

God's Key to Breaking Your Addiction to Food

How do I get rid of this mountain of flesh? That was the question I wrote in my prayer journal in 1977. I was newly married and gaining weight faster than a train gains speed. I knew I had a problem and I wanted God's solution. Or at least I thought I did.

His answer seemed impossible to do. I felt He told me, "Stop eating sugar. Eat more meat, fruits and vegetables. Don't eat so much bread."

I was like the rich young ruler who went away sad when Jesus told Him to sell all his stuff and give it away. I didn't feel I could give up sugar. It was my source for all comfort and emotional control.

When I was single I lived in Virginia and worked for the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board. My life was incredibly busy with work, master's classes, leading a growing young adult group and managing my life on my own.

This was both good and bad. I gained some weight during the two years I was there but it wasn't significant. I didn't have time to eat much. However, once I got married life settled down to just me and my husband.

The 50 young adults I led were 900 miles away. I couldn't find a full-time job. I worried about money and purpose and significance. Isn't life supposed to be about getting married, having a family and living happily ever after?

I loved my husband and we had a great time together. Those first few years, though, were hard for me to figure out who I was as married person. And to be truthful, I turned to food, especially anything with sugar, as the answer to every problem

and difficulty.

It was obvious I had a problem. I knew food had control over me, but we are human and we have to eat. I tried diets, every one I could find. Why isn't there a diet that lets you eat what you have learned to love and still lose weight?

I kept searching for one and in the mean time continued to gain weight. I am a really successful dieter. I can follow a diet for a short period of time and lose an extreme amount of weight. However, after losing weight and going back to the way I always ate, I would gain the weight back. You can read more about this in my memoir, *Sweet Grace: How I Lost 250 Pounds*.

I understood Paul's cry in Romans 7:24. For me it went something like this. "Oh pitiful mess of a woman I am! Who will save me from this constant, unmitigated eating that will certainly lead to my death?"

The next few verses give the answer, but I didn't really understand it at the time. It says that Jesus is the answer. I want to do the right thing but I am a slave to what my body craves. "The life-giving Spirit has freed you from the power of sin that leads to death."¹

This was the answer, but the practical application would take me 30 years to understand.

In 1977, God gave me a game-changing answer for my life. "Stop eating sugar." He knew I had the metabolic makeup to become a sugar addict. He also knew if I would adhere to His advice, I would be free of its pull. If not, I would be a slave to it.

Right at that moment, God gave me a clear choice. I could be a slave to sugar or to Him. I chose sugar.

It wasn't as clear-cut as that to me then. I had no idea that when I stayed away from sugar, I would not crave it. Eating one bite sends me back down the spiral to sugar slavery.

The obesity epidemic is out of control in America. We have too much processed food that is chock-full of sugar and we have become a slave to it.

God wants us set free. However, we have to make the choice. I now live what I call a fasted lifestyle. I don't eat processed sugar. Every time I make that choice, I say to myself, "God, I choose you over that dessert."

The pull for me now is not the taste of a sugary dessert because that overwhelming sweetness is repulsive to me now that I've been solidly on this journey for three years.

The pull is social interaction. I'm realizing that as others eat their cake, I can have a bowl of strawberries and feel more than satisfied. The satisfaction is in the fact that I'm no longer bound to this addiction.

The life-giving Spirit of Christ, His grace propels me on to be more than someone who wallows in the pull of a substance.

My boundaries are firm and I will not be moved. I am self-sufficient in Christ's sufficiency.² His grace is sufficient for me. His power is made perfect in my weakness.³

His Spirit has set me free from my biggest sin temptation.¹ The answer still and always will be Jesus.⁴

What would it take for you to make the commitment to stop eating sugar for the rest of your life?

¹ Romans 8:2

² Philippians 4:13

³ 2 Corinthians 12:9

⁴ Romans 7:25

Teresa Shields Parker is a wife, mother, business owner, speaker and author of *Sweet Grace: How I Lost 250 Pounds and Stopped Trying to Earn God's Favor* and *Sweet Grace Study Guide: Practical Steps to Lose Weight and Overcome Sugar Addiction*. Get a free chapter of her memoir on her blog at [. Connect with her there or on her Facebook page.](#)