

How the True Comforter Can Release You From Your Comfort-Food Addiction

There was a time when I thought the best butterscotch brownies in the world were an out-of-this-world comfort. Then I realized I was becoming addicted to comfort foods, which caused me to gain up to 430 pounds and have a death sentence pronounced over me.

When I began to understand I was a sugar- and comfort-food addict, I also began to see why I was always stuck in the Romans 7:19 conundrum. "For the good I desire to do, I do not do, but the evil I do not want is what I do."

I wanted to stop eating all the things that were making me gain weight, but I didn't do it. I didn't want to gain weight, but I did it anyway.

I learned that my problem was actually threefold: I was broken metabolically, emotionally and spiritually.

Broken Metabolism

My metabolism was that of an addict. I had low beta endorphins, the feel-good hormones, and low serotonin, the hormone that says everything is right with the world. Foods with high sugar and carbohydrates, which we typically call comfort foods, help elevate those hormones in our bodies. Problem solved, right? Wrong.

The effect of those foods on the body wear off after a while, and I need to eat more—hence, the feeling that I can't stop eating the brownies or the sugar cookies.

Having a broken metabolism also means I have unstable blood sugar. When my blood sugar is low, my body asks for more

sugar. When my blood sugar is low, my mind gets foggy or confused, I can't think logically, I get a low-level headache, I feel depleted like I have no energy and I am hungry! At least that's how it affects my body.

When this happens, if a glass of water doesn't do the trick, I eat protein. Focusing on eating protein instead of what I might *desire* to eat instead helps me be intentional. However, I don't wait for hunger to hit, because we all know when hunger hits, we can become ravenous monsters. So I eat small amounts of protein throughout the day to make sure I don't have that blast of hunger. Protein is my go-to source to keep my blood sugar level stable.

Emotionally Broken

I did not learn how to process my emotions as I was growing up. There were many reasons for this, one of them being that my mother was emotionally unstable with high highs and low lows. She was diagnosed at one point with manic depression, similar to what they call bipolar today. She also had anxiety and other issues.

She was confusing emotionally to me. If she had a bad day, she might take it out on me. If she had a good day we'd be dancing in the kitchen. I never knew what kind of mother I'd come home from school to find.

On the flip side was my very even-keel, mild-mannered, godly father, who was the hard worker in the family. I wanted to be like him. He read his Bible all the time, went to church every time the doors were open and prayed a lot.

I should have learned from him that the Holy Spirit is the source of peace and comfort, but I didn't connect the dots. I just knew I wanted my emotions to behave like his.

Eating Away My Emotions

I learned early on that I could manage my emotions, at least for a while, by eating them away. This was way easier than trying to figure out how to deal with them.

I shoved any negative or positive emotions down to the cellar of my life, where I thought I'd buried them. When some situation would trigger them again, I threw more comfort food at them. This ran rampant over my life for way too many years.

Today I understand more clearly that God gave us emotions for a reason. What we eat will affect how we feel, but feeling those emotions and processing through them is the best thing we can do for ourselves and those around us.

Spiritually Broken

All along, God had been telling me to stop eating sugar and breads and eat more meats or proteins, vegetables and fruits. This was exactly what I needed to do, but I was too spiritually broken to listen to Him.

I was a spiritual rebel in this area. I was sure I couldn't do what He wanted me to do. I was always weak around foods made with sugar. I was 100% right about that. I am weak around those foods, but I did not realize I could trade my weakness for God's strength. Paul says so right in the Scripture.

"He said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Cor. 12:9-10, NIV).

It took me a while to trust God and rely on His strength instead of my own weak and shaky foundation. Then I realized that the biggest issue I had was really a spiritual one.

“Oh, what a miserable person I am! Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin and death? Thank God! The answer is in Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom. 7:24-25, NLT).

The Real Comforter

Jesus is the answer, but how do I access His comfort? In John 14:16 Jesus tells His disciples that He is going away, but the Father is going to send them another Comforter.

In the Passion Translation, that same verse says: “And I will ask the Father and He will give you another Savior, the Holy Spirit of Truth, who will be to you a friend just like Me—and He will never leave you. The world won’t receive Him because they can’t see Him or know Him. But you will know Him intimately, because He will make His home in you and will live inside you.”

To be comfortable means we have physical comfort or ease. We are cozy, snug, warm, pleasant and agreeable, but the word also means to have a mental and emotional state of comfort when we are contented, undisturbed and at ease.

Dual Meaning of ‘Comfort’

Notice there is a dual meaning of “comfort.” There is physical comfort, and there is mental and emotional comfort. The comfort the Holy Spirit brings combines these with the state of spiritual comfort.

When Jesus told the disciple He wouldn’t leave them comfortless, He wasn’t talking about food and clothes, though we know when we trust Him He will provide what we need. He was talking about the comfort that comes from knowing we are in right standing with God.

He was talking about that still, small voice of the Holy Spirit inside us telling us, “You are beautiful. You’re My prize. You, My daughter, are enough. Remember I’m right here with you. You are never alone. You need not fear because I am

as close to you as the air you breathe.”

True Comfort

Because the Holy Spirit has chosen to make our bodies the temple where He lives, He will guide us continually if we let Him. He will direct us when we don't have a clue where we are going. His presence is our secret weapon against the world. He is our comfort.

When we choose to use foods to alleviate our stress, anxiety, despair, sadness, anger, frustration, overwhelm, overwork, regret, guilt, shame, depression and even to elevate our moods to be anywhere near happy, we are at best getting a false sense of comfort. We have bypassed the comfort of the Holy Spirit.

He alone is our Comforter, not the foods we crave. Those will be part of our demise if we continue to allow them to control our lives.

The Holy Spirit will be our source of true comfort if we allow Him to. Friends, trust me, we want Him to comfort us. Brownies don't hold a candle to His comfort. It is truly out-of-this-world good. It is exactly what we need. {eoa}

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This article originally appeared at .