

Biblical Eating **By Doug Hamilton**

Lesson One: Understanding the Problem

The first thing to understand is that you are not a loser because of a weight problem. We all have our struggles of life, but it is what we do in the struggles that determine success. Some souls struggle with lust, some anger, some coveting, some addiction and some dishonesty. We are human and along with this fact come many weaknesses that must be addressed in our everyday life. Gluttony is no difference. Temptations of all sorts are common and we should never think we are alone in our struggles. Paul confirms this in *1 Cor 10:13 No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, that you may be able to endure it.* The good news concerning temptation is that God is faithful to help us overcome, if only we yield to Him through His holy word. It is through the word that all temptation is understood and mastered.

Gluttony is defined in the dictionary as “*habitual eating to excess.*” I am persuaded that gluttony is the most overlooked sin our nation that we are struggling with today, but we are paying the price in many ways. Some of the statistics concerning overeating are as follows.

- 31%, or about 59 million Americans are obese, which is defined as roughly 30 or more pounds over a healthy weight.
- 65%, or about 124 million Americans are either obese or overweight, 10 to 30 pounds over a healthy weight.
- According to the US Surgeon General, an estimated 300,000 US deaths per year may be attributable to obesity.
- Individuals who are obese have a 50 to 100% increased risk of premature death from all causes, compared to individuals with a healthy weight.
- The incidence of heart disease is increased in persons who are overweight.
- Hypertension (raised blood pressure) is twice as common in adults who are obese than in those of healthy weight.
- Obesity is associated with raised fat levels in the blood and decreased HDL cholesterol ("good cholesterol").
- Over 80% of people with diabetes are overweight or obese.
- Overweight and obesity are linked with an increased risk for some types of cancer including colon, gall bladder, prostate, and postmenopausal breast cancer.
- Women gaining more than 20 pounds from age 18 to midlife double their risk of postmenopausal breast cancer, compared to women whose weight remains stable.
- For every 2-pound increase in weight, the risk of arthritis increases by 9-13 percent.
- Obesity during pregnancy is associated with increased risk of death in both the baby and the mother and increases the risk of maternal high blood pressure by 10 times.
- Infants born to women who are obese during pregnancy are more likely to be high birth weight and, therefore, may face a higher rate of Cesarean section delivery and low blood sugar (which can be associated with brain damage and seizures).

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- Obesity during pregnancy is associated with an increased risk of birth defects, particularly neural tube defects, such as spina bifida.
- Sleep apnea (interrupted breathing while sleeping) is more common in obese persons.
- Obesity is associated with a higher prevalence of asthma.
- Overweight and obesity are associated with increased risks of gall bladder disease, incontinence, increased surgical risk, and depression.
- Risk factors for heart disease, such as high cholesterol and high blood pressure, occur with increased frequency in overweight children and adolescents compared to those with a healthy weight.
- Type 2 diabetes, previously considered an adult disease, has increased dramatically in children and adolescents.
- Overweight and obesity are closely linked to type 2 diabetes.
- Overweight adolescents have a 70% chance of becoming overweight or obese adults. This increases to 80% if one or more parent is overweight or obese.

We are killing ourselves with obesity and it is growing worse year by year. It is estimated that by 2010, nearly 75% of all Americans will be overweight or obese. The above figures do not consider the damage to self-esteem and the added emotional stress that accompanies the obese person.

What is causing all this obesity? Some research indicates that it is decrease in activity during our everyday lives. Others say that the food is not as healthy for us today as it was in the past. Many say it is a combination of both. There is even a push to try and figure out if there is something genetic that may be causing this outbreak of plumpness. I am persuaded that this is so because of two simple facts. 1) We are eating too soon. 2) We are eating too much.

Controlling the Food Rather than Ourselves

How does the average person try to deal with gluttony? Instead of learning self-discipline, we start down the path of controlling the food or trying to undo the gluttony through increased burning of calories. Another common attempt meant to correct the problem is through massive consumption of vitamins or measured doses of soy based substances that come in multiple flavors. Many times these struggles result in depression, increased weight gain and conditions such as bulimia and anorexia. Most people who have a weight problem will spend most of their life jumping from one diet to the other and never really tasting any long-term success. Millions of people are hitting the gyms, wearing out their muscles and joints, simply trying to empty a tank that has overflowed onto their hips. The problem is not with the food, the exercise or medicines, but the type of hunger being pursued in life. This is not a program of exercise or dieting, but discipline.

