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Viewpoints

Observing events in our modern world from the viewpoint of our ascended Savior.

Comfort Eating - August 13, 2014

To deal with stress, why not replace your comfort eating with this.

[Online Version & Archive](#)

Why do we crave food that we know we should avoid?

Maybe at the end of a particularly pressuring day, a bowl of ice cream is most pleasing to your palate. Personally, when life has me all twisted up, I like to unwind with a plate of tortillas smothered in melted cheese. Somehow my taste buds massage the tension out of my body as the cheesy chips massage my taste buds. Later, though, I regret my indulgence as I think of how the body deals with those late night calories: storing them as fat.

Scientists perplex about these things, too. Did you know that studies suggest that consuming sugars (like ice cream) or fatty foods (like cheesy chips) “releases opioids in our brains [that] are the active ingredients in cocaine, heroin and many other narcotics?” No wonder we crave these calories, and why our caving in to our cravings has been called *comfort eating* or *emotional eating* or *stress eating*. “The calming, soothing effects you feel when you eat ice cream and BBQ potato chips are real. And breaking these habits can be like kicking a drug habit.”

But there’s more. Mary Dallman is a stress and physiology expert. Her studies show that when we’re stressed, our body releases stress hormones which leads to craving sugary or fatty foods. And if this is not bad enough, these stress hormones also activate the parts of the brain used for memory—yikes!—for learning a bad habit!

Do you see the cycle that develops? Stress tempts us to engage in comfort eating. And comfort eating ingrains in us the (bad) habit of dealing with stress by eating sugary or fatty foods, which leads us to later regret the results that stare back at us from the full-length mirror... which adds more stress to our lives.

In our sin-cursed world, we will constantly battle stress. But wouldn’t it be awesome if there was some food that calmed and soothed our stress, but had no bad side-effects like those comfort foods packed with dense calories?

There is such a food! “How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!” says the Psalmist about the promises God gives us in the Bible (Psalm 119:103). Jesus himself spoke highly of this special food: “Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4). And Jesus went so far as

to call himself the “Bread of Life” (John 6:35). Jesus elaborated: “If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world” (John 6:51). Jesus used the illustration of food and nourishment to teach that if you consume his truths and promises, they’ll nourish a trust-relationship, through which faith we receive eternal life. For only in the divine blood that Jesus would spill from his holy flesh at the cross can any soul be cleansed of sin and made right for living in God’s presence.

Surgery or fatty foods do offer a mild comfort for the stress in our lives, but its comfort is short-term and loaded with unwanted side-effects. There’s a different type of comfort eating: consuming the promises of the Bread of Life. Since all stress originates as a by-product of sin, and since Jesus is the Savior from sin, he has the ultimate way of helping us deal with stress. The spiritual calories packed into Christ’s promises are unbelievably soothing, without unwanted calories staring back at you from the mirror.

Next time you’re stressed out, instead of a bowl of ice cream, try the comfort food of Psalm 23, “The Lord is my shepherd...” Let the words slowly melt over the taste buds of your soul and rejoice in how this is a heavenly habit to learn! ✠✠✠

If you liked this Viewpoint you might also be interested in the sermon delivered on August 3, 2014 entitled “Heavenly Grown Seed” available [here](#).

Source Material (Links may become inactive over time.)

[Emotional Eating? 5 Reasons You Can't Stop @ Psychology Today](#)

[Mindfulness or cake? The battle against...comfort-eating @ The Guardian](#)

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Blessings to you and your loved ones, Pastor Mike Nitz

