

3 Serious Questions for the Undereater

After recently writing about overeating and the sin of gluttony, I thought it appropriate to also address its opposite yet equally dishonoring and destructive counterpart: undereating. This topic is particularly close to my heart because it is one that I have struggled with since my teen years.

A few moments of channel-surfing will remind you of just how image-driven our society has become. Hollywood's leading ladies and larger-than-life runway models flaunt flawless faces and svelte physiques. TV stars and pop singers flash dazzling smiles and perfect hair. Interspersed between the movies and shows are commercials touting diet products and weight-loss programs guaranteed to give you the body you've always wanted.

It's almost as if this subliminal message is being transmitted through the airwaves: You can have success, stardom, beauty and bliss. But first, you have to buy this product to get the toned legs of your favorite actress or the chiseled abs of your favorite singer!

"Physical perfection equals happiness."

That equation is the lie I began believing at age 17. It's one that many people, mostly women, buy into with their money, their time, their habits and sometimes, tragically, their very lives. For the sake of space, I won't go into details about my eating disorder in this book. If you'd like to learn more, please visit my blog, .

If you struggle with undereating, here are three questions to help restore a healthy perspective and free you from the chains of obsession. Answer them honestly, respond to them

positively and promptly, and wait for God's Word and the Holy Spirit to replace all carnal, harmful thoughts with eternal, life-giving truths.

1. Am I serving God or self with this decision? By believing that we can feel prettier, find success, meet the right mate or manage our emotions by depriving ourselves of the nutrients we need to survive and thrive, we choose to worship our own bodies. Our temple of the Holy Spirit becomes an idol of self as obsessive thoughts focused on calorie control, rigorous exercise, what the scale says and what others think build a barrier between body and spirit. Eventually, we become slaves to this idol; we worship it not because we love and adore it but because it controls us. It has become our master.

In Matthew 6:24, Jesus said that we cannot serve two masters. Either we are serving God through how we nourish our bodies or we're serving ourselves. Either we are loving our body because we view it as a member of Christ's body or we're hating it because we see it as a dispensable sacrifice to the idol of self.

The next time you want to skip a meal or severely cut calories, ask yourself who or what it is your decision is serving. There is no in between.

2. What are the consequences if I continue eating this way? Consider the following facts about undereating:

- It can lead to depression because our moods are affected by how and what we eat. Many of the nutrients in food affect the emotional centers of our brain, and reducing our intake of these nutrients has an adverse effect on the way we think and feel. Undereaters generally feel depressed and tend to become easily irritated or enraged.
- The effects of malnutrition on the brain also often lead to impaired concentration, a decreased sexual appetite,

frequent panic attacks and irrational thinking.

- As for physical effects, undereating can weaken the heart, which can lead to an irregular heartbeat. Digestion often slows, causing misleading feelings of fullness and bloat. Skin takes on a yellowish tint, fingernails become brittle, and hair thins or begins to fall out. Osteopenia, the precursor to osteoporosis, becomes more likely because the body isn't receiving the vitamins and minerals necessary for strong bones.

If you sense, or someone else notices, that you're eating very little, seemingly preoccupied by food or just a little crankier than usual, reflect on the list above, then remind yourself that you're a precious, beloved temple of the Holy Spirit, and then ask the Lord to guide you toward healthier decisions.

3. Have you been in God's Word? Don't let pop culture tell you what's attractive or desirable. Let God's Word tell you. If you've starved yourself of the Bible's soul-reviving nourishment, it's time to dive into the psalms and remind yourself that you are "fearfully and wonderfully made." It's time to jump over to Ephesians and see that you've been created for "good things" which Jesus "planned for us long ago."

When you shift your focus from self to Savior, you will see just how beautiful, valuable and beloved you are as a member of the body of Christ. When you pour out your frustrations and feelings of inferiority before the Lord, He will fill you to the brim with warm assurance of your acceptance, worth and victory through Him!

"But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us" (Rom. 8:37, NASB).

Diana Anderson-Tyler is the author of *Creation House's Fit for Faith: A Christian Woman's Guide to Total Fitness* and her

latest book, *Perfect Fit: Weekly Wisdom and Workouts for Women of Faith and Fitness*. Her popular website can be found at [www.perfectfit925.com](#), and she is the owner and a coach at CrossFit 925. Diana can be reached on Twitter.