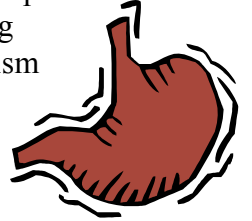
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Two Types of Hunger

There are two types of hunger that we experience, head hunger and stomach hunger. The first type, **Head hunger**, is that which fuels the sin of gluttony, for it is not driven by God-designed mechanisms, but through man-designed lusts. This type of hunger is determined between the ears, nose and eyes out of want rather than need.

The second type, **Stomach hunger**, is obedience to God through His design of the human body. Stomach hunger is the waiting and listening for the natural gauge that God has put in all our bodies called hunger pangs. This type of hunger is a very natural, growling sensation that results when stomach acids have nothing to process. It is the mechanism that God gave to all men to indicate a need for refueling. When a person waits for this type of hunger, they are listening to the body calling for the food.



Note: There are some accompanying signals with true hunger that may be more prevalent in some people with certain conditions, such as hypoglycemia and diabetes (See attachments #2 and #3). Nevertheless, a person with these conditions can still be very successful with this program. For most individuals, the stomach growl is the primary signal for physiological hunger.

Follow the path of simple logic.

God made man in the six days of creation. *Gen 1:31 And God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good.* On the sixth day, everything that God would make had been made; and it was good. From the crown of the head of the man and woman all the way down to their toes would include this goodness, for they were of creation. Their skin, eyes, ears and nose would also have to be included in the good category for God made those as well, right before He breathed the breath of life into man. *Gen 2:7 Then the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.* All of it was good, including an organ called the stomach. This organ was designed by God and comes with a built in sensor device to tell us when our body is calling for fuel. Our stomach growls as the cue for it to be refueled. When you meditate on this function being built into our creation, could we not all agree with God and say *“It was very good?”*

Along the same line of thinking, all food is good, for it is from the Lord. All things that God created for us to eat are good as long as we are grateful to the Lord for providing it. *1 Tim 4:4 For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving (NIV).* Simply put, God invented the good stomach, which tells us when it is time to consume good food if we are taking it in the good spirit of thanksgiving. The whole thing is good in the eyes of God for He declared it so in the holy word.

That which is not good is when we seek to put food into the stomach when it is not calling for it. Jesus said in *Matt 15:17 “Do you not understand that everything that goes into the mouth passes into the stomach, and is eliminated?”* God designed the stomach empty itself before being used again. It is not good when we disrupt the order and

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purpose of the eating process of God, resulting in gluttony, or eating beyond hunger. We end up bringing in calories that our body is not calling for and that is not good.

The Goal

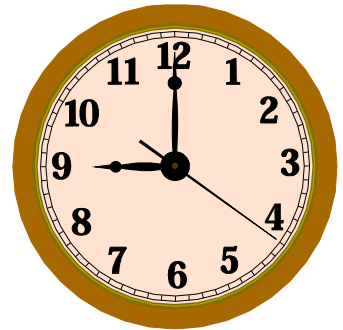
The whole purpose of this study is to teach and practice Biblical discipline concerning our everyday eating. We will learn to stop gluttonizing with head hunger and to start filling that desire with the word of God.

How to feed our God-given stomach

The reason people are overweight is because there has been grazing when the body has not been calling for it. When the body is forced to deal with the overload, it has the ability to multiply and fill fat cells. It is therefore necessary to be retrained to recognize true hunger.

