

# Training in Self-Indulgence

## HIS WIFE, SHE ATE NO LEAN

Early habits are lifelong habits. Why is it that some fat people find themselves compelled to eat when they become emotionally disturbed? They get angry or depressed and then go to the refrigerator as a way of coping. I have been told by grotesquely obese women that they wouldn't be fat if it were not for their compulsion to bury their disappointment under a stuffed belly.

Now, I am not attempting to define the cause of all fatness, nor even the sole cause of some; but it is at least a contributing factor in some cases. How did this connection occur? The human/animal tendency to accept conditioning is extraordinary. Every time I think of an orange and imagine eating it, I have a muscular reaction in the back of my jaws. I experience sourness when the orange is still in Orlando. Through repeated experiences, I have been conditioned that way. It is not voluntary. I can not help the programmed response.

When a baby is breast fed, there are physical limitations to how often and when he can nurse. With a bottle fed baby—even when the bottle is given after a year of breast feeding—the bottle becomes a mighty convenient baby-sitter. An emotionally disturbed child can be quieted by simply poking a synthetic nipple in his mouth. As the food goes in, the tension and anxiety go out. An angry child can be pacified by a “pacifier” or bottle. A child can be put to sleep with food. You can purchase for yourself a reprieve from almost anything through a bottle or pacifier. What are you doing to your child? Not only is he failing to learn self-control, HE IS LEARNING TO COPE BY PUTTING SOMETHING IN HIS MOUTH.

The addiction to cigarettes is not all nicotine. Have you ever noticed how a person who quits smoking will often keep something in his mouth? Many a tree has been eaten one match stick at a time.

Many fat people have no desire for food early in the day. Not until the day's responsibilities mount up, does their nervousness drive them to the refrigerator. Late at night, when the problems of the day are backed up, the refrigerator becomes their emotional support.

I am convinced that parents who provide emotional consolation through food or the sucking sensation are training their children to be self-gratifying and indulgent. “*Temperance*” is one of the fruits of the Spirit (*Gal. 5:23*). Parent, if you not only cater to your child's appetite, but actually employ it as a means of purchasing compliance, what are you instilling? Remember, the first human sin involved eating. The Devil's first temptation to the Son of God involved eating. “*And put a knife to thy throat, I/ thou be a man given to appetite (Prov. 23:2).*” There is a spiritual principle involved here that goes far deeper. To allow—much more, encourage—lack of self-control in any area is to condition the child to be generally intemperate.

## INHERITED INTEMPERANCE

A parent's example of intemperance in one area may be manifest through the child in lack of self-control in another area. Some children so despise their parents' weakness that their reaction propels them far from it. Yet, the parental example of intemperance will manifest itself in another area where their guard is not up. Parents who are intemperate in food may have skinny children who become intemperate in sex. Parents who are intemperate in possessions may have reactionary children who are intemperate in drugs. Intemperance in any area is a grave, destructive sin. Your children will reap what you sow. “*Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption (Gal. 6. 7,8). Man shall not live by bread alone... (Matt. 4:4).*”

If as an adult you realize that your parents passed on this intemperance to you, you can either blame them and continue letting your belly be your god or you can throw off the curse for your sake as well as your children's.

I have sadly observed many children being trained in the art of selfish indulgence by the example of parents gathering to themselves and their children the things of this world. The child raised with commercial gadgets heaped upon his lusts is much more prone to be envious and covetous than the poor child who finds satisfaction in the simple things of life. The child who grows up deprived of nothing is greatly handicapped in real life. Never consider your affluence to be an advantage to your children. It is a handicap for which you must compensate. Examine Jesus' words regarding the disadvantages of the rich: (*Mark 4:1 9; Luke 12:15; 17*).