

Whether You Eat or Drink

✘ *Help and strengthen*

us to glorify You in all that we do, Father. This request, or something like it, is lifted up to the Lord by countless Christians every day. But how many of us take time to consider the sweeping implications of the unassuming, three-letter word, *all*?

I am a 24-year-old personal trainer who grew up hearing the Word, praying with my parents and attending church since Day One. But despite my Christian upbringing, it took me 19 years to learn that exalting Christ's name and glorifying the Father isn't simply restricted to "holy" or "religious" activities such as fasting or volunteering at a homeless shelter. Like Paul said to the carnal Corinthians, we are called to glorify God whether we eat or drink! (see 1).

Today, by God's grace and unending faithfulness, I am healthy, strong and free from oppression and pride-saturated sin. A devastating breakup with my first love at age 17 turned my world upside down. Instead of turning to God for consolation and guidance, I sought to obtain a sense of control through my "healthy" habits.

A year before the

breakup, I had been introduced to the gym. Through the help of a personal trainer, I began to see and feel my body's positive response to a balanced regimen of resistance and cardiovascular training and proper nutrition. I truly fell in love with fitness. But with a broken heart, clouded and confused mind, and crushed spirit, I suppose I thought my body was the only remaining part of me that I could take charge of.

I began to work out obsessively, often going to the gym twice a day. I meticulously counted every calorie that entered my mouth and tried to avoid eating out with friends altogether. When I ate very little at the dinner table, I lied—telling my parents I'd already eaten at school or with the tennis team.

It didn't take long for my weight to drop significantly from a healthy 120 pounds to a frail 98. I looked in the mirror and smiled as a size 0 skirt hung low on my hips. I counted it as an accomplishment the day I could see the ribs beneath my tank tops in the summer.

When friends expressed their heartfelt concern, I told myself they were jealous of my slender figure. My pride in assuming I could strengthen myself and bring myself joy had supplanted God's grace.

I became increasingly isolated from those who loved me most and increasingly defenseless against the enemy's attacks.

I spent a year in denial and insisting upon having countless medical tests in an attempt to diagnose why I was chronically fatigued and experiencing dizziness, heart palpitations and headaches, to name a few. But I finally acknowledged, confessed and repented of my pride—an unequivocal answer to my parents' ceaseless prayers. It was then that God's healing work began to restore my mind, body and soul.

Since that dark season of my life, the Holy Spirit has shown me that the Bible has a great deal to say about how we are to treat these tents of dust. One such Scripture is 1 Corinthians 6:19-20. Paul writes that our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit and that we are not our own; we are the Lord's. "Therefore, glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's" (v. 20). For nearly two years, I had dishonored God by abusing the body He created, the temple He bought at a tremendous price.

Every decision we make—including the one to lace up our tennis shoes and head to the gym—either brings God glory, or it doesn't. Our

food

choices either glorify God, or they don't. For example, if given

the choice between a bacon cheeseburger and a turkey sandwich on

wheat bread for lunch, which one would you choose to keep your temple

tidy, so to speak?

It goes without saying that the latter item is the

healthier choice. Granted, the occasional cheeseburger and slice of

pizza is absolutely fine, and entirely human! What I'm addressing

is a day-to-day lifestyle that either facilitates or thwarts our

Christian walk.

I

believe the body of Christ should be among the healthiest people in

the world. After all, with the power of Christ living within us and

His Spirit spurring and strengthening us to run our race for Him, our

bodies can most certainly prosper just as our souls are! (see 3 John

1:2).

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