Step 1

There must be a time of fasting for a period of **up to** 36 hours initially. This amount for most people will be less than 36 hours, for you are simply trying to identify true hunger, learning true hunger by waiting for a growling stomach rather than jumping ahead with lust of food. It will seem rather strange for many, but you must wait for true hunger. During true hunger, your stomach will make it evident through loud, continuous groans. **Make sure to eat only when truly hungry.**



Step 2

What do you do when the hunger finally hits. The natural tendency is to grab anything edible and stuff ourselves, but that is overeating. You would not try putting 20 gallons of gas in your 14 gallon fuel tank would you? The idea is to give your body only enough to stop the hunger. When the body stops calling for the food, then is the time do stop eating. A general rule of thumb is to reduce your consumption of portions by $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{2}{3}$. When you reach a level of satisfaction (i.e. your stomach is not growling anymore), then wait for next time when the hunger hits. Following this method will begin to reduce your desire for food. **Make sure to stop eating when truly satisfied.**

Step 3

If you would like to eat carbohydrates, then eat carbohydrates. If you want meat, then eat meat. If you want salty food, then eat salty food. Enjoy what the Lord has blessed you with as long as the first two steps are observed. **Make sure that you are eating what you truly enjoy**, not what some diet company is telling you what you are to eat.

This week's pointers

- If you are hungry before dinner, just bypass the hunger until the meal. Your body will find the pattern which is best for it. If it is too far out to the next meal and the stomach is growling, then eat a very small snack to pacify the body until the meal.
- Sip between each bite, rinsing the palate clean and prepare to enjoy the next bite. This will help you slow down and digest the meal better. During each bite,

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- silently thank God for it, asking yourself if you have reached satisfaction and hunger has ended. It may sound silly, but it will help break the head hunger habit.
- It is okay to take a carryout of food with you when you leave a restaurant. After all, how could they know how much food your body was calling for? What are the odds that they have guessed the exact amount of food? Most restaurants have learned to cater to our gluttony by giving enough food for two or three meals. We are not trying to clean off the plate, but eat with a clear conscience and the right hunger.
 - Make sure that you are not drinking caloric, sugary sodas between meals. Even though soda is not food, it will delay hunger because it puts sugar into the blood, causing the stomach to hold off the calorie search.

Remember
The goal this week is
to discover true
hunger!

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Please fill out the questions and return

Questions for Lesson One

1) What are the two types of hunger?

- a) _____
- b) _____

2) Which one of those two hungers have you been obedient to?

3) What are some of the other symptoms of hunger that can accompany or precede the stomach hunger?

4) What are the two abuses of food that cause us to be overweight?

- a) _____
- b) _____

5) Is food evil or good? Use scriptures to backup all answers.

6) Name some of the dangers of being overweight that you may have.

7) What is the purpose of God designing the stomach to growl?

8) Write down the time that you started your fast.

9) How long did it take before you actually felt hunger pangs?

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10) Describe in detail what hunger felt like for you when waiting for it.

11) When you finally ate following the fast, did you recognize when you were satisfied? Describe satisfied.

12) Were you thankful to God for each bite of the food? Did you express that to God?

13) Did you eat whatever you wanted?

14) Did you draw closer to God this week while going through this experience? Describe in what way.

15) Did any of the pointers discussed in the class aid you in any way? Which ones?

16) Did you find yourself thinking about food very often? If so, then when?

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Daily Records:

Sunday

Yes _____ No _____ Did you feel true hunger today?
Yes _____ No _____ Did you stop eating when you were satisfied?
Yes _____ No _____ Did you eat what you wanted to eat?

Monday

Yes _____ No _____ Did you feel true hunger today?
Yes _____ No _____ Did you stop eating when you were satisfied?
Yes _____ No _____ Did you eat what you wanted to eat?

Tuesday

Yes _____ No _____ Did you feel true hunger today?
Yes _____ No _____ Did you stop eating when you were satisfied?
Yes _____ No _____ Did you eat what you wanted to eat?

Wednesday

Yes _____ No _____ Did you feel true hunger today?
Yes _____ No _____ Did you stop eating when you were satisfied?
Yes _____ No _____ Did you eat what you wanted to eat?

Thursday

Yes _____ No _____ Did you feel true hunger today?
Yes _____ No _____ Did you stop eating when you were satisfied?
Yes _____ No _____ Did you eat what you wanted to eat?

Friday

Yes _____ No _____ Did you feel true hunger today?
Yes _____ No _____ Did you stop eating when you were satisfied?
Yes _____ No _____ Did you eat what you wanted to eat?

Saturday

Yes _____ No _____ Did you feel true hunger today?
Yes _____ No _____ Did you stop eating when you were satisfied?
Yes _____ No _____ Did you eat what you wanted to eat?