

*Fit For Life*  
*Bible Study Devotional*

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**THE PROBLEM EATER**

Week Two

Weekly Memory Verse:

***“...For by whom a person is overcome,  
by him, he is also brought into bondage.”  
-2Peter 2:19***

In this week's study we will discuss some of the reasons for being over-weight, over-eating, and what the scriptures say about over-indulgence.

Be prayerful and thoughtful when answering the questions. Take your time. \*This week especially make sure that you begin to pray and journal about the insights you have. Be hopeful through your discovery, however difficult to admit to. God is working in you to bring FREEDOM. We are not learning a new "diet", but a new way of living. Diets make the food "behave". We do not consider our problem to merely be poor food choices, but also an issue of the heart.

All of the descriptions about problem eaters may not apply to you; however, be considerate as they may apply to others in your group.

Here are some definitions to familiarize your self with:

Compulsive eating- A behavior or feeling triggers a person into unplanned eating or into eating more than they planned.

Addiction- A compulsive or physical dependence upon something or someone or some behavior that provides a temporary sense of well-being.

Prayer: (personalize this prayer for yourself)

“Now may the God of peace who brought up my Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make me complete in every good work to do His will, working in me what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ to whom be glory forever and ever, Amen.”

Hebrews 13:20-21

## *Week Two—THE PROBLEM EATER*

### *Days One and Two*

(Please take at least two days to read and complete:  
there is a lot of reflection to be done.).

## Factors of Being Overweight

Some would say that the problem with overweight people is simply that they shove too much food into their mouths. “Just stop eating so much!” (Have you ever heard this? How did it make you feel?) From my own experience and partaking in the recovery of others I have found that the problem is never that simple. The reasons for obesity (Yes, it does sound like a dirty word! But a medical one none-the-less.) are quite a complex inter-weaving of factors. Those who have such beliefs mentioned at the beginning of this paragraph can be naïve and down right cruel (without even knowing it).

Today there are many who are rightfully beginning to realize that in order to successfully handle weight-loss all of the contributing factors must be dealt with. We as human beings are made up of spirit, soul and body. It is an unhealthy contribution of these very factors that interweave

to contribute to a complex problem with food. "It's just food!" Yes, it is. But *we* are not that simple. What affects our minds affects our bodies. How we think spiritually will affect our emotions and physical health; what we eat affects our physical health and even emotional state. Each facet of us is quite inter-relational and cannot be separated. Our creator, of course, knew all long. So why do we try to deal with something like losing weight by only addressing one area (the physical)?

Below are just a few scriptures that express this relationship.

***"For God has not given us a spirit of fear,  
but of power and of love and of a sound mind."  
-2Timothy 1:7***

***"Why are you cast down, O my soul?  
And why are you disquieted within me.  
Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him  
for the help of His countenance."  
-Psalm 42:5***

***"Cease from anger, and forsake wrath;  
do not fret- it only causes harm."  
-Psalm 37:8***

***"A merry heart makes a cheerful countenance,  
but a sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken."  
-Proverbs 15:13***

***"The spirit of a man will sustain him in  
sickness, but who can bear a broken spirit?"  
-Proverbs 18:14***

***"A merry heart does good, like medicine, but a  
broken spirit dries up the bones."  
-Proverbs 17:22***

These scriptures certainly have spiritual meaning, but we cannot neglect admitting that when we walk in the ways of the Lord it brings health to our physical bodies, minds, and emotions.

Let's look into some of the factors that may have played a role in being overweight...

- 1.) **Lifestyle**- Most Americans live a fast-paced lifestyle and eat fast food or pre-prepared food as a consequence. Even if a person is not eating at McDonald's every night a large part of his diet may consist of packaged, processed foods. Most of these foods have been denatured of their life-giving properties and replaced with refined sugars, high amounts of sodium, and saturated fats- all of which do not benefit in nutrition.

How has the pace of your lifestyle affect your eating habits?

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During a previous time period, people had to physically labor to get the food they needed to survive. That was all of the exercise needed to be healthy. Today many occupations consist of sitting, pushing buttons or papers.

Does your occupation allow you physical exercise?

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If so, how much?

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Describe how your social life may affect your eating habits.

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Can you think of other factors or our lifestyles that as a culture have affected weight gain?

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Romans 12:2 says that we should not allow our thinking to be a mirror of the world's ways but to go beyond that and renew our minds to God's ways. What health habits do you have that have been influenced by society? Do you feel that

they are something you may need to change or modify? And how?

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2.) **Physical Factors-**

1. Genes/Hereditiy- It is common knowledge that science can now prove that some people are more susceptible biologically to be overweight than others.

Are your parents overweight? \_\_\_\_\_ Your grandparents? \_\_\_\_\_ What is your body frame- large, medium, or petite? \_\_\_\_\_ Is your body similar shape as that of your family? \_\_\_\_\_

Whatever the influence your ancestors may have had on your predestined body type cannot be changed. Believe it or not; God does not want all of us to be Twiggies! He wants us to be *the best that is right for us*; **that** we do have influence in. Your genes are uniquely you; accept yourself and be thankful.

