



***BIBLICAL HELP FOR
THOSE WHO STRUGGLE
WITH EATING DISORDERS***

Introduction

Kim is 22, having graduated with honors from a prestigious university. Very thin, attractive and well-groomed, she insists that everything which she does be perfect. She describes herself as "very disciplined, a strong person who sometimes has trouble being compassionate." Popular with her peers, she admits that she really doesn't like herself, and fears she is becoming fat. "Most of the time I can handle it, but then I seem to lose it, and my world falls apart, so I vomit, and then I feel horrible, so I exercise like crazy and fast. Then I may be OK for a while... but it starts all over again. It's a horrible way to live, but I really think that I am OK, and I can handle it."

Introduction

Suzie is 19, a sophomore at a local technical college. She is gifted intellectually but had to drop out of the nursing major due to failing grades. "I just couldn't discipline myself to study," she admits. "And I'm not doing much better this year either." Once or twice a week she secretly gorges great amounts of food, and then forces herself to vomit—a habit that began her senior year of high school. "I know it sounds sick—but I just can't seem to get over it, and it's not a big deal. I may be a little overweight but at least I'm not obese."

Introduction

Ben is 45, single, a homeowner with a stable job. He has given up on his dream of finding a wife. "I realize I am overweight, but I'll never get married now, so who cares?" Most days he stays late at the office, pouring himself into his work. Weekends are when he really struggles—especially at night. "Friday and Saturday night are the worst—I just lose control. I watch TV alone and fly through one bag of junk food after another. It's been this way for at least a year or two. Even when I do go to church on Sunday I feel like such a loser—I would be ashamed if people knew what I was really like."

DSM-5: Eating Disorders

- Anorexia Nervosa
- Bulimia Nervosa
- Binge-Eating Disorder



Implications of using DSM terminology

- Belief in the medical model
- Failure to identify foundational heart issues
- Lack of personal accountability
- Seeking a sudden cure



Evaluate: do you agree?

*“Sometimes we learn from those lost battles, with the hangover [alcohol] or the numbers on the scale [food] or the heartbreak of a spouse [adultery] being enough to set us right. Sometimes, however, there is no lesson learned, or at least no lesson headed. **Sometimes instead we’re powerless to not repeat the behavior...** The behavior becomes a habit, the habit becomes a compulsion, and the compulsion becomes the life-wrecking **disease** that is addiction.”*

(Jeffrey Kluger, “The Disease of the Pleasures,” *Time—Special Edition; The Science of Addiction* [January, 2020], p.4.)

Potential Contributing Factors

- Social pressure
- Sexual conflict
- Family conflict
- Personal conflict
- Cognitive conflict

Getting to the heart of the problem

- Perfection
- Control
- Popularity
- Pleasure
- Laziness
- Safety
- Self-atonement

Helps in helping those who struggle

- Define the main goal
- Communicate a biblical world view
- Treasure what God treasures
- Make sure its for the right reason
- Develop a biblical theology of food, eating and abstaining
- Rejoice in the gospel / encourage in progressive sanctification
- Recommend consultation with physicians and nutritionists



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