

## Eliminating Excessive Behavior

I had lived with the problem all my adult life. There seemed to be very little I could do about it. Previous efforts had been short-lived. I was hooked and it had the potential to take a toll on my health.

The problem was I liked to snack between meals. I spend a fair amount of time at my computer. When I sat down at the keyboard out came the pretzels, crackers, M&M's and other snack food. A mid-afternoon soft drink refreshed me. A bowl of ice cream in the evening topped off my day. And if I missed a meal I made up for it (and more) by snacking more heavily. I enjoyed the feeling of a full stomach. Even though I was fairly active the bathroom scale inched up another pound or two each year. I needed to make a change.

Then, along came a positive example in my life. Several friends of mine lost a significant amount of weight, and looked fantastic. Their example motivated me that a change was possible. For the umpteenth time in my life I set a weight loss goal, but more than that, I vowed to cut out the impulsive, excessive behavior. My plan was to eliminate all between meal snacks and to make exercise part of my daily routine. I wanted to burn more calories than I consumed. Not particularly scientific, but the math seemed to make sense.



The results in the first six weeks have been encouraging. I weigh the lowest today that I have in the past 20 years and every few days I drop a little more. People are beginning to make unsolicited comments about my appearance.

The change hasn't been without discomfort. Changing old habits is difficult, or we would all be our ideal weight. I get hungry an hour or two before each meal. This is when I would previously have raided the kitchen; armed with the excuse I needed something to hold me over. In my new routine I head for the kitchen, but this time for a tall glass of ice water. My indulgence is a heaping serving of ice to go with the water. I view the initial feeling of hunger to be my body telling me I am burning more calories than I have consumed. It is working. The continued awareness of thinking I am hungry is Satan at work. Satan is losing that battle. My body is a Holy Temple and a gift from God. Satan wants to destroy it. Satan starts planting excuses and justifications in my head, hoping I will give in. Here is when I need to be strong in the faith, to fight off temptations.

What change do you need to make in your life? What vices and excesses do you have that may threaten your health, your marriage, the ability to be effective in your job or a good father? If you decide to eliminate that obsession, how will you handle the times when you are tempted to backslide and go back to your old, unhealthy habits? What is your motivation to succeed? What is your defense against Satan? Do you want a longer life, to be there for your grandchildren and your spouse? Will you better be able to support your family with a better lifestyle?

Making a change in life-long habits is difficult. There will be some pain and you will be tempted to give in. The old adage, "no pain, no gain" fits here. Maintaining the status quo is really a continuation of the destructive path you have been on for a while. God provides the support you need to make your life right, but embarking on that course has to be your decision. Don't go it alone. Find someone in your life that really cares about you, and will hold you

accountable to your goals. Listen to them. Hopefully it is a person who knows when to encourage and when to push you in this new pursuit. Satan is on the other side, baiting you to give up. Not only can you have a positive role model to emulate and an accountability partner, but Jesus Christ is the example of the perfect life. Be resolved in your effort to make positive changes in your life. When you are tempted, fix your eyes on Jesus. Together, you can do this.

**Question:** What positive change do you want to make in your life?

**Scripture:** *Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies. (1 Corinthians 6:19-20).*

**Prayer:** Dear Lord. Our tendency is to do things excessively, creating a disruptive path for our lives. Give us the strength to withstand and overcome the temptations that threaten to take us away from the right path. Place in our lives people who care about us and will stand beside us as we strive to be a better person. Amen.

