

Are You Too Legalistic About Dieting?

Walls, barriers, obstacles always seem to appear whenever I am trying to do the right thing. I could be going along fine on a “diet” and all of a sudden something would happen to derail me. “I want to do this,” I scream. “Why can’t I?” Bottom line, I did not trust Jesus to lead me on this journey.

Instead, I would just give up. The boulders strewn in my path just seemed too big to overcome. So, I’d go back to what I’d always done. Just eat whatever I wanted. I didn’t want anything or anyone governing my life.

This, of course, was really not true in the deepest part of me, but it certainly was in the reality of the moment. Trust in the One I should have complete trust in was absent in this one area of my life. Because of that, it felt like I was swimming through mud in every other area as well.

The Problem

We always focus on the problem (Rom. 7:19) and not the solution (Rom. 7:24-25). Sometimes, though, that’s because we don’t understand the problem. Reading over it again today, it all came together in my mind, and it really starts with an earlier verse.

Romans 7:13 says, “Therefore has that which is good become death unto me? God forbid! Rather, sin, that it might be shown to be sin, was working death in me through that which is good, so that sin through the commandment might become exceedingly sinful.”

What Law Is This Talking About?

It’s talking about the Scriptures the people knew at that

time: the Old Testament and all the myriads of rules and regulations God had laid out for the people to follow. I am very aware that many of these included what they should not eat, like unclean animals for instance (see Lev. 11 and Deut. 14). According to the law, beef could be eaten, but pork could not.

What was the purpose of the Law? God was revealing to us that we have a sin nature. We fall short in many areas. Although there was much more to the Law than food laws, God used everyday illustrations to show the people how far they were from following Him. In my way of thinking, in regard to dietary laws, it wasn't so much about what food they ate but whether or not they would follow what God said.

When they couldn't follow even everyday laws, which for that time period were crucial to their health and long life, it just magnified the fact that as human beings we fall way short of God's standards even when He spells it out in black and white. So in essence He said, "Eat this and live. Eat that and die."

The Conundrum

Here's where Romans 7:19, the Scripture that brings up the conundrum we all feel, comes into play. "For the good I desire to do, I do not do, but the evil I do not want is what I do. Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who does it, but sin that lives in me. I find then a law that when I desire to do good, evil is present with me."

Now do you remember why sin seemed to increase? It increased because the Law, the rules, revealed people are increasingly sinful. The Law is not wrong. The Law just reveals what the core issue is—sin or the desire to do wrong—that is resident within us.

Diets and The Law

In my life, diets were like the Law. They revealed the deeper core issue inside of me. For me not to be able to follow a diet that told me what I could and couldn't eat just revealed there is something really wrong with me. So many times I would either stop when I failed to follow the rules or I would follow them until I got to goal weight and then abandon them altogether, rewarding myself with all the things the diet was telling me I couldn't have.

It's really the same thing Paul is talking about. I knew the diet was telling me good things to do. I wanted to do what was good, eat the right things and exercise, but in the long run I would give up and fall back to old patterns. I didn't want to eat the wrong things and die early, but still I did it. It was the theme of my life that every time I tried to do the right thing where eating was concerned, I'd do the wrong thing.

I Am Miserable

Romans 7:24-25 says, "O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

How does Jesus free me in my diet conundrum though? The answer used to always evade me.

If a diet is like the Law, it makes it really easy to see because Jesus set me free from the Law, from the rules, from the rebellion I feel inside. I am only free, though, when I totally trust in, rely on and cling to Him and Him alone. Then I am no longer following a set of rules, laws and restrictions. I am following the only One who completely loves me, the only One I can totally believe in.

The New Way

2 Corinthians 5:17 says, "Old things have passed away. Look, all things have become new." The old way of doing things by being captive to a constant diet is gone. The new way of

following Jesus and what He wants for me has invaded my life. Does it include what I eat? Oh, yes, it sure does. It's not out of following a law or even getting a high five from Jesus. It's all out of my love for Him and His for me. It's the way I do life now.

"You won't lead me where You don't go," Amanda Cook sings in "We Dance." If I am following Jesus, He will lead me. That means if He prompts me not to eat sugar, it's because He knows me and what's best for me.

I know what you are thinking. "Are you saying Jesus didn't eat sugar?" I don't know. I just know in order to keep up with where He's going I have to do what I know He's told me to do. For me, that's not eating sugar and flour.

What Is It For You?

I can't answer that for you. However, if you're walking with Him He will show you, if you are listening and if you trust Him.

It's clear then. The question is, do you trust Him to lead you rather than diet rules? If not, then what barrier do you need to ask Him to remove so you can follow Him and be made new, even today? {eo}

Would you like the mentorship of someone who has actually lost weight and is keeping it off? #KickWeight is Teresa's low-cost, six-month coaching program. Right now it is closed as a great group is moving forward on their journey. However the landing page is open and a new group will start possibly as soon as October 2016. Get your name on the list now; just go [here](#). In the meantime, the ongoing group, Sweet Change Weight Loss Coaching Group, is open. Come on in. The water is fine. Join [here](#).

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