

How You Can Abandon Your Cravings and Surrender to the Holy Spirit

What do you crave?

Is it something God doesn't want you to crave? Is it more important to you than God? If you want it just because you want it, you may be living by following your desires and cravings rather than the power of the Holy Spirit.

Galatians 5:16, 18 (TPT) tells us, "As you yield to the dynamic life and power of the Holy Spirit, you will abandon the cravings of your self-life. When your self-life craves the things that offend the Holy Spirit you hinder him from living free within you! And the Holy Spirit's intense cravings hinder your self-life from dominating you! ... But when you yield to the life of the Spirit, you will no longer be living under the law, but soaring above it!"

When we do what we want, we are not following the Holy Spirit. We are allowing our cravings to lead us. The solution, then, is to surrender to the Holy Spirit. It took me a long time to do that and to understand that what I wanted was not the most beneficial for me. In fact, many times the foods I craved mastered me; I became their willing slave just because I wanted them (1 Cor. 6:12).

Caramel Thief

It started early for me. When I was around 5 years old, I noticed that my mother kept a bag of caramels up in the top of the kitchen cabinet. I loved caramels, but they were off limits to me. So when she took a nap in her bedroom, I'd pull a chair up to the counter, climb up and snatch a caramel.

At first I was very careful and only took one at a time. However, I soon wanted more, and I felt that what I wanted, I had to have. This went on for about a year until I went to school and wasn't home during my mother's afternoon naps.

One time in the summer, though, I had to have a caramel. Mom was asleep. I crept up onto the counter, but this time I took the entire bag down because there weren't many caramels in there. I sat in the middle of the floor indulging myself, unaware of anything else in the room. I was in caramel heaven.

That is, until I looked over and saw my mother's shoes in front of me.

"Teresa Kay," my mother said, "what do you think you are doing?"

I looked up and said, "I was hungry."

"Are those your caramels?" she asked.

I shook my head. "No."

"The caramels are mine, and you are never to eat them again without permission," she said. "When you get to be an adult, you can buy your own candy and eat as much as you want. But right now, you aren't to touch these."

She grabbed the bag with the few remaining pieces and took it to her room, where she carefully stashed it so I couldn't find it.

Grandma's Oatmeal Cookies

My desire for sweets didn't go away as I got older and stayed more often with my grandparents on their farm. There, Grandma would often have me help her make a big batch of oatmeal cookies. We'd eat them until they were all gone and then make another batch the next day.

When I grew up, I cooked all the things Grandma had taught me to cook. And I felt that if I wanted and ate something sweet, I was following my mother's advice—I was now an adult and could eat all I wanted. And eat I did.

Danger in Delicious Form

Because of that mindset, I eventually reached 430 pounds. A cardiac surgeon told me I'd have five years to live if I didn't lose at least 100 pounds and keep it off. This time in my life was pivotal because it was the first time I had been told unabashedly that my extreme weight could lead to my death.

He opened my eyes to the dangers of my overindulging in delicious foods and helped me realize that my excuse that I wanted them simply because I loved to eat them was controlling my life. During this time I realized I did want to live for my family and so I could do whatever God wanted to do with my life. I just didn't want to give up the foods I loved. I really thought I couldn't survive without them. Romans 7:19 (NLT) sums up how I felt during this time: "I want to do what is good, but I don't. I don't want to do what is wrong, but I do it anyway."

My story is long and involved, but I want you to understand that one of the main excuses I used to do what God told me to do—to stop eating sugar—is that I wanted it. I loved it. I lived it.

At the end of Romans 7, verses 24-25, Paul asks a pivotal question and then gives us the answer: "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. So you see how it is: In my mind I really want to obey God's law, but because of my sinful nature I am a slave to sin."

Let the Holy Spirit Lead

Jesus is the answer. When we accept Him, we receive the Holy Spirit. He lives within us to lead and guide us, but we have to acknowledge His presence and ask for His help. We must be Spirit-controlled, sensitive to His direction, guidance and leading.

In other words, we have to take the forks out of our mouths. We have to put the food down. He won't do it for us. {eoa}

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