

Biblical Eating
By Doug Hamilton

Lesson Six: Understanding Gluttony

We are nearing the end of our study and many have had success beyond their expectations. Others may have spent the bulk of their time in grasping for understanding in their struggle in overcoming their passion for food. If the results that you have wanted are not there, keep fighting the good fight. *1 Tim 6:12 Fight the good fight of faith; take hold of the eternal life to which you were called, and you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.*



It is in the struggles of life that the Christian is defined, for Jesus never said we would be perfect, but forgiven. He cleansed us from our sins to live no longer in them. We practice righteousness for we are righteous. *1 Jn 3:9 No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.* The success you are looking for in this course is to be addicted to God and not food. Food is tasty and has comforted many of our pains, but we pay a huge price for it. The mere fact that you have made it thus far is a testimony to your resolve in being successful in your struggle. *Phil 4:13 I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.*

You are not alone in your struggle with food. There are many around you that have put the BREAD OF GUT ahead of the BREAD OF LIFE without even knowing it occurred until now. We ask ourselves, "When and how did this occur?" In John chapter six, we find an example for others who have done the same.

John 6:1-4 After these things Jesus went away to the other side of the Sea of Galilee (or Tiberias). 2 And a great multitude was following Him, because they were seeing the signs which He was performing on those who were sick. 3 And Jesus went up on the mountain, and there He sat with His disciples. 4 Now the Passover, the feast of the Jews, was at hand.

The heat of the spring season was beginning to rise and Jesus retreated to the cooler air of a mountaintop. There was a great multitude of groupies following Him, beholding the miracles and seeing the signs, desiring to be part of this growing ministry. Jesus was not only an important man to be around, but it was an important time, for the Passover was at hand.

John 6:5-6 Jesus therefore lifting up His eyes, and seeing that a great multitude was coming to Him, said to Philip, "Where are we to buy bread, that these may eat?" 6 And this He was saying to test him; for He Himself knew what He was intending to do.

Notice that Jesus is testing His disciples and this test is going to be coming in the form of food. This was not a test that came about by accident, but well thought out strategy.

John 6:7-9 Philip answered Him, "Two hundred denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for them, for everyone to receive a little." 8 One of His

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disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to Him, 9 "There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two fish, but what are these for so many people?"

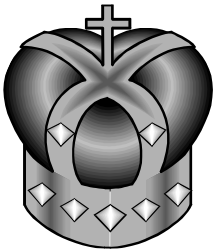
There is a problem, too many people for too little food. This is often the breeding ground for gluttony, specifically binge eating. When people are forced to fast out of necessity, when the food becomes abundant, the heart goes astray.

John 6:10-13 Jesus said, "Have the people sit down." Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand. 11 Jesus therefore took the loaves; and having given thanks, He distributed to those who were seated; likewise also of the fish as much as they wanted. 12 And when they were filled, He said to His disciples, "Gather up the leftover fragments that nothing may be lost." 13 And so they gathered them up, and filled twelve baskets with fragments from the five barley loaves, which were left over by those who had eaten.



The test is definitely Christ-centered. All the food was distributed through Christ; All were thankful to Christ; All were filled to satisfaction by Christ. All the people's eyes were glued to Christ. Now let us see what happens when a people take their eyes off of Christ and put them on the food.

John 14:14-15 When therefore the people saw the sign which He had performed, they said, "This is of a truth the Prophet who is to come into the world." 15 Jesus therefore perceiving that they were intending to alone come and take Him by force, to make Him king, withdrew again to the mountain by Himself.



They saw the miracle of the bread and fish on the backdrop of their hunger and wanted Jesus to be in a worldly position of power. They wanted Him to be their king (note: the "k" is not capital) in hopes that He would keep feeding them with that magic. This was not the perspective that Jesus wanted them to have, therefore He retreated from them.

Evening came; His chosen disciples took a small boat to the other side of the Sea of Galilee; a storm brewed; Jesus walked on water and entered the boat; the rest of the 5,000 were left behind. The next morning, with the "Denny's Grand Slam" breakfast on their minds, they marched up the hill to the sight where the twelve baskets of leftovers were last seen and noticed the chef was gone. Assuming that Jesus would be with the other disciples, they headed in small boats to find their hopeful source of welfare. Finding Jesus on the other side, they were faced with the truth.

John 6:26-27 Jesus answered them and said, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate of the

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loaves, and were filled. 27 "Do not work for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man shall give to you, for on Him the Father, {even} God, has set His seal."

They loved the food more than the One that gave them the food. Jesus had been preaching to them the entire day prior and even made them supper (literally), but it was the meal they could not take their minds off. In fact, they wanted to be able to have their own distributorship in the bread making business, just like Jesus. 28 *They said therefore to Him, "What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?"* They did not get it! Jesus said in verse 29 *"This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent."* They wanted the food more than a Savior. Jesus was trying to win them to the kingdom of God and they were trying to make it a food issue.

John 6:30-31 They said therefore to Him, "What then do You do for a sign, that we may see, and believe You? What work do You perform? 31 "Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, 'He gave them bread out of heaven to eat.'"

