

Feeding our Stomachs, Starving our Souls

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Stress, cravings, procrastination, boredom, loneliness... Have you ever considered the many reasons that we eat? If you're like me, hunger is not the only reason that food enters your mouth. Often times, I eat to achieve some form of comfort, but the reality is that it only offers momentary satisfaction. And then there's the guilt that ensues, negating any positive feeling that I may have experienced.

So why do we eat when we're not hungry? What is so appealing about food? Is it really about the taste or is it more about the emotions that we associate with food? You know, those feelings of home... or happy celebrations... or fond memories of family holidays.

Food is indeed good. God created it to be that way. He could have created another way to sustain us, but He gave us tasty food. And He wants us to enjoy it. Think about His creativity in the variety of flavors, colors and smells of food. We even see evidence of food used in celebrations throughout the Bible. He describes the Promised Land as "a land flowing with milk and honey." And, He often uses references of food when He refers to pouring our blessings on the Old Testament people. At a time when food wasn't available in the abundance and convenience that it is today, He provided for the people and blessed them with food.

Although God created food to be good, He didn't intend for it to be a substitute for satisfying our emotional needs. He is the only one that can meet all of our needs. When we're sad, He comforts. When we're stressed, He offers encouragement. When we're worried, He offers peace. And His offerings are both satisfying and lasting. We're really longing for Him, not the temporary fix of food.

So, how do we turn back to God for our emotional needs instead of relying on food? It starts with knowing Him. We come to know Him by spending time with Him. Does this sound like a strange concept? Spending time with God starts with prayer and reading the Bible. The Bible is His word to us, not an ancient book of stories and history. His word is alive and active – it's real and relevant to our lives today. Join a Bible study or find a book about how to study the Bible. You'll be surprised at what you might discover. As you start to know Him, you'll learn to trust Him... even with your hurts and struggles. Once you experience Him, you'll want more of Him because you'll find that He does indeed satisfy.

If you're an emotional eater, I challenge you to consider why you reach for food in response to your feelings. Then, take the next step and feast on Him. Let Him fill your emotional needs, so you can enjoy your food without feelings of guilt. Feed your soul with all the good things God has to offer.