

# Jesus Is Sweeter Than Sugar

Why didn't I stop eating foods that contained processed sugar when Jesus told me to stop back in 1977? Because I was stubborn and rebellious and wanted to keep at least one pleasure for myself.

"Let me keep sugar, Jesus," I'd say. "It makes me happy." Of course, it also made me super morbidly obese, with a cardiac surgeon declaring I only had five years to live if I didn't lose weight.

However, Romans 14:17 (AMP) clearly states, "The kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking [what one likes], but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." Notice that the kingdom is not about eating and drinking what we like. It's about righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. Nothing else matters but allowing God to lead us.

## Food Wars

This entire chapter of Romans is about the food wars the believers were having. Romans 14:2-3 (MSG) says: "A person who has been around for a while might well be convinced that he can eat anything on the table, while another, with a different background, might assume he should only be a vegetarian and eat accordingly. But since both are guests at Christ's table, wouldn't it be terribly rude if they fell to criticizing what the other ate or didn't eat?"

When Jesus gave me His plan regarding food, I dismissed it and rebelled against what He had told me to do. So for me, eating sugar was a sin, which became a stronghold, which I continued to feed until I weighed 430 pounds. The plan He gave me is not how everyone should eat, but it was how Jesus wanted me to eat in order to get healthy.

When I first gave up sugar and then gave up flour, people

would try to get me to just try a bite of this dessert or that dessert. If I would eat the dessert, then they wouldn't feel bad about eating some themselves. If I didn't eat it, it made them feel guilty for eating the dessert. So they were pushing their desires on me.

## **Good Boundaries**

Jesus gave me good boundaries, which has helped me lose 250 pounds. Today, I don't eat desserts because for me sugar is very much like alcohol would be to an alcoholic. If I take a bite, I'll want more. It's sort of like those in this chapter because not eating desserts is my preference but it's not enough to start a Christian war over!

If I eat sugar though, it would once again begin that unending cycle of continual eating that I was caught in. I was addicted to sugar; it's the same type of cycle that happens with those who are alcoholics and drug addicts.

As a sugar addict, I couldn't stop eating sugar on my own because I was convinced I couldn't live without it. I could give it up for six to nine months by exercising my own self-effort. But I always went back to eating sugar when I was off the diet.

## **I Am Weak**

I wasn't drawing on self-control, which is a fruit of the Spirit. On my own, I'm weak. Self-control began to happen only when I allowed myself to be controlled completely by the Holy Spirit.

In 2 Corinthians 12:9 (MSG), Jesus says, "My grace is enough; it's all you need. My strength comes into its own in your weakness."

Then 2 Corinthians 12:10 (AMP), Paul explains, "For when I am weak [in my human strength], then I am strong [truly able,

truly powerful, truly drawing from God's strength]."

## **Giving Jesus All of Me**

The other day I was a guest on a podcast and was asked, "What changed in order for you to stop eating sugar?" Immediately I was taken back to the time I once and for all surrendered sugar completely to Jesus.

It wasn't a matter of giving up something; it was a matter of realizing I had not given Jesus all of me. I had kept sugar as my cushion in case God didn't come through. I had felt like eating sugar was just part of who I was, like brown eyes and freckles. I couldn't change it.

That's a half truth; I couldn't change it until I gave it to Jesus. I had tried in my own strength, and it never worked. Every time, diets backfired on me because I just started eating sugar again and gained all the weight back I'd lost plus more.

## **Sugar Addict**

Then I heard a man I admired say, "Alcohol is one molecule away from sugar; Alcohol is liquid sugar." That was it; that was my come-to-Jesus moment. I was already a Christian, but that was the moment I realized my dependence on sugar had to go.

At the end of the talk, I asked if someone could be addicted to sugar. At this point, I didn't even know if sugar addiction was a thing. He said, "I don't know about all the physical natures of it, but I know you can be addicted to anything that controls you."

That settled it. I knew sugar controlled me. I was a sugar addict. As I drove home, I pulled off on a country road, sat in my car and cried out to Jesus. I mourned what I had done to my body. I repented of thumbing my nose at Him and not

listening to His statement telling me clearly to stop eating sugar.

## **Surrendering Sugar**

In true heartfelt repentance, I surrendered sugar to Him that evening. I was bent over in anguish for how I had put sugar above Jesus. The tears wouldn't stop coming. I repented until I was empty and spent.

It was my firm commitment to stop eating sugar, but for the first time I was honest with Jesus and told Him, "I am weak around sugar. I've tried many times to stop eating it, and I always go back to it. I need You to lead me to someone who can help me or show me how to do this. I want sugar out of my life for good."

So when I was asked what changed in order for me to stop eating sugar, I realized the difference was my love for Jesus finally became greater than my love for sugar. I didn't have a plan. I just said, "I can't do this myself. Jesus, I need Your help!"

## **Jesus Dependent**

That's all He ever wants from us. Jesus wants us to be dependent on Him, not on ourselves, a diet or religious rules. He wants to show us how to follow Him in all things.

If sugar or certain foods are causing us to sin by allowing them to be more important than God in our lives, we have to let them go. They are inanimate objects. They should have no power over us.

I learned, though, that I couldn't give sugar up all at once; that would just make me want it all the more. I had to do it gradually, replacing a good habit where a bad had been. I did it a step at a time with Jesus at the helm and the help of a mentor. Within about two months, I gave up all sugar.

## Focus on Jesus

It was all about focus, just as Romans 14 says. We have to focus on Jesus, not sugar or any food or drink or drug or desire.

I don't identify my journey as giving up sugar; it is much greater than that. It is a journey of growing closer to Jesus. I will never go back to sugar because I love Jesus too much to make sugar my god again.

Sugar is nothing compared to Jesus. Loving and following Jesus is so much sweeter!

For more on this topic, check out *Sweet Grace for Your Journey* podcast episode 105: *Focus on Jesus, Not Sugar* podcast episode 105: *Sweet Grace for Your Journey* podcast episode 105: *Focus on Jesus, Not Sugar*. Go here. {eo}

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