2. Diseases or physical conditions- Diabetes, inactive thyroid, physical inability to exercise, post-pregnancy, etc.

Can you list anything else? Do any of these factors affect you? How do these conditions affect your weight control?

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Are you under a physician's care? \_\_\_\_\_ What can you do to adapt to these conditions? (ie. Read and inform yourself, modify exercise, make sure to take prescribed medicine and food supplements...)

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3.) **Bad habits and Poor choices-** Unhealthy habits usually develop over time. Perhaps some are done out of ignorance, not knowing their unhealthy contributions. Some habits may be the result of "learned behavior" from when you were a child or picked up from of those around you.

Can you list any poor habits that affect weight gain? (i.e. eating before bed, eating while cleaning up the supper dishes, grazing all day, having a daily candy bar for energy)? List all that come to mind.

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Can you remember any learned behaviors you were subject to as a child that affect you today? Were you rewarded with food? Were you made to believe that food was a comfort? Was food ever held from you as punishment? Describe.

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Perhaps these behaviors of the past contribute to your relationship to food today.

- 4.) **Emotional factors**- OK, this is the one area that affects about everyone. Think and ponder awhile. It may take the course of several days of observation (or more) to realize the emotions that may drive you to eat. Right now can you say that you eat for comfort? \_\_\_\_\_

Refer to the definition of “compulsive eating” found at the beginning of this week. Do you frequently eat in a response to an emotion? \_\_\_\_\_ What emotions or situations trigger this eating? Explain.

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Are there particular foods that you desire to eat during these times? List.

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Describe the reason why you may desire these foods.

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Have you ever behaved in a way similar to an anorexic or bulimic? \_\_\_\_\_ Can you remember the time or an event that triggered this behavior? Explain.

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Are you currently engaging in these behaviors? \_\_\_\_\_ Have you ever received help (spiritual, professional...)? \_\_\_\_\_

Maybe you do not engage in the above-mentioned behaviors, however do you find yourself constantly thinking and obsessed with food? \_\_\_\_\_ Would you consider yourself “addicted” to food or a particular food?

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\*So far we have looked at our lifestyles, physical factors, poor habits, and emotional factors that promote weight-gain or hinder weight-loss. What new insights do you have for yourself?

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There still may be a lot for you to discover in the weeks ahead. Ask the Lord to reveal any habits, mind-sets, or emotions that foster an unhealthy you.

This week is only to gain insight about our reality now...to have an understanding of where we are. In the weeks ahead we will discuss where the Lord wants to take us. Do not be discouraged; have hope!

**Memory Verse:**

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**Prayer:** (Adapted from Alcoholics Anonymous)

***“Lord, grant me the serenity to accept the things that I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.”***

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## *Week Two—THE PROBLEM EATER*

### IN BONDAGE

#### Day Three

***“...For by whom a person is overcome, by him, he is also brought into bondage.”  
-2Peter 2:19***

All of us know someone who can eat whatever they want, whenever they want, and how much of it they want without seemingly having any ill effects at all. Some of you may be like me, I just look at brownies and they seem to reappear on the hips! Yet what are your eating habits *really* like? Are you always on a see-food diet that you simply eat whatever your eyes catch in their view? Do you eat carelessly, grabbing what is in front of you when you are hungry? (Or when you are not?) Is there a particular food that you must have everyday? Or once a week? Do you ever eat in secret? Do you ever binge or gorge until you are “stuffed”? Or perhaps you are a very conscious of eating healthily, but you “lose control” more than you like.

These may be difficult questions to answer, and perhaps a little embarrassing to admit, but freedom begins when we are truthful with ourselves and the Lord.

There are times when I allow food to become my Master. When I am irritated or stressed and grab for food as my comfort, I give in to a wrong desire. I am allowing myself

to be dominated by idol. That may sound very blunt and too harsh, but think about it. I am replacing the Lord who is Comfort for an inanimate object to comfort me physically, emotionally, and mentally.

***“For by whom a person is overcome by him, he is also brought into bondage.” –2Peter 2:19*** If thoughts of food control my mind, if I eat compulsively, or lust after particular foods, I am now being controlled by food. ***“You cannot have two masters either you will hate the one and love the other or be loyal to one and despise the other.”***

Are there times when you feel powerless to food? Jesus explains to us that when we sin we become a slave to that sin. We forfeit control and our sin controls us. The sin becomes our master and we are merely pawns carrying out its desires. (John 8:34) The question you need to ask yourself is, “Do I have control over food or does food have control over me?” Do you LIVE TO EAT or EAT TO LIVE?

Ask the Father to expose any eating behaviors that are not pleasing to Him.

**Suggestion:** Journal your thoughts, feelings, and any insights that you may have today.

**Memory Verse:**

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**Commitment:** “Today I will \_\_\_\_\_.”

