

When You Feel Powerless Against Food

A Take Back Your Temple (TBYT) reader named Ivy wrote me the following message the other day. I share it with her permission:

Hi Mrs. Kim,

I am very grateful for your website. I know you are led to write under Holy Ghost inspiration. However, if you ever are led, please write a piece on feeling "Hopeless Against Food." This is the strongest addiction because you don't need drugs, alcohol or fornication, but you need food to survive. Quite naturally we will reach for (what) we like, which pulls us out of portion control. As soon as this happens more than once, the pounds lost come back. Thank you for your time."

I empathize with Ivy because she is not alone. At one time, I felt like a hopeless food addict. But God showed me that a change of perspective can change everything.

If you have ever felt hopeless against food or if you feel that way now, then the following letter I wrote to Ivy will shed new light on this situation.

Dear Ivy,

Thank you for writing me. What a challenge to write about feeling "hopeless against food"! The challenge wasn't in coming up with words to write; the challenge was capturing all the Lord was speaking to me about this.

You said you think food is the strongest addiction because you don't need drugs, alcohol or sex to survive. However, you must eat to survive.

You are right in that food can be a strong addiction to

overcome, depending on how certain substances affect your brain. And food is unique in that you must face it several times a day.

But these facts don't override the truth. I'll share what I mean later in this letter.

Let me pause and ask you a question. Do you like feeling hopeless against food? This is a serious consideration.

You see, some emotions become like familiar spirits to us. They are like a comfortable robe we put on. We have wrapped ourselves in this robe for so long that the thought of going forward without it frightens us. We think if we leave that robe behind, we will be left without comfort.

In a way, feeling hopeless gives us permission to settle where we are. We may not be happy, but at least we are in a familiar place.

However, the following words will minister to you if you do not like feeling hopeless and want to know what to do when you feel that way.

Take a moment to pray and ask the Holy Spirit to bring understanding and show you how to apply the following words to your life so you don't have to stay at Hopeless. He is our built-in Comforter!

You can't conquer what you won't confront. So let's confront the hopeless feeling.

Proverbs 23:7 says, "For as he thinks in his heart, so is he." So what are your thoughts before you feel hopeless against food?

You likely think things such as, *There's no use in fighting. This is too hard. I might as well eat it. I've tried before and failed. Food is destined to defeat me forever.*

With thoughts like that, hopelessness comes. What would be the natural action to follow such a feeling?

It is natural to act according to how you feel. You grab whatever food you are feeling hopeless against. It is easy because you can reach out and grab it, right? You could not do that if it were not close to you. You eat it as quickly as possible. Your tongue enjoys the taste, but in this case, the tongue's enjoyment comes at a cost.

Joy and hopelessness cannot live in the same space. So when you settle at Hopeless, then you sacrifice joy.

A Bible story is a good example of people who settled at Hopeless. Numbers 13:26-14:10 tells the story of what happened once God's people arrived at the land of Canaan, which the Lord promised to give them.

Out of 12 men sent out to spy out the land, 10 of them came back with a bad report. In verses 27-29, they listed the obstacles they faced to take possession of the land. Now, nothing is wrong with acknowledging the facts.

In your case, you feel hopeless against food—a fact. The fact is that there are certain foods you currently eat that make it difficult to control your portion sizes. When you eat these foods, you overeat. When you overeat, you gain back the pounds you lost.

But are facts and the truth always the same thing? No. Feeling hopeless (a fact) and being hopeless are different things.

Being hopeless speaks to your identity and is a conclusion. It is what you choose to believe, and it settles a matter in your heart. Scripture says that as a man thinks in his heart, so is he.

The 10 spies looked at the facts and made the following statement their conclusion: "We are not able to go up against

the people because they are stronger than we" (Num. 13:31).

The problem is that the 10 spies left God's word and presence out of their facts. So they drew the wrong conclusion!

In the absence of God's word and presence, people will use facts from what they see with their natural eyes or use the past as substance from which to draw their conclusions, their truth.

When you feel hopeless against food, Ivy, check your thoughts. Are these thoughts based primarily on what you see with your natural eyes or your past? If so, then you are in danger of drawing the wrong conclusion.

You can acknowledge facts, but don't make the same mistake those 10 spies made. Don't leave God's word and presence out of your facts. Remember these truths:

You have Christ in you, who is the hope of glory (Col. 1:27), so you are never without hope.

The Lord will always make a way out of temptation (1 Cor. 10:13).

If you lack wisdom in this area, you can always ask God for it in prayer (James 1:5).

God's strength is always available to you to empower you to do what you know is right (2 Cor. 12:9).

In your message, you said that food addiction is stronger than others. I disagree because all addictions hijack the brain's God-created reward center. So it isn't conducive to healing to have a contest of "my addiction is worse than your addiction." For everyone who suffers from addiction, the bondage is the same and is real.

You make a valid point in that food is needed to survive. The fact is that you have foods that cause an addictive response

in you. These are best handled through avoiding or limiting them because of the harm they cause you.

It is the same as an alcoholic choosing not to keep a well-stocked liquor cabinet in the home, a drug addict getting rid of the secret household stash or a sex addict blocking porn sites from the computer.

These are all wise means to protect addicts from further harm.

Regarding food, it would be terrible if the foods that cause you harm were the only ones you could eat! After all, you would need these foods to survive.

That is not the case though, is it? You have other food choices available to you that enable you to survive—and thrive. If you don't remind yourself that you have other choices, then you will fixate on the foods you have chosen not to have.

I also advise not starting food fights with yourself over foods that trigger your addictive impulses. You do that whenever you keep problematic foods before your eyes. Why waste energy fighting avoidable fights? You won't have time or energy to fight the unavoidable ones.

Whenever you have an unavoidable confrontation with a problematic food, consider it a weight you must lift.

Just like lifting weights in the physical, your resistance to that food will be challenging. Breathe through it. Put on your faith goggles and see past the challenging moment to your victory on the other side. That future victory to come will give you strength in the present.

Hold on to your hope and never let it go. Be like Jacob in Genesis 32:24-29 when he wrestled with an angel of the Lord. Jacob would not let go until he received his blessing.

Ivy, you have already been blessed with all spiritual

blessings in Christ Jesus (Eph. 1:3). But it is up to you to grab hold of them through believing in God's word above what you see with your natural eyes and above what you have experienced in the past.

God wants you to succeed in this area even more than you do! After all, you play a vital role in winning lost people to Christ Jesus. I ask you to memorize the following Scripture and meditate on it today:

"For this reason we do not lose heart: Even though our outward man is perishing, yet our inward man is being renewed day by day. Our light affliction, which lasts but for a moment, works for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal" (2 Cor. 4:16-18). {eoa}

*Once 240 pounds and a size 22, **Kimberly Taylor** can testify of God's healing power to end binge eating. She is an author and the creator of the Christian weight-loss website . Visit today for inspirational health and weight-loss tips.*

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