

When You're Desperate to Lose Weight, Here's How Jesus Can Set You Free

"I need help," the text on my phone read. It was 11:39 on Sunday morning and I was taking notes on the sermon as I always do, but I knew God wouldn't mind that I answered Andrea's urgent plea.

"What's going on?" I replied.

"I need to get healthy," she said. "I cannot do this anymore. Who I am is dying."

Tears came to my eyes. Andrea, who weighed over 300 pounds, was desperate to lose weight, so desperate she'd tried starvation diets, but they were always short-lived. She just wanted to be free of the desire to eat continually.

Desperate to Lose Weight

I totally understood where she was coming from. I've been there too. You may be there now.

You are desperate to lose weight. Like Andrea, you know your very life, or in the least your quality of life, is at stake. You have to lose weight, and you know it.

You have lost weight and gained it back plus more. You can't seem to lose more than a few pounds even though you have 50 or 250 or more to lose.

Taste and See

You know God is the answer, but you can't figure out how to find the key to let Him into your food closet.

You truly want to taste and see that the Lord is good, but you

just can't figure out how that works when all you really want is a big piece of cherry pie with a double scoop of homemade ice cream.

You want so badly to lay down the weight that has so easily entangled you, but you don't want to give up the foods you love more than life.

You want something to happen to make you change overnight without going through what you are sure will be an agonizing process.

Beyond God's Help

I have been where Andrea was and where you are. I have been so trapped in my own body that I didn't even know if the real me was still in there somewhere or not.

I knew God had a purpose and plan for my life, but I had piled on so much weight and had dug such deep ruts of bad habits that I was sure I was beyond help even from God.

At 430 pounds, I felt hopeless. There was no diet that would fix me. No exercise plan that would instantly transform me. Yet, if I didn't lose weight, a cardiac surgeon told me, I would be dead in five years.

Coping Mechanism

Food had become a way to comfort myself at the end of a horrible, no-good, very bad day. Since I worked long hours and came home to housework and children and a husband, it seemed every day was unending.

Of course I had to fix supper, and I would fix the foods that would fill the emptiness inside me: things with high carbohydrate content like pastas, cheesy casseroles, fried meats, potatoes fixed every way I could, gravies and sauces.

If that didn't do the trick, there were always brownies,

cookies, cakes and the endless bag of chips and dip I would keep by my computer when I worked on projects at home. Eating would get me through the day and the night. It would numb any pain, frustration, anger, bitterness, regret, failure or sadness. Or at least I thought it did.

It was my coping mechanism, but it was not working.

Endless Cycle of Bondage

In reality when I numbed my negative emotions with food, I also numbed the positive emotions too. So I ceased to feel happiness, joy, love, peace, hope, mercy, compassion and grace. My life became a huge flat line, devoid of emotion.

I thought that was better than screaming like a crazy lady, but I just ended up feeding my addiction. I simply continued to stuff my feeling of nothingness with more food. Of course, that just made it worse. It became an endless cycle that I willfully put myself in bondage to.

I chose to do that to myself, one bite at a time.

God Sees

God sees what we are doing and knows where it will lead. He doesn't beat us over the head and tell us we are wrong, at least that wasn't my experience. If anyone deserved to be beaten over the head, though, it was me.

When I would get to the end of my rope and ask Him for help, He would tell me exactly what I needed to do, but I didn't like His answer. So, I simply ignored it and did what I wanted anyway.

I didn't like it because I was not ready to fully trust Him with the foods that I was sure I couldn't live without. I didn't trust Him because I had some deep emotional, mental and spiritual issues that needed to be addressed first.

Jesus Set Us Free

Jesus set us free. It's His desire that we are free to follow Him completely, but when we have turmoil inside that we want to get rid of and choose to eat it away instead of dealing with it, we put ourselves back into bondage.

"Let me be clear, the Anointed One has set us free—not partially, but completely and wonderfully free! We must always cherish this truth and stubbornly refuse to go back into the bondage of our past" (Gal. 5:1, TPT).

I needed help to get free of the bondage I had put myself in. That meant going back to understand some issues I didn't want to face. I just wanted to continue to stuff them. But once I faced them with His help, He set me free. As a result, I lost more than 250 pounds.

Whatever your issue is, Jesus will set you free if you let Him show you how. All it takes is a little bit of interior work to clean up years of feelings we don't know what to do with.
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Teresa Shields Parker is the author of five books and two study guides, including her latest, *Sweet Journey to Transformation: Practical Steps to Lose Weight and Live Healthy*, and her No. 1 best-seller, *Sweet Grace: How I Lost 250 Pounds*. She is also a blogger, spiritual weight loss coach (check out her coaching group, *Overcomers Academy*) and speaker at .

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