Jesus tried to turn their focus to Him in verse 32 *"Truly, truly, I say to you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread out of heaven, but it is My Father who gives you the true bread out of heaven. 33 "For the bread of God is that which comes down out of heaven, and gives life to the world."* He wants these people to know that Father is the focus not the bread! Did they learn this most important lesson or keep their mind on the food? Their response: *"Lord, evermore give us this bread."* Jesus finally puts it in layman's terms so they would understand.

John 6: 35-40 Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me shall not hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst. 36 "But I said to you, that you have seen Me, and yet do not believe. 37 "All that the Father gives Me shall come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out. 38 "For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. 39 "And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day. 40 "For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him, may have eternal life; and I Myself will raise him up on the last day."

It could not be any clearer than this. Jesus is the chosen One of God with the hope of eternal life. This is why He came to the earth, to save mankind from their sins, not to start a franchise of restaurants. One might think that they would have understood and rejoiced in this knowledge, but that is not the typical reaction of gluttons wanting to satisfy head hunger rather than soul hunger. What usually occurs in this situation is what did occur... grumbling.

John 6:41-42 The Jews therefore were grumbling about Him, because He said, "I am the bread that came down out of heaven." 42 And they were

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saying, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How does He now say, 'I have come down out of heaven'?"

Jesus begged them not to grumble, but believe in Him. He tells them in the clearest terms that *"I am the bread of life."* Yet they would not listen, for they wanted food of this world and not the spiritual food of Jesus. With many other exhortations and explanations, the head hunger, food craving gluttons gave up.

John 6:60-61 Many therefore of His disciples, when they heard {this} said, "This is a difficult statement; who can listen to it?" 61 But Jesus, conscious that His disciples grumbled at this, said to them, "Does this cause you to stumble?"

Yes, their love for the BREAD OF GUT was greater than the BREAD OF LIFE. They wanted to hear that which would put more into the stomach instead of that which would put more into the heart and soul. These were some hard words for the gluttons to absorb; therefore *"As a result of this many of His disciples withdrew, and were not walking with Him anymore."* (John 6:66)

Not all were following their stomachs that day, for His hand chosen disciples were still there by His side. Peter gives the most wonderful, anti-glutton declaration for the moment.

John 6:67-69 Jesus said therefore to the twelve, "You do not want to go away also, do you?" 68 Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life. 69 "And we have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God."



To better understand the relevance of what Peter declares, it is necessary to go back to verse 35. It was there that Jesus defined Himself as the "bread of life" and the means to consume it is by coming to and believing in Him. *John 6:35 Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me shall not hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.* When Peter states that he and the other apostles have believed and come to know Jesus, he is admitting to choosing the spiritual food over the physical food, the BREAD OF LIFE over the BREAD OF GUT.

We have that same decision placed before us on a daily basis. Will we choose this week to keep the plans of Jesus concerning our bodies and food consumption or will allow the food to consume our passion for the Lord. Eat when you are truly hungry and stop when you are truly satisfied. It is your choice to do right concerning the issue.

Deut 30:19 "I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. So choose life in order that you may live, you and your descendants..."

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This week's pointers

- Refer back to the notes many times a week in your struggle over food. Don't be afraid to add some of your thoughts next to some of the notes and then be ready to share them in the class or with another in the class.
- Remember to make occasional phone calls and write letters or emails of encouragement for others in the class. Working together with others who are struggling with the same weakness most generally leads to success. *Prov 27:17 Iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another.*
- Make it a point to eat very slowly. This not only allows us to taste and enjoy the food to a greater degree, but also makes it easier to identify the satisfaction level. You only have so much stomach space to enjoy the food; therefore why rush it?
- We have a tendency to focus on the pain and suffering that our gluttony has brought to our life. Repent, not remorse! Remorse is focusing on the symptoms like the weight, poor health, ridicule, pain and blown opportunities. Repentance is to focus on the problem, which is disobedience to His natural design of the stomach. Our focus needs to be repentance. *2 Cor 7:9-10 I now rejoice, not that you were made sorrowful, but that you were made sorrowful to {the point of} repentance; for you were made sorrowful according to {the will of} God, in order that you might not suffer loss in anything through us. 10 For the sorrow that is according to {the will of} God produces a repentance without regret, {leading} to salvation; but the sorrow of the world produces death.*
- Plan your meals ahead of time. Before you leave for the day, know what you are having for the meal in the evening. It is when we fail to plan that we plan to fail. Knowing what is for supper in the evening allows us to be more patient throughout the day, knowing there is a delicious waiting for us.

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Questions for Lesson Six

1) Did the people in John chapter 6 start out listening to Jesus? If yes, what do you think their perception would have been of Him?

2) What was the purpose of Jesus wanting to feed the multitude?

3) What is binge eating? Are you involved in this type of eating?

4) According to the lesson, what is one of the reasons listed that encourage binge eating?

5) What kind of “king” did the people want to make Jesus?

6) What kind of king have we made Jesus through our gluttony?

7) To what extent did the gluttons of John chapter 6 pursue food? To what extent have we pursued food?

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8) How do we consume the “Bread of Life”?

9) What are the two choices concerning the “Bread of Life”?

10) List some of the other strategies that you have used to be obedient to God throughout this course.

11) Have you felt a lessened pull concerning your attraction to food?

12) What were some of the personal changes that you have enjoyed the most concerning this class?

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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?