

## Obesity: A National and Spiritual Crisis

### The Road to Sodom

One study stated that the majority of Americans are obese. This is not unique to our nation; they tell us obesity is a problem throughout Western civilization. Self indulgence and over indulgence are indications of a deeper, more fundamental problem.

Ezekiel tells us that overeating was an issue in Sodom. *Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness . . . neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy* (Ezek. 16:49). Loftiness (*pride*), laziness (*idleness*), lard (*fullness of bread*), were the forerunners of lust, the notorious sin for which Sodom is known.

Lack of control in one area bleeds over into other areas. More than once gluttony and drunkenness are paired together in the Scripture (Deut. 21:20; Prov.23:21). Proverbs warns us; *Be not among winebibbers (drunkards); among riotous eaters of flesh* (23:20). *Riotous eaters* are gluttons. A glutton is a person who lives to eat, whereas godly people eat to live. An over eater is one who has conditioned himself/herself to excess. When food intake exceeds energy output, obesity is the obvious result.

Paul referred to those *whose God is their belly as enemies of the cross*. Here are those who idolize their appetites. They are controlled by their cravings. He uses very strong language when he says that they which *mind earthly things* will be destroyed (Phil. 3:19).

Flesh domination manifests itself in a lack of moderation. Three areas where this often occurs are sleep, sex, and saliva. Compulsive addictions in any area indicate serious spiritual problems. Feeding the flesh can become a way of life. Self-indulgent cultures become weak, while those who practice self restraint become strong.

Note the attitude of the rich man, who lost his soul, as he said to himself, *Take thine ease, eat, and drink* (Luke 12:19). In modern language he said to himself, "Be lazy and pig out!" His neglect of God and preoccupation with self caused

the Lord to refer to him as a *fool*. He may have been rich in a worldly sense, but he was not rich toward God. Failure to restrain the flesh is the sure path to destruction.

*The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared . . . Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts* (Titus 2:11-12). Saving grace is sanctifying grace. And the saving grace of God teaches us to deny our sinful, selfish, and obsessive desires. God's grace brings liberty to do right, not license to do wrong.

Gluttony is no laughing matter. Most of us have heard jokes about overeating, but only *fools make a mock at sin!* Could it be that our national obsession with food is directly related to the homosexual explosion? Maybe one reason so many came out of the closet is because the closet was getting so crowded! Lack of restraint manifests itself in ever increasing depravity in succeeding generations. Lack of control in one area leads to lack of discipline in other areas. This is the way societies self-destruct. Sodom did not start having sex in the streets until it first had given itself to loftiness, laziness, and lard. These root sins later brought forth bitter fruit in the area of perverted sexual lusts.

Have you considered that the first temptation in both the Old and New Testament revolved around food? Satan tempted Eve to *eat* the forbidden fruit and solicited the Son of God to turn stones to *bread* after a forty-day fast. Eve succumbed and Christ resisted temptation. Temptation is the enticement to use a God-given drive in a God-forbidden way. The body is not evil, neither is food, but overeating is a serious sin.

As Christians, God has given us everything that pertains to life and godliness in His Son (2 Peter 1:3). It is time for God's people to get off the road that leads to Sodom. You are not a victim—you are a victor. You don't have to be overcome—you are more than a conqueror. You don't have to be an overeater; you are destined to be an overcomer. Let's quit making excuses and get in the grip of overcoming grace. To put it another way, avail yourself of the grace of God and stop sinning! If you are in Christ, then you have within you both the power and desire to please God. You can do all things through Christ which strengthens you! Earthly existence for the child of God is designed to be a

super-abundant, supernatural life. The things that are impossible with men are possible with God. There is victory in Jesus!

By Harold Vaughan