*Week Two- THE PROBLEM EATER*

## **OVERINDULGENCE-GLUTTONY**

*Day Four*

***“For three things the earth is perturbed,  
Yes, for four it cannot bear up:  
For a servant when he reigns,  
A fool when he is filled with food,  
A hateful woman when she is married,  
And a maidservant who succeeds her mistress.”  
-Proverbs 30:22-23***

When you hear the word “glutton” what comes to mind? Someone as fat and big as Jabba-the-Hut? Someone gorging themselves with food as grease and drool drip down their shirt?

Let’s look at the biblical definition of “glutton” to gain a right perspective.

***“Glutton- to shake (as in the wind), i.e. to quake; fig. To be loose morally, worthless, prodigal, riotous eater, vile.”***

***Deuteronomy 21:20-21, “And they shall say onto the elders of his city, ‘This son of ours is stubborn and rebellious; he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton and a drunkard.’ Then all the men of his city shall stone him to death with stones; so you shall put away the evil***

***person from among you, and all Israel will hear and fear.”***

If you have never considered that gluttony was a serious sin, this scripture should shed some new light on your understanding. Notice the connection between gluttony and rebellion. God ranks gluttony with rebellion and stubbornness: worthy of death! If we had this law today how many Americans would be stoned?! How many Christians? I might not have lived to write this!

Ironically this subject is rarely mentioned from the pulpits. Could food be the Christians' accepted vice of choice? When society all around us accepts and even promotes overindulgence such as "riotous eating", can it really be sin? It is, because the Lord says that it is.

The Webster definition of gluttony is "*one who demands too much*". A demanding, loose, immoral person who is stubborn and wants to have their own way and do their own thing does not sound like a faithful child of God exemplifying temperance, humility, submission, and gratitude.

One bad root grows into many different branches. If you are a compulsive eater, can you think of the effect it has had on your life? In honesty I can admit that it produces anything but blessing. Jesus said that we cannot serve two masters for either you will hate the one and love the other or else you will be loyal to one and despise the other (Matthew 6:24). The Lord wants all of our minds, hearts, souls, and strength to love Him (Matthew 23:37). In doing so He knows that we will receive nothing but blessing and prosperity.

When I read the definition of "glutton" there is one man that comes to mind. He demanded his "rights". He had to have his own way. He was stubborn, rebellious. He left the love and security of his father and went his own way. He became a glutton, drunkard, and committing crimes that all immorally loose men do. One day he awoke to his senses. He realized that "his own way" took him straight to living in the slop of the hogs. He knew even being a servant in his father's house was a blessed life beyond this. When he returned home he did not receive a stoning which he lawfully could have but a party! His father was overjoyed to have his son return and fully forgave his wrong doings. Allelujah! **Read this story in Matthew**

**Memory Verse:**

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**Journal:** What insights have you had today? Write a prayer to the Lord today.

**Commitments:** "Today I will..."

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## *Week Two-THE PROBLEM EATER*

### A HEART ISSUE

*Day Five*

***“Not what goes into the mouth defiles a man;  
but what comes out of the mouth,  
this defiles a man.”***

***-Matthew 15:10***

How easily the human mind focuses on the physical rather than spiritual. In the context of the above written scripture the Pharisees are guilty of this. They were overly concerned with the externals of their religion. What other men could see. Case in point: the washing of hands before they ate. They were so preoccupied with appearing “clean” before other men, they were ignorant of being clean before God. Jesus said they were replacing the commandments of God with their own traditions.

What does this have to do with weight-loss? Jesus is showing us where the emphasis should lie. He is not concerned with *what* we eat as compared to what’s eating us.

***“Therefore, let no one judge you in food or in drink,  
or regarding a festival or new moon or Sabbath which  
are a shadow of the things to come,  
but the substance is of Christ.”***

***~Colossians 2:16-17***

Two people are eating a slice of chocolate triple-layer cake. The outward appearance of these two people eating may be the same; however, the relationship to the food may be quite different. To one the cake may be a delicious, tasty

morsel- nothing more. She knows that God freely gives her all things to enjoy-in temperance. She eats on knowing she will not have another treat like this for a while. To the second eater, the cake is a vehicle of sin. She takes this gift and abuses it. She overindulges knowing that that same afternoon she already dined on a plate of sugary delights! When she feels lonely or sad or anything that prompts her, she chooses this treat as comfort, rather than her Father who is longing to give her true peace that lasts. She has made an idol for herself. Tomorrow she will again worship the food as she will seek out some other food to fill her up-physically and emotionally.

You ask how can an observer tell the difference when these two women are eating their chocolate cake? We cannot. For you see it is a heart issue. We cannot tell but there is One who can. ***“The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord the at the heart.” (1Samuel 16:7)***

Maybe you are not addicted to food but you know what it is to “overeat”. Describe how you felt afterwards:

Physically \_\_\_\_\_

Mentally \_\_\_\_\_

Emotionally \_\_\_\_\_

Spiritually \_\_\_\_\_

Are those few moments of pleasure worth the consequences?

**Suggestion:** \*Today, do not eat more than one portion at each meal.

\*Tune in to your emotions when you reach for food. Are you feeling stressed? Grab your journal and go to your prayer closet!

**Memory Verse:**

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**Commitment:** "Today I will \_\_\_\_\_."