

Why Do I Eat?

"But he said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me." ~2 Corinthians 12:9-10

Biblical Application?

God's Word teaches that when we are weak, He is strong! He loves us in our shortcomings and strengthens us with His power and strength in our time of need.

Isaiah 40:29 says "He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak."

This is true in every single area of our lives, whether in our finances, physical health, emotional stability, profession, etc. God is faithful to equip us with the stamina needed to overcome each trial, temptation, or stressor that comes our way.

Deuteronomy 31:6 reads, "Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the Lord your God goes with you; He will never leave you nor forsake you."

God is our source of unfailing love, real joy, peace that surpasses all understanding, and comfort. He is the good Shepherd who cares for us always no matter what the circumstances may be.

Why?

It is no secret that God created humans to need consistent fuel, which, of course, comes from the wonderful variety of food God created for us to eat each day. God created the perfect foods that contain all the good nutrition we need to promote good health (see Genesis 1:29). God even cared so much that He gave us taste buds to enjoy all of the tasty foods He had made! Wow, what care He has for us!

Sadly, many are using food for reasons other than fuel. Sometimes we find ourselves eating, not because we are hungry, but because we feel sad, lonely, anxious, angry, scared, happy, out of control, or other emotional reasons. This happens to everyone occasionally, but when it happens too often it can become a real problem and affect our health negatively.

The desire or commitment to eat better is the first step to living a healthier lifestyle, but not really knowing *why* you eat can cause a struggle on the journey. The simplest rule is to be aware of why you are eating, and if it is not hunger then commit to getting to the bottom of those feelings.

Food is for fuel and nutrition, not to fill our emotional longings or quench our spiritual needs.

What?

Do you ever find yourself eating for comfort? What about scanning the pantry because you are bored? Consider your eating patterns in the last few days. Can you remember any situations when you turned to food because you desired

- Reward
- Joy
- Comfort
- Control
- Distraction
- Peace
- Love
- Care

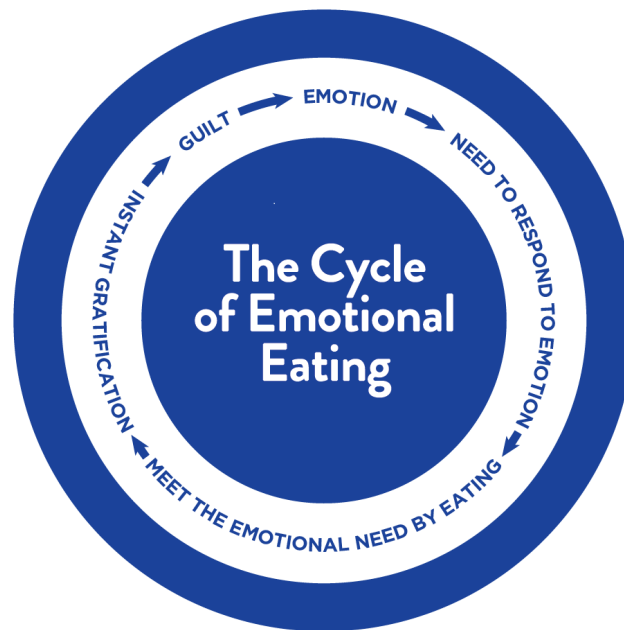
When we habitually go to food to fulfill these needs we neglect to go to God to fulfill these needs.

What if we got in the habit of first thinking about our physical hunger level and our emotional state, then praying about our needs and choices, and *then* eat if we need food for fuel. But if we determine it is not the food we need but it is actually the emotional fulfillment we crave, then we seek God for how to best meet that specific need. After all, God is true love, joy, peace, comforter, care giver, and our reward!

How?

Emotions can become challenging when our response to an emotion moves us away from the healthy choices we want to make. At certain times, our emotions (good or bad) can be shaped by external circumstances and by those around us.

Unlike the defining life moments, daily things like stress, anger, worry, depression, tiredness, lack of sleep, and sometimes even happiness, can cause a response to eating in place of dealing with the negative emotion or enjoying the positive emotion. Let's face it, you typically don't crave a salad or broccoli during a stressful situation. More commonly, you might crave chocolate or coffee! Cravings are often a response to highly emotional situations. If something can provide instant gratification, boost your mood or energy level - it meets a need - even though it is temporary. This is commonly referred to as *Emotional Eating*. The cycle of emotional eating is something we have all experienced. It is so common in society, as food is offered to us for every emotion, event, and social gathering that we have practically.



The good news is you can make strides toward better choices, by identifying the triggers and implementing practical strategies for yourself. Here are some ideas to get you started:

- Pray in the moment
- Use a hunger scale to determine your true hunger level
- Journal about your feelings
- Set a timer for 10 minutes to pray, wait, and make a rational plan
- Read the Bible
- Put on worship music
- Know what you love and spend time doing those things regularly
- Cherish relationships
- Eat only when hungry
- Schedule quiet time daily
- Get adequate sleep each night
- Have healthy food choices in the house
- Grocery shop with a purpose and a meal plan
- Seek counsel from a trusted friend, pastor, or professional counselor