

Is Being a 'Good' Christian Preventing You From Overcoming Your Food Addiction?

" Therefore if anyone is in Christ [that is, grafted in, joined to Him by faith in Him as Savior], *he is* a new creature [reborn and renewed by the Holy Spirit]; the old things [the previous moral and spiritual condition] have passed away. Behold, new things have come [because spiritual awakening brings a new life]" (2 Cor. 5:17, AMP).

Spiritual Awakening

I was made new when I accepted Christ at age 7. Then, I grew up. I had already become a new creation. So I couldn't deny that I knew I wasn't allowing God to bring spiritual awakening into how I was eating.

It was as if what I ate was something I hid away and kept in a locked closet. I decided this part of my life was for me alone. No one else, especially not Jesus, was allowed into my closet.

I allowed Him into every other part of my life, but I would tell myself I needed certain foods to keep me anywhere near sane.

God had offered to make all of me new. He had given me this great gift of being joined to Him, but I kept one part back for myself. It was included in what Jesus offered me, but I rejected it.

The 'Good' Christian

I didn't want to be reborn and renewed in the types of food I

ate. I didn't want that particular "old thing" to pass away. I didn't want to be spiritually awakened in that one area.

The truth is I couldn't see how to be what I considered a "good" Christian without food to comfort me, keep me from blowing my top in anger or screaming in frustration.

When I felt stressed and overwhelmed, how else could I celebrate and pat myself on the back without eating some great dessert Grandma had always fixed for me?

How could I have fun without going out to eat or making a huge dinner with all the trimmings? That meant love, family, fun and relaxation. I didn't know how else to enjoy life other than eating great foods.

I'd Rather Die

I didn't see sugar and high-carbohydrate content foods as my selfish indulgent pleasures. I saw them as a necessary part of life. As a matter of fact, I told myself I would rather die than not eat my favorite foods.

So when I ended up in the hospital weighing 430 pounds, a cardiac surgeon told me I had five years to live if I didn't lose at least 100 pounds and keep them off. I really didn't care if I went to heaven. I just didn't want my children to suffer.

God used that rude cardiac surgeon to get me to see, though, that what I was doing did not just affect me. It affected my entire family. For me to be gone before my children became adults would certainly be selfish. If I could stop them from suffering because their mom wasn't there, I wanted to do that.

Although I'd lost weight many times, the issue was this: I had not been dedicated to a total healthy lifestyle change, so I never kept it off. I went back to eating the way I always had, and I gained the weight back plus more. I knew I had a choice:

change or die. For me, to live meant I had to embrace change.

One of the first changes I had to make was to give up sugar. And to do that, I had to understand why foods made with sugar and flour meant more than life to me.

Forgiving Grandma

My Grandma was my person. To me, she embodied love and comfort. I began to see that the way she did that was to fix all my favorite foods and allow me to eat as much as I wanted, any time I wanted.

Her dessert table was a 24-7 smorgasbord, always open and available at my every whim. Food became my love language, and that overfull feeling, I equated with feeling alive.

I had always wondered why I felt as though I were living in the Romans 7:19 conundrum of “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.”

I had an emotional attachment to food, and to break that meant I was going to have to confront my relationship with the person I had loved most in this world. Although she was already in heaven, I still knew that when I was stressed, frustrated or depressed, baking and eating her oatmeal cookies, banana nut bread or special cakes would make me feel as though I could face the world again.

The Real Comforter

So I forgave her for feeding me the delicious foods that had become addictive to me. I renounced the lie that the Holy Spirit doesn’t know how to comfort me and will comfort me in a way that will harm me.

The moment I did that, I felt love and peace invade my being, like being swaddled in a warm and very secure blanket. I understood for the first time that this is what real comfort feels like. It’s not an overfull feeling, which leads to

harming my body. It is a peace that only the Holy Spirit can bring.

He is Comforter, teacher, guide and director. If I look to Him for these things, I will not live in the struggle of what I should and shouldn't do. I will live in peace. {eoa}

Teresa Shields Parker *is the author of seven books, all available on Amazon. Her latest book, Sweet Hunger: Developing an Appetite for God, is available now, and Sweet Grace: How I Lost 250 Pounds is the No. 1 Christian weight-loss memoir. She is also a writing and weight-loss coach, blogger, speaker, wife and mother. Visit her online at to find her books, coaching programs and free gifts.*

This article originally appeared at .