

# OVEREATING

Freedom from Food Fixation



**June Hunt**



**HOPE**  
for the Heart

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Freedom from Food Fixation

JUNE HUNT





Overeating: Freedom from Food Fixation  
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Dear Friend,

Have you heard about the new “Heavenly Diet”? *Eat everything you want—then pray for a miracle!* Of course, most people are more familiar with the old “Seafood Diet.” *Whatever food you see—you eat!*

While many things are in short supply, the multitude of wisecracks about overeating is not one of them. We read them on refrigerators, see them on funny cards, receive them in emails, and hear them on television.

Some sayings are couched as simple suggestions: “The best way to look thin is to hang around fat people.” *Ouch!* Others just tell the truth in a clever way: “Thin may be in, but fat’s where it’s at!” For years, my favorite saying could always be found on a kitchen magnet—a reminder each time I opened the refrigerator door: “He who eats in secret cannot hide it openly.”

Without a doubt, these kinds of wordplay always evoke a wide array of smiles and snickers. However, for those in the midst of “The Battle of the Bulge,” the real fight isn’t funny—it’s war!

And for me, it really was and is war, which means I must have my own personal battle plan. For starters, the way I eat today is not how I was raised, with fried chicken, mashed potatoes and gravy every Sunday. Yet today, I only rarely eat fried foods or potatoes.

Likewise, I don't buy Cheetos (which I absolutely adore), or candy bars, or cookies. Any combination of nuts and sweets is my Waterloo. However, my focus is not to diet, but rather to eat healthily as a way of life. Therefore, my strategic battle plan doesn't dwell on what I shouldn't eat, rather on what I should eat, such as high protein and low carbs—to keep my hunger in check.

I need to add that I sincerely don't feel deprived of fried foods and the like. I've adapted my lifestyle to my strategic plan so I don't miss most of my old favorites.

Meanwhile, it's not the end of the world if I deviate from this strategic plan occasionally, with a handful of peanut M&Ms! Ultimately, by giving Christ total control of my life, I'm no longer controlled by a food fixation.


In a grotesque kind of way, Philippians 3:19 refers to those whose “god is their stomach.” Well candidly, I don't want to be out of control—yet at times, I have been. And, I don't want god to be my stomach—yet at times, it has been. That's why I had to “go to war.” My fixation on food had become more than a physical issue (to meet physical needs) or an emotional issue of love hunger. It had also become a spiritual issue—actually, a spiritual defeat.

If you understand this struggle firsthand, then in this book, you will find an abundance of biblical hope and practical help so that you will become “more than a conqueror.” My prayer is that the

truths within these pages will encourage you to live a satisfying, healthy life with wisdom to help you fulfill the design for which you were uniquely created. From tips for eating on-the-go, to healthy ways of thinking about yourself and food, here is a road map for achieving victory—spiritually, physically, and emotionally.

The Lord has used the years I've spent struggling to keep my weight in check (a vigilant pursuit that continues to this day) to develop a deep compassion for other strugglers. During this time, he has also deepened my appreciation for this Scripture: "*His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life*" (2 Peter 1:3). That, my friend, is my personal prayer, and my prayer for you too, as you pursue God's very best for your life.

Yours in the Lord's hope,



June Hunt



# OVEREATING

## Freedom from Food Fixation

Television commercials can be tantalizing, and at the same time, reflect what we wish wasn't true. One long-running ad featured a bag of potato chips with the tag line, "Bet you can't eat just one!"

This fascinating commercial featured different people who, after tasting one chip, were prevented from having another. Oh, oh, oh, the agony! First they would fidget and sweat, then leap over obstacles, tackling grocers to get to the chips. Finally, when they got their hands on those tasty tidbits. Oh, the ecstasy of finishing off the whole bag!

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.

The fact that our God-given appetite can turn into an all-consuming fixation is an example of this principle ...

**" ... 'people are slaves to whatever has mastered them.'"  
(2 Peter 2:19)**



## DEFINITIONS

The potato chip commercials were memorable for the clever way they showed people losing self-control—specifically, losing all sense of portion size. They always ate the whole bag!

For those caught in the cycle of compulsive eating, the craving is for quantity, not quality. Consider ice cream: If one scoop is good, two would be better. If two are better, three are best! (Or why not the whole carton?)

This same compulsive mind-set applies to cake and candy, doughnuts and drumsticks, bacon, biscuits, and brownies—in spite of this common sense caution ...

**“It is not good to eat too much honey.”  
(Proverbs 25:27)**

## WHAT IS Overeating?

It all began in the 1980s. The collective waistline of people throughout the world began to spread at an unprecedented pace. Literally millions of people packed on millions of extra pounds because of food saturated in fat, sugar, and salt, driving folks to eat more fat, sugar, and salt. Increasingly, country after country became inundated with compulsive overeaters.

