Him, a living sacrifice. **"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."** This is our reasonable service. May God bless you with health, abundant life, and freedom from sickness as you follow His Word in your life!

COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS EXPLAINED.

PETER'S VISION

Many individuals have quoted from Peter's vision in Acts 10 in an attempt to prove that it is all right for New Testament Christians to eat the unclean foods. Here is a prime example of how a text can be lifted out of its context and made to teach something that the original writer never had in mind. Let's notice the vision:

Acts 10:9-17, "On the morrow, as they went on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the housetop to pray about the sixth hour: And he became very hungry, and would have eaten; but while they made ready, he fell into a trance, And saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth: Wherein were all manner of four-footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air, And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat. But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for *I have never eaten any thing that is common or*

unclean. And the voice spake unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common. This was done thrice; and the vessel was received up again into heaven. Now while Peter doubted in himself what this vision which he had seen should mean, behold, the men which were sent from Cornelius had made enquiry for Simon's house, and stood before the gate."

Most interpreters read the vision this far, stop and then devise their interpretation of the vision. But such is only man's interpretation. How much better to let the Bible explain itself.

First of all, notice that this was a vision, and not an actual occurrence. Peter did not literally eat these unclean animals. He merely saw them IN VISION. Second, notice in verse 17 that Peter did NOT understand the vision. He did NOT know what it meant. One thing he DID KNOW, and that was that it DID NOT MEAN that it was all right to eat the unclean foods. In the days when the early church was just beginning, most of the converts to Christianity were from Judaism. At first, there was no thought that the gospel message must also go to people of other nations. The Jews regarded anyone who was not a Jew as ceremonially unclean. They felt that such people had no right to have the gospel brought to them. The early Christians still had these same ideas.

However, God did not want the Christian Church to be restrictive. He did not want them to think that salvation was only for the Jews, that all others were unclean, and therefore could not have the gospel of salvation brought to them. Thus God chose to give Peter this vision to teach people the great lesson that NO PERSON,

NEITHER JEW NOR GENTILE, should be considered unclean.
Notice how the force of the vision comes to Peter in **verse 28**:

"And he said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shewed me that I should not call ANY MAN COMMON OR UNCLEAN."

Here then was the explanation of the vision. They were not to call ANY MAN COMMON OR UNCLEAN. God wasn't talking about food at all when He gave the vision to Peter. He was talking about the Jewish practice of calling anyone of another nation unclean. This is the Biblical interpretation of the vision. Any other interpretation stands in direct contradiction to a plainly interpreted passage of Scripture. To attempt to apply this text to the unclean foods is a great misuse of Scripture, and certainly reveals the flimsy evidence that there is for attempting to justify the use of the unclean foods today.

1 TIMOTHY 4:1-5

"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and the doctrines of devils' speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats (the original reads "foods"), which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: For IT IS SANCTIFIED BY THE WORD OF GOD AND PRAYER."

Many in attempting to justify their usage of the unclean foods quote this text as far as verse 4 and then conclude that it is all right to eat anything, as long as we thank the Lord for it. But does this mean that it is all right to eat a mouse or rat, or cat, or bat? Yet this is the

inevitable conclusion, if such an interpretation is held. But notice the last verse, verse 5. Here we are told what creatures may be eaten with thanksgiving: namely, those that the Word sanctified or specifies should be eaten. Does the Word of God sanctify the usage of the unclean foods, such as pork or shellfish? Absolutely not! That's why this text cannot be used to support the eating of the unclean foods.

Thus, rather than support the idea that it is all right to eat the pig, this text actually tells us three conditions to what we eat. It must:

1. Be "meats God has created to be received with thanksgiving."
2. We must "believe and know the truth" on what is good or not.
3. It has to be sanctified by the Word of God.

Unclean foods do not pass one of the conditions. Again, let's allow the Bible to interpret itself instead of attempting to read personal interpretations into the Bible.

MARK 7:15-20

"There is nothing from without a man, that entering into him can defile him: but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man. If any man have ears to hear, let him hear, And when he was entered into the house from the people, his disciples asked him concerning the parable. And he saith unto them, Are ye so without understanding also? Do ye not perceive, that whatsoever thing from without entereth into the man, it cannot defile him; Because it entereth not into his heart, but into the belly, and goeth out into the draught, purging all meats? And he said, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man."

In order to correctly understand this text, we must carefully examine the context of the passage. Mark 7:1, 2 indicate there was a contention between the Pharisees and certain of Jesus' disciples because the disciples did not go through the ceremonial washing of hands before they ate. The Jews in the time of Christ had added significantly to the commandments of God by instituting all kinds of ritualistic washings and ceremonies that had to be performed before a person ate. Jesus' disciples did not perform these ceremonies. According to Jewish law, what they ate was therefore unclean.

Please note that this discussion has nothing to do with clean and unclean animals as described in Leviticus 11, but instead is talking about the ceremonial washing of hands that made foods clean ceremonially. God never commanded His people to do this; it was a Jewish tradition. Mark 7:3- 5 continues with an explanation of the charge of the Jewish leaders against the disciples of Jesus. Mark 7:6- 13 contains Jesus' tremendous denunciation upon the Pharisees because they had rejected the commandment of God and yet were so meticulous about their own traditions. Verse 8 in particular notes that the tradition Jesus is speaking about is ceremonial washings. Jesus categorically states that if people worship by these traditions instead of the commandments of God, they are worshiping God in vain.

Finally, in verses 15- 20 Jesus specifically addresses the issue of the food that they eat being unclean because it did not go through the ceremonial washings. In Mark 7:19 Jesus declares He has purged all meats. The word translated "meats" is the Greek word **bromata**, which means "food." It does not refer to flesh food; it simply refers to any kind of food. Again, remember the context. The

charge was that the disciples had eaten without going through the ceremonial washing of hands that the Jews required. Therefore, to the Jewish Pharisaical mind the food that they ate was thereby unclean. Jesus now categorically declares that whether they have gone through these elaborate washings or not does not affect the food. It does not make the food unclean, because food simply goes into the system and is excreted. As Jesus says in verse 15, it cannot defile people or make them unclean simply because they did not go through these ritualistic washings.

Jesus was here declaring that ceremonial washings have nothing to do with food being either clean or unclean. This text has absolutely nothing to do with the clean and unclean animals of Leviticus 11. The issue is clearly whether or not Jesus requires His followers to practice the ritualistic washings of the Jews before they eat. He is answering the charge that the disciples are ceremonially unclean because they did not follow these ritualistic washings. Therefore Jesus declares that the ritualistic washings do not affect whether a person is clean or unclean, or whether his food is clean or unclean. The context, then, deals not with biological uncleanness, but with uncleanness supposedly incurred from the omission of ritual washings. See verse 15. The kind of food the disciples ate (verse 2 and 5) is not even referred to, but the way in which they ate it! Throughout, Christ is dealing with the commandments of God versus the traditions of men. To make this verse refer to the clean and unclean animals of Leviticus 11 is to ignore completely the meaning of the Greek and the context of the passage.