Food Fixation

We all share one common characteristic: When we find something we especially like, we simply want more! But if our common desire becomes a compulsive demand—if our natural drive to eat becomes a notorious slave driver—then we are out of control...

"People are slaves to whatever has mastered them."
(2 Peter 2:19)

Definitions

• **Overeating** means excessive eating.
  — Overeating often results in obesity, a condition characterized by body fat 20% or more above recommended body weight.

• **Compulsive eating** is a seemingly irresistible impulse to eat.
  — Compulsive eating is uncontrolled overeating based on satisfying emotional hunger, not physical hunger.

• **Bingeing** is a period of unrestrained indulgence and most often refers to binge eating and drinking, but can also refer to binge shopping and gambling.
  — Binge eating can easily become an addictive behavior.

• **Night Eating Disorder** (Night Eating Syndrome) is a condition characterized by huge caloric intake during the after-dinner hours.
  — Night Eating Syndrome often involves insomnia because feelings of guilt, anxiety, and disgust can also hinder sleep.

• **Bulimia** comes from a Greek word meaning “great hunger.”
  — Bulimia is a psychological eating disorder characterized by repeated or sporadic “binge and purge” episodes.

  "A discerning son heeds instruction, but a companion of gluttons disgraces his father."
  (Proverbs 28:7)
How to Think “Healthy”

• **Think** of yourself as the person God created you to be. (2 Peter 1:4)

• **Have** the correct motive for losing weight. (2 Corinthians 5:9)

• **Identify** the real reasons you overeat. (Psalm 139:23)

• **Make** a personal commitment to obey God. (1 John 3:24)

• **Know** how to listen to the Lord. (Psalm 32:8)

• **Develop** an exercise plan that will increase your metabolism. Vary the plan. (Proverbs 15:32)

• **Eat** only when you are hungry and only foods you should eat. (Romans 14:20)

• **Allow** for flexibility and include some pleasure foods in your diet. (Psalm 37:4)

• **Let** the Holy Spirit direct your plans and provide needed self-control. (John 14:26)

• **Turn** your focus to the healthy foods you need to eat. (Proverbs 21:29)

• **Have** a thankful heart. (Philippians 1:6)

  “We are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.” (Ephesians 2:10)

Key Verse to Memorize

“Whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.” (1 Corinthians 10:31)

Key Passage to Read

Daniel 1:8–21

Dos and Don’ts of Wise Weight Loss

• **Don’t** say, “I am dieting.”
  **Do** say ... “I’m eating healthy foods.”

• **Don’t** start a new eating plan during a crisis, illness, holiday, or high-stress situation.
  **Do** ... Consult a doctor before beginning any new eating plan.

• **Don’t** adopt a plan just because it worked for someone else.
  **Do** ... Adopt a personalized plan that will work for your individual lifestyle.

• **Don’t** fail to set goals.
  **Do** ... Set realistic, short-term, incremental goals.

• **Don’t** weigh yourself every day.
  **Do** ... Record your weight once a week.

• **Don’t** keep unhealthy food around you.
  **Do** ... Keep healthy food prepared for snacks.

• **Don’t** shop for groceries on impulse or when you are hungry.
  **Do** ... Shop with a prepared list.

• **Don’t** buy packaged food without reading the labels.
  **Do** ... Notice the first ingredients listed; these have the highest percentage in the food.

• **Don’t** eat fast!
  **Do** ... Chew slowly. It takes 20 minutes for your brain to register that you are full.

• **Don’t** keep your new plan a secret.
  **Do** ... Share with your friends and ask for their support.

• **Don’t** get caught off guard by temptation.
  **Do** ... Have an alternate plan (call a friend, memorize Scripture, take a walk, enjoy a hobby).

• **Don’t** reward yourself with food.
  **Do** ... Focus on the rewards of self-control and a new, healthy lifestyle.

Plans for the Road

• Avoid ordering “junk food,” which is high in fat and low in nutrition.

• Don’t eat at restaurants without planning ahead.

• Eat at restaurants that offer a variety of healthy foods.

• Keep a small cooler in your car with healthy snacks.

• Predetermine the best foods to order when eating out (fish, turkey, chicken, spinach, broccoli, asparagus, etc.).

• Take healthy foods with you when you are away from home (fruit, nuts, white cheese).

  “Commit to the **LORD** whatever you do, and he will establish your plans.” (Proverbs 16:3)

My Daily Choices for Change

• I choose to give control of my life to the Lord Jesus Christ.

• I choose to change my eating through the power of Christ within me.

• I choose to live to please God, not to please my appetite.

• I choose to make wise choices when tempted to eat unwisely.
• I choose to make right choices when tempted to eat excessively.
• I choose to glorify God with how I treat my body.
• I choose to focus not on food but on faithfulness to the Lord in my life.
• I choose to let God be my God—not to let food be my god.

“My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.”
(Psalms 73:26)

Questions and Answers

“Can overeating be considered a sin?”

Yes, overeating is a pattern of yielding to fleshly desires instead of yielding to God. Those who habitually eat to excess are controlled by their natural appetites rather than controlled by the Spirit of God. The Bible contrasts the wise man with the foolish man.

“The wise store up choice food and olive oil, but fools gulp theirs down.”
(Proverbs 21:20)

“Spiritually, is there a difference between a food addiction and other addictions, such as smoking, gambling, or drinking?”

No, the Bible places them in the same category, although the physical ramifications can be more serious with certain addictions. The biblical book on wisdom states ...

“Do not join those who drink too much wine or gorge themselves on meat, for drunkards and gluttons become poor, and drowsiness clothes them in rage.”
(Proverbs 23:20–21)

“Should I eat only once or twice a day in order to lose weight?”

No! You can optimize your body’s fat burning ability by eating five times each day: breakfast, morning snack, lunch, afternoon snack, and dinner. Keep portion sizes no larger than your fist. Remember, caloric intake for women will be slightly lower than for men because women have a naturally slower metabolism.

“Those who disregard discipline despise themselves, but the one who heeds correction gains understanding.”
(Proverbs 15:32)