Apart from poor food choices, other factors contributed to this worldwide weight gain, including the exploding availability of fast food, larger menu portions, and eating on the go rather than eating slowly around the dining table.<sup>1</sup>

No wonder weight gain is out of control. We are controlled by the fruit of overeating instead of the “fruit of the Spirit.”

The Bible explains it this way ...

**“The fruit of the Spirit is ... self-control.”**  
**(Galatians 5:22–23)**

- ▶ **Overeating** means excessive eating.<sup>2</sup>
- ▶ **Overeating** often results in obesity, a condition characterized by body fat 20% or more above recommended body weight.<sup>3</sup>
- ▶ **Overeating** in Scripture is described by the word *gluttony*, which means consuming excess food to the point of losing control.

The Bible states ...

**“A discerning son heeds instruction, but a companion of gluttons disgraces his father.”  
(Proverbs 28:7)**

## **Overeating and Sin**

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**QUESTION:** “Can overeating be considered a sin?”

**ANSWER:** 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)**

## WHAT IS Compulsive Eating?

The fanaticism for fatty foods in the 1980s didn't just tip the scales—it set new world records. Manuel Uribe went on a saturated fat and sugar spree and earned a title that landed him in the *Guinness Book of World Records* as the “World’s Fattest Man.”<sup>4</sup> At 1,230 pounds, Manuel was the embodiment of compulsive eating—a man completely out of control.

Compulsive eating triggered another catastrophic consequence for Manuel. He turned to liposuction to improve his appearance, but his damaged lymph nodes left giant tumors on his legs—so weighty that he couldn't walk. Manuel readily pointed to one source for his sorrows: “It is all because of the junk food.”<sup>5</sup>

Eventually Manuel became determined to no longer be the world's heaviest man. With serious dietary changes, he dropped his weight to around 700 pounds and then set his sights on a new title: “World's Greatest Loser of Weight.” What a change of focus!

Those like Manuel who need powerful help to control their compulsive eating can find invaluable strength from our powerful God ...

**“He gives strength to the weary and  
increases the power of the weak.”  
(Isaiah 40:29)**

- ▶ **Compulsive eating** is uncontrolled overeating based on satisfying emotional hunger, not physical hunger.
- ▶ **Compulsive eating** is a seemingly irresistible impulse to eat.<sup>6</sup>
- ▶ **Compulsive eating** is a food addiction that can result in a physical disorder and even death.

**“For lack of discipline they will die,  
led astray by their own great folly.”  
(Proverbs 5:23)**

## **Overeating and Addictions**

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

**ANSWER:** 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 rags.”  
(Proverbs 23:20–21)**

## WHAT IS Binge Eating?

“It’s like having a pair of arms around you.”<sup>7</sup> That’s how Diana, Princess of Wales, described the comfort she felt after consuming large amounts of food. Before dying in a car crash in 1997, Princess Diana struggled for years with bulimia and knew all too well how those “comforting arms” could quickly turn constrictive and smothering.

Although she was considered the most popular woman in the world, it was not unusual for Princess Diana to binge up to five times a day, gorging herself with food and then purging. While this futile cycle consumed her life, her lack of self-control turned to self-loathing.

At times, she surely could have identified with Job ...

**“I despise my life; I would not live forever.  
Let me alone; my days have no meaning.”  
(Job 7:16)**

- ▶ **“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.<sup>8</sup>
- ▶ **Binge eating** can easily become an addictive behavior.
  - Binge eaters who don’t purge typically experience great weight gain.

- Binge eaters who do purge through vomiting or excessive laxative use are “bulimics” who often experience severe health hazards, including death.
- ▶ **Bingeing** in the Bible comes with a warning against overindulgence: *“If you find honey, eat just enough—too much of it, and you will vomit”* (Proverbs 25:16).

Oh, that Princess Diana would have turned to the Lord’s “*everlasting arms*,” which would have forever embraced her in unconditional love as described in the Bible ...

**“The eternal God is your refuge,  
and underneath are the everlasting arms.”  
(Deuteronomy 33:27)**

## **Night Eating Disorder**

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The clock strikes 8:00 p.m. and the feeding frenzy begins. Multitudes of people around the globe, including six million Americans, struggle with Night Eating Disorder. Strugglers find themselves agitated, restless, and bored. Before they know it, they’ve consumed massive amounts of high-carb, high-calorie “comfort food.” And for many, when the clock strikes midnight, they’re back at it again—raiding the refrigerator into the wee hours of the morning, craving comfort food to fill the hole in their hearts. At times we all need comfort, but when no one is near to provide comfort, we can look to food to be that friend.