



Mapping Your Emotional History with Food

We were created for relationship with God and with people, but when those relationships fall short of what God intended them to be, there is a void in our heart. God, first of all, wants to fill that void with Himself. Second Corinthians 1:5 tells us, “For just as the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives, so also through Christ our comfort overflows.” The Holy Spirit, who is always with us, is available to comfort us when we are feeling lonely, sad, hurt, angry or whatever we feel that quenches our joy.

Many of us, however, have failed to find our comfort in the Lord and instead have sought fulfillment from food. God wants to fulfill our emotional needs with Himself and through other people, not with food.

As we identify the ways we have built an unhealthy relationship with food, God is waiting for us to turn our hearts back to Him. In Isaiah 61:1, we learn that Jesus came “to proclaim freedom for the captives, and release from darkness for the prisoners” (that’s you and me). When we ask, He will reveal to us the patterns and habits that are so far away from the abundant life we desire and that He has promised to give us.

In order to experience that abundant life, we first have to identify the patterns we have developed and map out the role that food has played in keeping us from experiencing what was promised. Mapping our emotional history with food will help us evaluate each stage of our life (early childhood, childhood, teen years, college years, single years and married years) in order to discover the reasons behind why we struggle with food issues.

To map your emotional history with food, you will need paper and pen to record your thoughts and an extended period (or perhaps more than one extended period) of uninterrupted time. As you begin, ask God to bring to mind what you need to remember.

Step 1: Ask God for clarity to identify thoughts, emotions and patterns of behavior that have resulted in your current emotional relationship with food. As you pray, ask God to reveal truth to you through this process and allow you to visit the deep places of your heart to bring about inner wisdom (see Psalm 51:6).

Father, I know that You are the God of all wisdom, and right now I need wisdom about the relationship between my emotions and food...

Step 2: Label separate sheets of paper with each major stage of your life, starting with early childhood and ending with your current stage.

Early Childhood. Childhood. Teen Years. College Years. Single Years. Married Years.

Step 3: Think back to the earliest time in your life that you can remember and write out the story of what life was like for you during that period. Go as deep into your heart as you can, even if expressing those emotions is painful. The Lord will guide you to the memories and experiences that have impacted you the most. Jesus tells us that God sent Jesus “to comfort all who mourn . . . to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair” (Isaiah 61:2-3).

By the age of 6 or 7, home didn't feel safe anymore . . . I began to gain weight . . . food was comforting . . .

Step 4: Identify when there were major changes in your life and describe how you responded to those changes (such as a family move, graduation from high school, or marriage). Maybe you began eating more when your parents divorced, or you lost a significant amount of weight just before a major change in your life. Thoroughly explore the patterns of your eating behaviors and your weight during each of the periods you write about.

When I was 12, my family moved to a new state. It was hard to make friends. I didn't like the new area much . . .

Step 5: Be specific about your feelings, destructive patterns of behavior, choices and longings. At the same time, be sure to also include your strengths so that you develop a balanced view of your life and who you really are.

Food comforted me and made me feel good, and it also kept me away from the rejection I feared would come if I were thin . . .

Step 6: Ask God to help you remember what you may have forgotten or have blocked from your memory. Ask Him to reveal the true story of your life and the relationship you have developed with food.

Lord, show me if there is anything that I have forgotten or blocked from my memory. I desire to live in truth about my life . . .

Step 7: After you have reviewed and prayed through each of the stages, take some time to write down what you have discovered from this experience. Ask the Lord to show you the connection between your eating and your emotions, the events of your life and the patterns you have developed to cope with certain events, and the ways that food has kept you from becoming the person God desires you to be.

There is a connection between my weight and my relationships. When I fail at relationships, I turn to food to comfort me . . .

Step 8: If you are able to see well-defined patterns and you are prepared to turn from the destructive behaviors you have developed, take some time to pray and make a commitment, both in prayer and in writing, to the changes God has led you to make.

Lord, I am committed to learning new ways of dealing with my emotions and not allowing failed relationships to lead me to destructive eating patterns . . .

Step 9: Finally, write a prayer of repentance and rededication to God. Don't forget to thank Him for allowing you to search your heart so deeply and revealing the wounds He wants to heal in you. Thank Him for the work He is going to do in you as you turn back to Him and allow food to play its proper role—to bring physical nourishment to your body.

As of today . . . you are out of my life! I will eat for God's glory . . .

Jesus promised, “If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free” (John 8:31-32). As you continue to seek Him in the process of returning food to its proper role in your life, you will find the freedom that results from the abundant life Jesus promised we would have.



FIRSTplace

FOR HEALTH

For more information about
First Place For Health, please
contact:

First Place For Health
5826 Broadway St., #16405
Galveston, TX 77552-1019

1-800-72-PLACE (727-5223)

email: info@firstplace4health.com
website: www.firstplaceforhealth.com