

When You Can't Say No, Here's Where Your Real Strength Resides

Before starting my time with God that morning in 1977, I decided God wouldn't mind if I finished off the cinnamon rolls staring me in the face. I grabbed the rolls and started reading in Matthew 17.

Then God's flashlight illuminated words that went straight to my heart.

Jesus replied, "Because you have so little faith. Truly I tell you, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you" (Matt. 17:20, NIV).

I Have a Little Faith

I said, "God, I have a little bit of faith. I also have a mountain of flesh on my body. How can this mountain be moved?"

To put things in perspective, it was 1977 and I weighed over 200 for the first time in my life. I was headed toward 250 and I didn't like it. Still, I loved cinnamon rolls, cookies, cakes, rich casseroles, hot rolls, chips and so much more.

Jesus didn't answer my question in an audible voice but in the sense of knowing deep in my soul. I know the answer was straight from Him because it is not an answer I expected, had ever heard anywhere before or had ever thought about.

Stop Eating Sugar

He said, "Stop eating sugar. Eat more meats, fruits and vegetables. Stop eating so much bread."

I said, "Nice plan, Jesus. If I could do that, I could lose weight but I can't do that."

I didn't ask Him if He could help me with this plan. I didn't tell Him I'd think about it. I didn't decide if He was telling me to do this, He must have a reason. I simply said, "I don't need Your advice, after all, Jesus."

I didn't want to give up sugar. I knew the Bible well enough to know as a Christian I am free to do whatever I want and if I want to eat sugar, then I'm going to eat sugar. Nowhere in the Bible does it say, "Thou shalt not eat sugar."

The Sugar Conundrum

The conundrum I found myself in, though, was I wanted to lose weight and I knew overeating foods containing processed sugar was one of my biggest problems. Still, I didn't want to give up those foods completely. They were too intertwined with who I was.

For the next 30 years, I tried to lose weight by finding diets that curtailed sugar and most breads and focused on protein, meat, vegetables and fruits. On those diets, I could lose weight but I never learned anything about how to change my habits.

I'd stay on the diet until I got to a goal. Then I'd celebrate by baking one of Grandma's delicious oatmeal cakes and eating as much of it as I wanted. That always resulted in me gaining the weight back plus more.

Jesus, You're Mean to Me!

The plan Jesus gave me felt like He was being mean to me. Why could I not eat sugar? Others could eat it and not gain an ounce. Life was not fair.

He made Himself clear and plain to me on that day; it's a day I will never forget. It's the day He gave me a lifestyle

change plan designed especially for me, but I thumbed my nose at Him and walked away. Even by this time, eating sugar had become more important to me than following Him. I had no clue I would become more than twice the size I was then before I finally implemented His plan.

If I'd been in my right mind and thought about it logically, I would understand eating sugar was not good for me. I was gaining weight, taxing my body and setting myself up to develop diabetes, high blood pressure and many other diseases

I was denying the Holy Spirit access to all of me. I was blinded by a lie I had allowed to grow into a stronghold. I had certainly fed it often enough.

Is Overeating a Sin?

When I asked Jesus how to move my mountain of weight, it wasn't because I was convinced it was a sin. It was because I saw my weight as an inconvenience. Plus, I wanted to look better. My reasons for losing weight were purely selfish, as were my reasons for eating whatever I wanted whenever I wanted it.

I'm surprised Jesus even answered such a selfish prayer. He answered, though, because He had a vested interest in what I was doing to myself. He gave me the right answer; I just didn't realize the depth of the question I had asked.

If I had known then what would eventually happen to me, all the difficulties, missed opportunities, pain and disease I had opened the door to, maybe I would have listened to Him. Sometimes, though, the best lessons are learned through experiencing our failures and brokenness.

To get through this, I was going to have to admit my weakness and rely on real strength, the strength that only comes from God. I was going to have to stand on and understand that when I am weak in human strength, only then am I strong, truly

powerful, truly drawing from God's strength, as it says in 2 Corinthians 12:10 (AMP). {eo}

Teresa Shields Parker is the author of six books and two study guides, including her No. 1 bestseller, *Sweet Grace: How I Lost 250 Pounds*. Her sixth book, *Sweet Surrender: Breaking Strongholds*, is live on Amazon. She blogs at . She is also a Christian weight-loss coach (check out her coaching group at Overcomers Academy) and speaker. Don't miss her podcast, *Sweet Grace for Your Journey*, available on CPN. This article first appeared on .

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