

Resist the Crave

It was almost 1 a.m. I finally finished my day's work of writing, answering emails and doing bookkeeping and other tasks.

I was tired. I needed to go to bed, but my body said, "Feed me. Feed me something sweet and gooey. I need fuel."

In the past, before losing 250 pounds, I would have given my body what it wanted, no questions asked. It would have been easy to give in because I would have had an array of available gooey sweet things on the very top shelf behind the mixer in my kitchen or under my bed or in my desk drawer or in the top of my closet or hidden in my sock drawer. You know, all the normal places one would go to find such things.

Some would be out for all to see, but the things I craved constantly, the things I wanted to be sure I had on hand for "such a time as this," would be hidden in places only I knew existed.

This hiding we do is a characteristic of an addict, but I didn't think of it that way at the time. I just thought my body needed these things to survive. As a matter of fact, it told me that all the time, and I listened to it.

These days I've learned several things about my body and, well, about myself.

1. I am a triune being—spirit, soul and body. I am not just a body. My body, left to its own devices, will have me going down all sorts of paths that aren't healthy, helpful or advisable, no matter what spiritual inclination I have.

2. My body is only in charge of me if I let it be. Many people allow their body to be in charge. If their body wants sex, they have sex with whomever is available. If their body craves

getting drunk, they party all night and drive home, risking their life and the lives of anyone else who happens to be on the road.

If their body craves sugary sweets, they will consume vast quantities for long periods of time, greatly endangering their lives.

Why? Because their physical desires are in charge.

3. My thoughts govern my soul, but my thoughts are also not reliable. My thoughts and emotions many times argue over what is best for me. For instance, if I want to stop a bad habit of eating sugary foods, my emotions try to talk me out of it, even if I have thoughts that say I want to be healthy.

My emotions want to eat the food that gives my body a short-term high, and so they try to talk me into eating it. My brain is saying no but isn't really solidly against it. So a tug-of-war ensues.

The real problem is that neither my soul, thoughts, emotions or body is in charge. They don't know what is best. I feel exhausted trying to make myself do the right thing.

4. My spirit, connected to God's Spirit, controls me. For me, weight loss is a very spiritual thing. I know God wants my body healthy so I can function and be involved in kingdom work.

Scripture talks about my body being God's temple (1 Cor. 6:19-20). My spirit and His are one (v. 17). Those verses are talking about sexual sin, but I believe it can mean anything that causes my body to be unhealthy in any way.

When I align my spirit with God's, His truth will control my body. His truth will guide my every thought and decision. It starts there, but I still must be aware of what is going on in my body and soul or I will get sidetracked quickly.

God made me and knows what I need. He also knows what I want. Many times what I want is not what I need.

Finding the truth of what I really need is not trial and error. It happens when I connect with the Truthgiver.

5. God's truth is supreme. "You shall know the truth and the truth will set you free" (John 8:32). Only God has the truth. Only God is the truth.

I know that, and yet my body will pull me one way and my thoughts and emotions will verify it. Before I know it, I'm in the kitchen at 1 a.m. looking for something unhealthy to eat.

These days, though, it is really something that won't happen. This is why:

1. There's nothing remotely unhealthy in my house because I've made that decision at a time when I was totally connected with God's truth and strong in spirit.

2. When I ask God what I need, He tells me the truth: "You need a drink of water."

3. My mind has learned to come in line with what my spirit understands through God's Spirit. Thoughts and emotions calm down and come under authority of my spirit.

This is a truth God established in Scripture: I bring my thoughts, reasonings, arguments, emotions and anything else that exalts itself against God captive to the obedience of what I know Christ has already said in my life (2 Cor. 10:5). My spirit aligns with His.

Finally, instead of anything to eat, I get a cold bottle of water out of the refrigerator and go to bed.

My body rests because it has come to understand I finally really am taking care of my needs—body, soul and spirit.

Teresa Shields Parker *is a wife, mother, business owner, life group leader, 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 .*