

# Does the Holy Spirit Feel Welcomed in Your Temple?

Recently I was asked to speak about the spiritual aspects of weight management and found myself remembering a very difficult season in my life when I was in a pit of unhealthy body issues. The whole topic made me uncomfortable.

It's not easy for me to reflect on that time. However, the truth is, God lifted me out of the slime and demonstrated to me how my flesh, bones, blood, and organs were created in wonder. I am a wonderfully and fearfully made temple of the Holy Spirit.

## **Do You Think of Your Body as a Wonderful Place for the Spirit to Dwell?**

Glancing at new research on this issue, I discovered how 20 million women and 10 million men suffer from a clinically significant eating disorder at sometime in their lives. For many reasons, people struggle with body dissatisfaction. By age six, girls can start to express concern about their bodies. This breaks my heart.

Here's a brief story of how God rescued me.

When I was 21-years-old, a senior in college, I realized I had an issue with eating. From all appearances, I was a successful student, I was in good physical shape (I even taught aerobics), my friendships were strong and I was working to help pay for school. To deal with the stress, I started to restrict myself from certain foods. Something was wrong, though, as I knew I was restricting myself from something deeper.

**What was I truly restricting myself from?**

I remember the day I was in our little apartment standing in the kitchen when I devoured a pan of cinnamon rolls in minutes. It happened before I even knew it. As I looked up from the dark pit, I asked God, "Why did I just do that?" Soon after, I heard, "It's an intimacy issue. Your goal is to enjoy me forever and not fill up on anything else." (Don't think sexual intimacy here – think emotional connection).

It didn't take me long to let my closest women friends in on my struggle. Just telling them, brought both my hands out to the edges of the pit.

### **What was I so hungry for?**

The preacher in Ecclesiastes 2:11 says, "When I surveyed all that my hands had done and what I had toiled to achieve, everything was meaningless . . ." Several verses later he concludes that a woman or a man can do nothing better than "to eat and drink and find satisfaction in his work. This too, I see, is from the hand of God, for without him, who can eat or drink or find enjoyment?" (24-25).

I was hungry for satisfaction and here's what I learned through the years about enjoying God through seeing my body as a wonder of His creation:

- Body care or weight management is a daily craft: a little bit everyday is enough
- Body care is not just physical: Psalm 139 says we were knit together and fearfully made
- Body care is meaningful: it's wise to please God by feeding ourselves with plenty of healthy foods
- Body care is not about being in control but practicing self-control
- Body care is not about conforming but being transformed

How are you encouraging the younger women around you to see their bodies as a wonder of creation? Be sure of this: they are watching you. I'm asking myself this as I spend my hours with three teenage daughters.

Let's share our lessons with one another in transparency and awe of God's creation. Not much in our social media culture encourages us to enjoy God by loving, as opposed to worshiping, the bodies he gave us. Body care and weight management is an art and a skill that can be meaningful as we accept that they are temples of the Holy Spirit—created in wonder for his Spirit of Wonder.

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