

Eat a variety of foods and focus on what you can eat, not on what you cannot. Numbers 11:4-6, *“Now the mixed multitude who were among them yielded to intense craving; so the children of Israel also wept again and said: ‘Who will give us meat to eat? We remember the fish which we ate freely in Egypt, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions and the garlic; but now our whole being is dried up; there is nothing at all except this manna before our eyes.’”* Isn't it interesting that they remembered, with craving, the foods but failed to remember that they were in bondage in Egypt? We tend to remember the delight of the food but fail to remember the bondage.

Stick with single servings. Don't skimp but don't indulge. Avoid second helpings. See Exodus 16:4-5 above. Rarely, when we want seconds, is it because we are still truly hungry.

Feast upon Christ. Be fully satisfied in Him.

Jeremiah 31:14, *“... My people shall be satisfied with My goodness, says the Lord.”*

- **Read Scripture** - immerse yourself in the Word of God.
- **Memorize Scripture** - love God with all your mind.
- **Meditate on Scripture** - consider, dwell upon, chew on God's truth.
- **Pray** - communicate often with God

FOOTNOTES

¹ Matthew 11:19, Luke 7:34

²³ () mine; Welch, Edward T., *Addictions: A Banquet in the Grave*, P&R Publishing, 2001

All scripture is from the New King James Version of the Bible unless otherwise noted.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Addictions: A Banquet in the Grave
Edward T. Welch, Ph.D.

Love to Eat, Hate to Eat
Elyse Fitzpatrick

Breaking Free: Making Liberty in Christ a Reality in Life
Beth Moore

DIGGING DEEPER

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FOOD



Food Friend or Foe?

A BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE

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Food: Friend or Foe?

To really gain an understanding of the whole area of overeating, the best place to go is to the Bible to learn God's perspective of this very human problem. Before doing that, let's look at a definition of gluttony. Webster defines gluttony as "excess in eating; extravagant indulgence of the appetite for food."

A simple Bible search for the word "gluttony" is not terribly helpful. The most it did was to reveal a link to drunkenness.¹ What might that link be? Dr. Ed Welch says, "The biblical view of drunkenness (is) the prototype of all addictions..."² Could it be that gluttony is a form of addiction? Let's consider the following definition of addiction (also in Dr. Welch's book), and its applicability to food: "Addiction is bondage to the rule of a substance, activity, or state of mind, which then becomes the center of life, defending itself from the truth so that even bad consequences don't bring repentance, and leading to further estrangement from God."³ Words like bondage and rule can identify what it "feels" like in a battle with food. Sometimes, a person can "feel" out of control and in the grip of food even when threatened with failing health, overweight, fatigue, high blood pressure, guilt, etc. Yet, repentance does not follow. It is interesting that Dr. Welch used the word repentance in his definition. Repentance is associated with sin. Why would addiction or gluttony be considered sin in the Bible? Go back to the first phrase in the definition, "addiction is bondage to the rule of a substance."

When we are in bondage to the rule of anything or anyone other than God, we have misplaced our worship. We are looking to, and relying on, that thing or person to do what God wants to do in our life. This is true in the lives of believers as well as unbelievers.

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Romans 1:25, "... who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator." God alone is worthy of our devotion and worship. Revelation 4:11, "You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power."

If we are not fully satisfied in Christ, we look elsewhere to be filled — to people, substances, sex, exercise, diet, entertainment, food, excitement, etc. For sake of illustration, let's say that our relationship with Christ fills us 85%, leaving 15% unsatisfied or empty. Our human propensity is to find something to fill that 15%. If that something is food, we become dependent on it, or even in bondage to it. The root to breaking a bondage to food is being fully satisfied with Jesus Christ. When we are fully satisfied in Christ, there will be no empty space that needs to be filled up with food, drugs, sex or people. Think about it, when we have just finished Thanksgiving dinner and are full, probably over full, we are not tempted to eat even more. It's easy to turn down that third slice of pie because we are so full already. In the same way, when we are fully satisfied in Christ, in fact, satiated with Christ, there will be no empty space (that 15%) that needs to be filled. We will be so full, food will lose its allure to satisfy beyond what is necessary for our bodies to be healthy. When all is said and done, the root of gluttony is not being satiated with Jesus Christ.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

There are worse things than being hungry. Sometimes hunger is allowed by God for His purposes and for His glory. We are to be filled with the fullness of God.

"And you shall remember that the Lord your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you and test you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not. So He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you

with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord."

– DEUTERONOMY 8:2-3

Eating to the glory of God requires discipline and obedience.

"And Moses said, 'Let no one leave any of it till morning,' (speaking of the manna). Notwithstanding, they did not heed Moses. But some of them left part of it until morning, and it bred worms and stank. And Moses was angry with them. So they gathered it every morning, every man according to his need, and when the sun become hot, it melted." – EXODUS 16:19-21

God is the ultimate provider of all that we need.

The amount each person got was a predetermined and set amount; there were no seconds. The provision was not too little nor too much. It was just the right amount for sustenance and health.

"Then the Lord said to Moses, 'Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you. And the people shall go out and gather a certain quota every day, that I may test them, whether they will walk in My law or not.'

– EXODUS 16:4-5

BUT HOW? MAKING IT WORK

Be thankful for God's provision and the sufficiency of it. God's provision is abundant and free. We have a greater struggle disciplining ourselves when we have too much of something than when we have too little. Each meal is a gift of God's provision and further evidence of His care and love. Why do we think it is okay to presume upon that gift and ask for more than we need?

When you are tempted to overeat, choose to be satisfied in Christ alone. Romans 13:14, "But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts."