



Episode 3-15: Eating Disorders

Resources:

Books

[Love to Eat, Hate to Eat - Elyse Fitzpatrick](#)

[Addictions: A Banquet in the Grave - Ed Welch](#)

[What God Has to Say About Our Bodies - Sam Allberry](#)

[All Things for Good - Thomas Watson](#)

Podcasts

[Biblical Body Image - Joyful Journey](#)

Websites

[Vision of Hope](#)

Transcript:

Jocelyn: I don't just need to feel better. I need the truth. And ultimately that will make me better.

Janet: I just want to make it as totally simple as possible for ladies to see that the Bible is really applicable to their everyday life.

Jocelyn: When they understand theology, the application flows out of it quickly with joy.

Janet: It is a journey, but even the journey itself is joyful when I'm doing it, holding the hand of my savior and trusting him all along the way. This is the joyful journey podcast, a podcast to inspire and equip women to passionately pursue beautiful biblical truth on their journey as women of God. When you choose truth, you're choosing joy.

Janet: Hello. Welcome back listeners, and Jocelyn and I are excited to have the third part of our initial podcasting team visiting with us today.

Jocelyn: Yes. This is gonna be a great conversation.

Janet: Yes. So Alexandra Nitzschke welcome back as a guest interviewee this time.

Alexandra: Thank you.

Janet: And we've asked her to come back and talk to us about a topic that affects more of us than we probably recognize. But we just don't always know what to do with it. And we're gonna be talking about disorderly eating.

Jocelyn: So I think this topic is important to discuss because, you know, eating affects all of us.



Janet: No way.

Jocelyn: And all of us have bodies. And I think sometimes we think of this a little bit too much like a niche topic. Like disorderly eating affects every single one of us. And when we think about how this might affect some of our listeners, we might have some ladies that are listening that are actively fighting to honor God with their body and with eating. And this would be helpful on their personal journey. And then some ladies love people who are in trouble in this area, and it would be really helpful as they work hard to love that other person to have a little bit more education about the topic. Some of our listeners may not even be aware that some of their choices that they're making in these areas are not godly and are destined to cause problems. And that's one thing I really wanna make sure we talk about today is like this affects everybody. And ultimately, knowing how to view our bodies and how to think about and handle eating are topics that every single human has to address in their heart and life. And so I think this broad topic of disorderly eating is really important for all of us.

Janet: I agree. And so I'm just gonna address the listener who's already going, I don't even wanna hear the rest of this.

Jocelyn: Yeah.

Janet: Because for many of us, it feels hopeless. So I don't wanna think about this. Here's what I used to say. I'm working on so many areas of my life, I should not have to also think about everything I eat. Because I didn't know how to think about it.

Jocelyn: Yeah.

Janet: Or want to.

Jocelyn: Or have answers.

Janet: So ladies, there is hope.

Jocelyn: Yeah.

Janet: And that's what this is gonna be about. So don't tune out just because of that. But let me get us started, Alexandra, and just ask you, I am so thankful for your willingness to just talk with us about this. Can you share some of your history and how you've viewed your body and how you viewed and used food in the past?

Alexandra: Sure. Well, I got saved when I was in seventh grade. And then when I was in eighth grade, I, me and my family, went through some really horrible suffering. And it was the first time in my life that I realized that God was going to save me from hell, from suffering in hell. But he was not planning on saving me from suffering here on earth. And I really struggled with that.



And out of that came this internal struggle with control and not trusting God's sovereignty. My parents graciously brought me to a psychologist. I had started at that point struggling with cutting, and he helped, the psychologist helped me stop those behaviors. But in the end, my experience with therapy was that it didn't get to the root of what was wrong with me. because I think that-- I'm not gonna speak for everyone, but a lot of therapists are working from an assumption that you are internally good and therapy helps you find ways to healthily like healthy ways to cope with any negative external factors in your life. And that wasn't my biggest problem.

Jocelyn: Right.

Alexandra: My biggest problem, and we'll get into this more later, but my biggest problem was that I had a really intense idol in my life that I was worshiping. So when my psychologist helped me stop cutting, almost instantly those behaviors just switched to something else. And I'm pretty sure it was around the age of 13 that I started struggling with eating issues. Now I was very active, so a lot of that stuff was hidden.

Janet: Right.

Alexandra: You couldn't really, it just blended. But, I,

Janet: And it's not as socially unacceptable.

Jocelyn: Right.

Janet: As cutting.

Jocelyn: Right.

Janet. So it might have felt like a healthier way to deal with your control issues.

Alexandra: Yes. Yes, exactly. but just through time for about 10 years, I really just increasingly struggled with depression and anxiety. I mean, the more you give into a habitual sin, the less you're going to experience the fruits of the spirit, like joy and peace. And so my depression was just getting bigger and bigger. My anxiety was just getting more and more intense. And I was actually thinking on the way here, you know, I can't remember Janet, the first time I met you, you've kind of just been like a mom that's always there. But I remember the first time I met Jocelyn.

Jocelyn: I remember the first time I met you too. Your interview was very vivid.

Janet: Uh-oh.

Alexandra: Yes. So I remember that interview well.



Jocelyn: Not in a bad way, I just remember it.

Alexandra: No. In a bad way. Yeah. We can be honest.

Jocelyn: It wasn't bad. It was just memorable.

Alexandra: Well, I guess at that point in my life, I was a chain smoker, cuz I used that to curb my appetite. So I'm sure I stank so bad when I walked into that beautiful conference room for my interview.

Janet: Interview for what?

Alexandra: Oh, excuse me. That's a really good point. Yes. When I met Jocelyn, Jocelyn was the executive director of a residential treatment program called Vision of Hope, which we've talked before on the podcast.

Janet: Yep.

Alexandra: And so I was applying to be a resident there. I had reached a point in my life where I was, just really deep into despair. I had gotten to a place where I knew I had a problem. It took me about 10 years to admit that I had a problem, and then six months with a biblical counselor of just trying to get out of this deep hole that I had dug myself into. And it just, I was so stuck. I couldn't hold down a meal anymore because I was

Janet: Even if you wanted to.

Alexandra: Even if I wanted to. My body was so conditioned to self-induced vomiting.

Janet: Yeah.

Alexandra: And laxative abuse. it was just, I was an absolute mess. Physically, but also emotionally. I mean, we'll get more into this later, but you think that anorexics or people that give into really controlled eating, they have this mindset that they're strong because they can say no to hunger.

Janet: It's self control.

Alexandra: Yeah. Quote for the air quotes there. Yes. But it really just makes you such a weak and fragile person, and that is exactly. Where I was. I'd like to share a quote by Ed Welch from his book, Addictions: A Banquet in the Grave, because when I think of eating disorders, in my head, it's very similar as an addiction. I read that book and I found so many things that I related to, even though I wasn't a drug addict. Because in the end we're talking about a sinful addiction.

Janet: Right.



Alexandra: So, I appreciated this quote. It says, by Ed Welch, addicts themselves feel like everything is fine and under control, but they're starting to do things just because the idolatrous object tells them to. Everything is fine, they think, but they don't see clearly enough to judge. Things are getting darker. It's as if you were outside at dusk trying to see the moment it gets dark. The process is imperceptible. The eyes adjust, and suddenly it is black. And so when I came to Vision of Hope, that was the process of me really starting to get help. I remember Jocelyn asked me, she said, I don't really think you want to love Jesus more than you want to love your body. And I was like, well, that's why I'm here, isn't it? And so that's kind of where I was at. I was very sarcastic, very cutting, very negative, very rude, very prideful. But I didn't see any of that. I just was tired of the consequences of my sin.

Jocelyn: And thank God that he gives us consequences of our sin. Cuz that's one of the ways that he draws us to him.

Janet: Yes.

Jocelyn: The consequences are terrible.

Alexandra: Yes.

Jocelyn: And he desires so much better for us.

Alexandra: So true.

Jocelyn: And just so you know, my first memory of you is how you were determined. Like when I remember you now, you were late for your appointment because you got lost and you came anyways and you convinced me to let you come. And I was like, she is determined. So don't think bad. What I remember is how determined you were.

Alexandra: That's sweet.

Jocelyn: So, why don't you talk to us a little bit about what is a physical body and what is the biblical purpose for having a body?

Alexandra: So this question seems really simple, but it, I feel like it's really complex.

Janet: Yeah.

Alexandra: Like what is a body? Well first of all, for someone who struggles with disorderly eating, this concept I think is not easy to grasp. But I am not a body, like our earthly bodies are temporary. And for someone who has found their identity in their body, like that's just a really hard thing to grasp. At least it was for me. But I am an embodied soul.

Jocelyn: Yes.



Alexandra: We are embodied souls that will live forever in either heaven or hell once our earthly bodies die. And we long for that glorified body.

Jocelyn: Yes.

Alexandra: For those of us who have been saved by grace. I think it's tempting to find our identity in things that are not permanent, including our bodies. The problem is that if it's not permanent, there's no security in that. And I re-listened to your podcast on body image. That was so good. And you guys did talk a lot about Second Corinthians four. Though outer self is wasting away, you know, Paul does tell us, don't focus on the shell. He talks about the body in this passage.

Janet: Yeah.

Alexandra: Earlier he says, but we have this treasure in jars of clay. So I think, to answer your question first, our bodies are jars of clay that hold treasure.

Jocelyn: Yes.

Alexandra: And we are not the treasure.

Jocelyn; Yes.

Alexandra: Lord, help us not to ever think that. We are not the treasure. The treasure is the truth and the hope of the gospel.

Jocelyn: Yes. I love what two Corinthians 3:18 talks about because it says we are, our souls are being impacted at having been exposed to Jesus Christ, the glory of Jesus. It's lit a fire inside of us when we have, when we're saved, when we've trusted in Christ for our salvation. Our soul has been made alive, but it's living in a body that is still living under the curse of sin. And I think one of the things that's helpful for me to remember in my own struggle with my view of my body and my view of food, is that my body is something that God prepared for my soul to inhabit. That's all it is. It's a vessel for my soul to live in. And like Janet said in our interview earlier on body image, like it's not nothing and it's not everything. I think that's so helpful. Like,

Janet: Yeah.

Jocelyn: I can't put too much emphasis on it, but I also can't not pay attention to it because that's my temptation is like whatever, who cares. It's such a temporary jar of clay. But when you think about the amazing things that God says he can do with our body, that is a jar of clay under the curse of sin still, but with an alive soul inside of it. That passage in two Corinthians 3:4 and 5 goes on to say like, although your physical body is wasting away, it houses a soul that has been



changed by Jesus, and the rest of the days that you live in this jar of clay can be eternally significant.

Janet: Yes.

Jocelyn: And second Corinthians five says, so I am compelled by the love of Jesus to live the rest of my days in this body, screaming out to everyone I meet as an ambassador, be reconciled with God. So our bodies are not nothing, and our bodies are not everything. But they were prepared by God for my soul to live in.

Alexandra: I love that. That reminds me of Ephesians two 10 that says, we are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works.

Janet: Yes.

Alexandra: We don't ever wanna talk about Ephesians 2:10. We wanna stick with like grace. You know what I mean?

Janet: Yes.

Jocelyn: I love that. I love that you're bringing this up cuz everyone loves 2:8 and 9. I'm like,

Alexandra: Yes.

Jocelyn: There's 10 too.

Alexandra: There's verse 10. The whole purpose.

Jocelyn: Yes.

Alexandra: We have to get to the why and that, you know, our bodies are God's creation. Like I love that you said that. We are created, God gave me a body very specifically, he created very specifically for my individual soul in a way that's gonna glorify God most.

Janet: Yeah.

Jocelyn: Yeah.

Alexandra: And I'm reading a book right now about how the gospel is interwoven in the lives of families whose children have disabilities. It's really fascinating. And I am reminded of John nine. He brings up John nine, this author. And you know, the disciples are saying, who is in sin here? This man, this man who was born blind or his parents.

Jocelyn: Yep.



Alexandra: Why was he blind? And Jesus' response shows the purpose of the how and why God created bodies in a particular way. Even bodies that are born with disabilities. He says that the works of God might be displayed in him.

Jocelyn: Yes.

Alexandra: And so we can find comfort that even in our dying bodies, that he designed my body very specifically for the works he prepared my soul to do. So theology of the body is very much connected with both my purpose in Christ and my actions.

Jocelyn: Absolutely.

Alexandra: It is not trendy right now to talk about like ways that we need to change or our actions or sanctification. Like the trendy topics right now are more the justification.

Jocelyn: Acceptance, yeah.

Alexandra: Yes. And how God loves us. But ultimately God is going to judge me on what I do with this life and this body that he has given me. He's going to hold me accountable for that.

Jocelyn: Absolutely. And just think about all the things that we could not do that God has commanded us to do if we didn't have a body. Like he tells us to participate with his mandate over the creation. You cannot bear children and be fruitful without a body. You can't have dominion and subdue without a body. We need a body to glorify God. Like our mouth was given to us, to glorify God. God wants us to live out his righteousness in all these thousands of practical ways. He wants us, like you said, to accomplish the works that He saved us to accomplish, and he wants us to be an ambassador for him. Titus 2. I love Titus, but it says like, Our eyes were given to us to notice people's needs so that we could meet them. We require a body for that. And so it's just so helpful to know our bodies, were prepared by God for our soul to inhabit.

Alexandra: Another verse that I really like when talking about like Theology of the Body is Romans 12:1, which says, and so dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice, the kind that he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him. And so our bodies are for the Lord. We are called to be a living sacrifice. And ultimately, Jesus is the best example of what that looks like.

Janet: Yep.

Alexandra: His focus wasn't on being the healthiest, best version of himself, although it is important to be a good steward of our bodies and to pursue good health. But his focus wasn't to



be that best version of himself. Otherwise he would never have anything to do with lepers, you know?

Jocelyn: Right.

Janet: Right, right.

Alexandra: But he lived it out perfectly what it meant to be a living sacrifice. And that is my example when I look at what is a body and how am I supposed to steward that well.

Janet: So it's just interesting as you guys are talking and I'm sitting here thinking. A phrase that I think we hear a lot. And we don't think about what we're saying, but I think it's a true statement, we're to be the hands and feet of Jesus. Like you have to have hands and feet.

Jocelyn: You literally have to have a body for that.

Janet: You know? And you've just said, he is our example and I love that the scriptures tell us that he was not attractive.

Jocelyn: I really appreciate that.

Janet: You know, like

Jocelyn: I've thought about that a lot.

Janet: Wow. The perfect man who used his body perfectly was not about his abs. Was he strong? If he needed to be. I'm sure Then he did that, but not to look a certain way. But to use his body for the Lord. And I really do believe the more that we are focused on using our bodies the way Jesus used his, the more it will put other things in perspective.

Jocelyn: I agree.

Janet: The way it ought to be, but Okay. If that's the body, what about food? What is food? What's the purpose for food?

Alexandra: So first of all, food in itself is neutral. It's not sinful. First Timothy 4:4 says Everything created by God is good.

Janet: Yes.

Alexandra: And nothing is to be rejected if it is received with gratitude.

Jocelyn: Yep.



Alexandra: To answer that question, I have thought through maybe like a two-part answer. So one, I think what most people would say is that food is fuel. Right?

Janet: Right.

Alexandra: You don't have to be a believer to agree that food is used to fuel our bodies. It's a matter that sustains us for ministry. So I really wrestled with the idea of food being fuel. As simple as that concept is, when I was struggling with disorderly eating. I met with a dietician. One thing I struggled with is why carbs? Like, there seems to be zero point to eating carbs. I just, I was, you could not convince me. And I had a conversation with two ladies who were on staff at Vision of Hope and they shared with me you know, when I eat too much, I'm tired. When I eat too little, I'm tired. So I eat in a way where I can live out my commission to love God and love others well.

Jocelyn: That's super helpful.

Alexandra: It was very, very helpful. So my goal is not just to survive on as little calories as possible, that's so self-focused. My goal should be focused outside of myself. What do I need to eat today that best glorifies God, that gives me fuel to best love the people in my life that God has given me to love on? I think food is also an avenue of God's grace. We see passages involving food, literally all over the Bible.

Jocelyn: Yes.

Alexandra: The Old Testament holy days often involved a feast. Jesus participated in dinner parties. And if you read through the book of Luke, it's like back to back to back to back dinner parties that Jesus was participating in. Jesus sat down and ate with his enemies. An example of that is Luke 5: 27 through 32. When we see Jesus again, we will enjoy a great banquet. Jesus ate fish with the disciples in his glorified body. You see that in Luke 24, verses 42 and 43. So eating in the presence of God is something that we are going to look forward to in heaven. Even the Lord's supper, food is part of our liturgy. I have a quote from an author named Tim Chester. He says, the Lord's supper is more than a mere memorial. It changes us. The shared activity, partaking of the one loaf forms us afresh as one body. It reinforces our identity as a community shaped by the cross. Each time we participate, we are reminded of the cross. We are reminded that our sin is atoned for. We're reminded that the cross is our model. And we are called afresh to serve and to sacrifice. And we see that in first Corinthians 10: 17. That's what that's based on. So even carbs, I mean, that's carbs that we do at the Lord's table. Even carbs has a very precious reminder that brings us back to the gospel.

Jocelyn: I love it that food can be gospel centered. That's so cool.

Janet: Yeah.



Alexandra: This sounds so simple, but food is something to be thankful for. It's God's grace to us. God doesn't only have work for us. He provides refreshment for us. Having dinner together with your family or friends has almost a festive quality to it. And if you're having dinner with your family, that's every day. Dietrich Bon Hoffer says, through our daily meal, God is calling us to rejoice, to celebrate in the midst of our working day. How precious. And

Jocelyn: that's beautiful.

Alexandra: sweet of our Lord. And I think also food is a missional tool. Stefan and I, we just bought a house that's we have a large family, so one of the things that we have been praying for is a house that's big enough to host others. And the Lord has blessed us with a house where we're able to have company over. And it's been such a joy to be able to host meals more often. Hosting a meal, it creates community amongst believers. And I think it's also, this is not me tooting my own horn, but I think for anybody hosting a meal, it is an act of humility. It's saying that my social status is not too elevated for you to come and eat with me. And that's why Jesus dining with sinners made the Pharisees so angry. Hospitality and I don't wanna be legalistic about hospitality. I'm not saying every time you're a host you have to serve food. But there is that element where,

Janet: that's right.

Jocelyn: It's often connected. Yeah.

Alexandra: Yes. But it is so important to God that it's a requirement for elders. We see that in First Timothy 3:2, Titus 1:8 and Romans 16:23. Just recently we invited two young men over from the church for dinner. And those two guys ended up staying for six hours. And we didn't know them too well before that, but we definitely know them now and we feel very, very connected to them. And so sharing a meal together is a tool to opening conversation and helping others let down those guards and opening up and allowing us to walk together, which I think is so important in Christianity.

Jocelyn: Yeah.

Alexandra: To live in community with other believers.

Jocelyn: I heard some comments by Al Mohler a couple of months ago about family dinner nights, and he said it's one of the tools that you use to give preference to other people. Because at family Dinner you're learning what people love and don't love. You're learning how they like to celebrate. And eating together is a way that you, like you said, build community by saying what you value is more important to me than what I value.

Alexandra: I love that.



Janet: So I love hearing a more full orb ed view of food. I would suggest, and I understand there's people in all different areas and struggles, but it seems to be that if we're gonna talk about food, the one that we're more comfortable with is it's fuel. So I'm gonna count my carbs and I'm gonna count my, because I'm gonna maximize whatever I have to have so that I'm, whatever it is I believe I need to be. And right now, especially, you know, well, we're recording this at the first of the year.

Jocelyn: Everyone's talking about it.

Janet: Everybody's doing it right now. They won't be in about another week. But for now we're talking about that. And I think it's really important to realize, think how it would affect your hospitality if when they say, would you like a piece of pie? You're counting the calories in your head.

Jocelyn: Yeah, yeah.

Janet: I would suggest that if feasting is part of the scriptures, it doesn't equal gluttony.

Jocelyn: Right.

Janet: To even eat in a meal more than I might require for fuel.

Alexandra: Completely agree.

Janet: You know?

Alexandra: Right.

Janet: But so then what's the problem? Well, if I am using my body in a priority way around loving God and loving others, I will feast joyously and fully. And not end up being gluttonous.

Jocelyn: Yes.

Alexandra: Yes. And that's why the biggest issue with disorderly eating is not eating.

Jocelyn: Right.

Janet: Right, right.

Jocelyn: Right.

Janet: I love that. I love that.



Jocelyn: In first Timothy four, you mentioned this earlier, but I like that passage because it says that food was created for pleasure. That would point us to our greatest pleasure. So the food that is pleasurable in and of itself is not the goal.

Alexandra: Yeah.

Jocelyn: That pleasurable food certainly points us to a God who is going to fill us with pleasure when we see him for the first time.

Janet: So it's actually okay to just enjoy my food and have pleasure.

Jocelyn: It is.

Janet: Like, it's not like, It should only be if it's regimented.

Jocelyn: If it's gross and

Janet: Yes, yeah.

Jocelyn: Crunchy, you know. But another cool thing about food is that if I think about manna in the Old Testament, that provision of food caused the Israelites to build their dependence on God. So it is very tightly connected to our hearts.

Janet: Yeah.

Jocelyn: And I think it's neat to be able to see how food demonstrates that we are dependent on God. When we first started growing a garden, we were depending on it to replace some of my salary cuz I was staying home and we needed the food. And I remember planting those first seeds and be praying to Jesus, God please make the seeds sprout. We were so obsessed with like, huh, what will we do if Jesus doesn't provide for us? We have a greenhouse and we just wrote verses all over it about how God provides food for us. He sustains us so that the way that we eat, And the provision of food shows us God's grace. It shows us his provision and it shows us our dependence. And he wants us to eat our bread with gladness.

Alexandra: Yes.

Jocelyn: That's what Ecclesiastes 9:7 says. He provides everything for our enjoyment and he wants us to enjoy our food, his provision for us, without feeling guilty or frustrated. Which like you mentioned, Janet. That might be something new. Like

Janet: Right.

Jocelyn: For a lot of people food is frustration.



Janet: Yeah.

Jocelyn: But like you said, it's providing our bodies and our minds with the energy that we need to do the things that God has asked us to do. And it's one of the ways that we provide and care for each other. Which is, it's, it's not a topic for this episode, but it's interesting to think, with all the regimented eating, it makes it really hard for you to show hospitality sometimes. Like if someone is only eating this way and they will not bend, it limits the amount of love that they can receive in the form of hospitality.

Alexandra: That's very true.

Janet: Right.

Jocelyn: In certain situations. That's great. I'm so glad we can talk about this topic in a big, broad way.

Janet: Yeah.

Jocelyn: It's important for us to just say like, literally, what is food and why did God give it to us? So how and when does eating become a problem?

Alexandra: So one thing that I used to justify all of the sin surrounding anorexia was that my BMI was not in the range of being underweight. So I would try to get as close to that number as possible without going under to try to excuse my issues. And I'll give another example. My, and I asked his permission before sharing this, but for insurance, like my, our husbands at the church have to get weighed and every time his BMI with his height and weight, he is listed as overweight. But if you looked at him

Janet: Oh, my word.

Alexandra: Yeah.

Janet: There's no way.

Alexandra: There's no way he is overweight cuz he's tall and he is very muscular. So we can't use charts, numbers, pant sizes, et cetera to determine if we have a problem. We have to look at our hearts.

Jocelyn: That is such an important point.

Janet: Yep.



Alexandra: And so I wrote out how I would define gluttony in the Bible. I, in my understanding of gluttony, I think it is an excessive or obsessive attention on food or eating. So this can be overeating or undereating.

Janet: Interesting.

Alexandra: So what I, in my opinion, what we call bulimia, I think the Bible calls it gluttony. What we call anorexia. The Bible calls it gluttony, what we call compulsive eating. The Bible calls it gluttony. What we call obsessive and over dieting. The Bible calls it gluttony.

Jocelyn: It's just what you're gluttonous for.

Alexandra: Yes. Yes. I think it's too much attention on food and eating.

Janet: And not for the purposes God gave it.

Jocelyn: Right. Because I was just thinking anorexia could be gluttonous for control. Bulimia could be gluttonous for pleasure, like there are idol

Janet: or whatever.

Jocelyn: Right. Idolatrous things that your heart is worshiping that are not the Lord Jesus Christ. And you become gluttonous for it. An excessive appetite for it.

Alexandra: Yes. Where the tool involves eating.

Janet: Right.

Alexandra: So, some questions that we can ask ourselves is, how much time does food or eating or the effects of food take up in my thinking? Or how much do I talk about it, journal about it, post on social media about it? Do you covet someone else's body shape or size? Instead of going to God with your highest and lowest moments of the day, do you go to food, exercise, or some aspect of strategizing to lose weight? Are you looking at your views of eating or exercise through the crosshairs of the gospel? Are you willing to ask God to help you hate the way that you view food or exercise? And so these questions I think, are very hard to answer on our own. And sometimes if people have made comments like I think you may have some disorderly eating issues, sometimes going through those questions with a counselor or people in your local church who are wise and who are equipped to disciple, that can be really helpful to kind of work through some of those questions with them.

Jocelyn: Yeah. So I think eating becomes disorderly when you're letting your appetite control you. And it can be an appetite for anything, not just food, like your appetite for control or your appetite for pleasure. And I think that it's so interesting to see how tightly the Bible says our food



is tied to our worship. And so I think it's a helpful indicator cuz sometimes the pleasure of food becomes the point instead of it pointing to Christ who was our greatest pleasure. And like when you look at Genesis three eating got Adam and Eve into trouble because what they wanted was to make their own decisions and they chose to do that through eating something that had been forbidden to them. So I just think food choices are, are very personal and they're very tightly tethered to our heart. And so when you look at why you're eating what you're eating or how you're eating, or what the pattern looks like, it's just a helpful connection to see what it is that your heart is actually valuing above all else.

Alexandra: I completely agree. I think what you're saying is when food and eating and how your body looks, when that is your greatest love that is when it's an issue. And I think one of the saddest aspects of this , and the reason why it's a big problem is that it distracts us from the gospel.

Janet: Yes.

Alexandra: A life obsessed with certain ways of eating or not eating is how the world operates. You were talking about appetites. That reminds me of Philippians 3:18 through 20. It says, for I have told you often before, and I say it again with tears in my eyes, that there are many whose conduct shows that they are really enemies of the cross of Christ. They are headed for destruction. Their God is their appetite. They brag about shameful things and they think only about life here on this earth. But we are citizens of heaven, where the Lord Jesus Christ lives and we are eagerly waiting for him to return as our savior. And so having that mentality of like literally what I worship most is what I desire.

Jocelyn: Yeah.

Alexandra: That is how the world functions.

Jocelyn: Right.

Alexandra: And we are called to live separate.

Jocelyn: Yes.

Alexandra: And differently than that.

Jocelyn: Absolutely.

Janet: So that leads me to, okay, in the world that we live in now, how might we see people involved in disorderly eating?



Alexandra: Well, I have a question in response to your question. Do you think that gluttony is considered sinful in our culture?

Jocelyn: Oh, absolutely not. It's praised and no one should question body size or shape. We should praise it. We should include everyone. We should never encourage someone to go against what they want.

Alexandra: Yes.

Jocelyn: According to my social media.

Alexandra: Yeah.

Janet: Yeah, yeah. It's so interesting though. I hear all that you're saying, and yet, if you look at what Hollywood loves, I believe that on a practical level, we need to look a certain way. And that's why everybody gets a gym membership in January. And that's why there's nothing wrong with CrossFit or any of these things. But why is that the new God? Instead of just something that we do for stewardship. So it's interesting because on the one hand, I don't believe anybody would say it's sin. On the other hand, we are very judgmental.

Jocelyn: Oh yeah, definitely. Yeah, definitely.

Alexandra: Yeah. I think we live in a post-truth culture.

Janet: Yep.

Alexandra: So absolute truth is not tolerated. And feelings define who you are.

Janet: Yep.

Alexandra: So the problem with that is that how we feel is just so fickle and easily swayed. Right? We need to hold our feelings up to the word of God. If how we feel about eating, about food, or about our bodies is rooted from a desire that God says is sinful, then I am wrong. And God is right. It is sin. I have to call it sin. And my feelings don't change that it's sin. So you asked me first to like. How do we see disorderly eating in our culture? I just wanted to first address that like, the world does not condemn this.

Janet: That's right.

Alexandra: It praises it. I think you mentioned like gym memberships. I think excessive dieting, over exercising or just excessive strategizing about losing weight. I feel like, first of all, that's just really easy to do. It's just really easy to get caught in that hamster wheel. My experience when I just really struggled with this you lose weight, it leaves you feeling empty, so you think I need to lose five more pounds to be happy. But then you get there and you still feel empty. And



then it's just repeating and repeating and so, it's just never enough. My husband and I do ministry and college ministry. And what I see a lot is young women following people whose bodies that they want.

Janet: Yeah.

Alexandra: They call it fitspo like fit.

Janet: Oh, wow.

Alexandra: Inspiration. And it can be on Pinterest too, you know, but it's just this concept of like, I'm going to be putting images in front of myself to inspire me to do better in this area, which is so sad, but I get it. Because we do need reminders to push us.

Janet: We need the motivation.

Alexandra: We need motivation. Yep.

Janet: For what.

Alexandra: Exactly. Exactly. So my encouragement to those young ladies is, First of all, unfollow all of that stuff because it's not leading you anywhere good. And set up reminders that are gonna push you towards freedom in Christ. Because we need those motivations to do the right thing. But just your end goal is not where it's supposed to be.

Jocelyn: And motivation toward godliness. Because when you're looking at pictures, it has nothing about what's going on inside of that person's heart. And what they're worshiping and what they're wanting. And you can have inspiration to look a certain way and your heart can still be rotten. You can be thinking wicked things and looking totally hot.

Janet: Right.

Jocelyn: And that's not what God has asked us to do.

Alexandra: Yeah. There's gonna be really hot people that are going to hell.

Jocelyn: Yeah.

Alexandra: And so it's not a command.

Janet: Right.

Alexandra: And we need to focus on the things that are going to lead to the abundant life that Christ promises us. You know, we just came outta the holidays and so I feel like, Maybe it's, I



hear this and I feel like it's common to say that, oh, now that I've eaten a lot of calories, I need to work out extra hard tomorrow. And that kind of goes back to like sometimes, like during a Thanksgiving meal, like it's okay to eat more than what my body,

Jocelyn: Celebrate, right.

Alexandra: Yeah. So it goes back to like the purposes of what a body is. My body's not a checks and balances system. It houses a soul and it's totally okay to enjoy a Thanksgiving feast with my family and friends. Have you guys seen the documentary or heard of it called Supersize?

Jocelyn: Yes.

Alexandra: Okay. So it's this concept of the guy who did it, Morgan Sperlock for one month, he eats McDonald's every day for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. And every time he was asked, do you wanna supersize that? He had to say yes. And it was really disgusting and fascinating also to watch the decline in his health and how it affected his mental state and his emotions. But my point of bringing that up is that we live in a supersize culture.

Janet: Right.

Alexandra: Hedonism in a lot of different areas is very celebrated in our culture.

Jocelyn: So from a super practical point of view, for people who may not have ever thought about eating or food, some of the ways that you might see disorderly eating being lived out, are things like just eating in a way that gives too high of a priority to physical desires. Like we're just not keeping our bodies disciplined. We're not keeping it under control. We're indulging the flesh. So we're just, we're constantly just saying yes to everything. Or you could be eating in a way that shows you are mastered by something where your God is your stomach. So you have things that control you and control the way that you make decisions. Or you might just see eating with a lack of spirit control and lack of self-control. So you just think in the moment, what do I feel like doing? You could even see greed that motivates our eating. So just a selfish desire for anything which we're warned against greed, and gluttony, which you've mentioned. Just eating to excesses, like an inordinate desire for food or drink that goes beyond reasonableness and therefore departs from goodness. I thought that definition was really helpful. Like we are commanded to be good in a way that mirrors God's goodness, and gluttony is not a good thing. That's different than celebrating. It's different than rejoicing at hospitality. That's saying, I am going to eat to excess cuz it fills something inside of me. Or I'm gonna exercise to excess, or control to excess. You could also see things like binge eating or even, I'm just gonna put this out there just to think about extreme eating that becomes your law. Like, I will only ever eat keto.

Alexandra: Yes.



Jocelyn: I will only ever eat paleo. Like even my family, we have some standards of eating that we've chosen because we think it's wise for us. But even in those cases, like I can't hold those rules when I go over to somebody's house because that's not loving to force them to eat only my way. But for some people, your salvation is your eating plan. And that's what you're confident in is gonna give you health. And there's all sorts of other OCD types of eating. Like, I'm gonna be super clean, I can control that I'll never get cancer. All the way up to things like what we would see in maybe the DSM that have a title, not necessarily biblical, but they do have a title like anorexia or bulimia. Which I think is important for us to say at this point is, If you've been given a title for your behavior, it doesn't really mean all that much. It just means that your behavior has been categorized into a certain system of thinking. And it doesn't necessarily fit what God would say about that. And so it's important that we're thinking about how we eat and we're ordering it according to what the scripture says, not according to any societal standard, just that we're living to glorify God with the way that we live in our body and with the way that we handle our food.

Alexandra: Yes. And that is what freedom from eating disorders looks like.

Jocelyn: Yeah.

Alexandra: I'm just seeking to glorify God. I really appreciate that you brought up how easy it is to have a certain way of eating become the rules that I'm learning my salvation, cuz I definitely struggled with that. I think another way to phrase that is, where am I finding my justification? Am I trying to earn my righteousness through a particular way of eating? Do I feel like I'm a better Christian because I uphold to extra rules that other believers may not be upholding? But in the end that is not, it's not good.

Jocelyn: It's so prideful.

Alexandra: It is.

Jocelyn: And it's so easy for us to be like, well, at least I'm not eating that way. And just looking at other people in the way they carry their body or eat their food and think judgmental, hateful thoughts about them because we've chosen to eat a different way.

Alexandra: Yes. And I think ultimately it's an offense to the cross because Jesus said on the cross, it is finished. I cannot add anything more to that. So the way I eat cannot earn any more favor than God has already lavished upon me.

Janet: You know, in situations like that, the thing that has really struck me is, it seems sometimes like it's not that big a deal that maybe I'm adding to the cross. I know that is a big deal, but it can feel like it's not that big a deal, and I can say, I'm not gonna do this or that, and then I get to sit in judgment of you, because you lack such self-control that I saw you get the second scoop of ice



cream. And oh my word, I would never do that. And then to realize I am now holding a standard that God doesn't require.

Jocelyn: Yes.

Janet: But not only that, in doing that, I am choosing to violate a standard he's clear about.

Jocelyn: He clearly has said.

Janet: He clearly has said don't stand judgmentally over other people. And I'm okay that I do that.

Jocelyn: Right, right.

Janet: So I've added a standard. It's not even there. And then I'm clearly then, as a result of that, violating what he has said very clearly.

Jocelyn: Yes, yeah.

Janet: Not to do.

Jocelyn: Absolutely.

Janet: And I think that helped me to kind of go, it's not just, oh, I probably shouldn't do that. It's now you don't understand when you do that, it requires you to violate what he has been very clear about. I think that's great. And I, and people are already, I don't even know, I'm picturing as I'm listening to you guys, I don't even know then do I eat it? Do I not? I, you know, I guess I'm not supposed to get legalistic. So then why? I guess I should eat more. And I think even though the doctor has said I should lose some weight, oh, I'm not gonna worry about that cuz that's just a chart. So now I guess I can, you know, and one of the things that's helped me, number one, if you're actually killing the idols in your life on a daily basis, food will more and more take its rightful place.

Jocelyn: Right.

Janet: And in the moment, am I able to truly thank God for what I'm about to eat?

Jocelyn: Yeah.

Janet: Because then I'm doing it under submission to God, and I can do that with a cinnamon roll.

Jocelyn: Right.



Janet: It's hard to do it with the fourth one.

Jocelyn: Yeah, it's true. It's true.

Janet: But I can do it with the first one. It's one of that actually. And then to go, okay, if I can thank the Lord for it, but if I find I'm trying to hide it even from myself,

Jocelyn: Right.

Alexandra: With greediness, there's no room for thankfulness.

Janet: Yes. Then I can't be thankful.

Alexandra: Yeah.

Janet: So that is a tool that's helped me is, not legalistically, can you say, thank you, God, and then put it in your mouth.

Jocelyn: Right.

Janet: But can I

Jocelyn: Right the principle of it

Janet: be transparently thankful.

Jocelyn: Absolutely.

Janet: And that helps me.

Jocelyn: So it's really interesting to think about some of the extremes that an average person can get into when you think about bodies and food in general, and we've mentioned this on previous episodes, like it's easy to think on these two ends of the ditch. A body is everything or a body is nothing. And we're so comfortable trying to live in a ditch, instead of saying the body is a valuable tool that God prepared for my soul to live in so that I can do stuff for him as a result of my salvation. And the same thing with food. Like I'm tempted to think food is everything or food is nothing. So all of my life is gonna rotate around food or none of my life will rotate around food. But food is a tool given to you to depend on the Lord and enjoy peeks of the pleasure that's available in your relationship with him. And even like, I can control my body or food, or I can control how food affects my body or health, that's just ludicrous. Like we can't even make our heart continue beating. To think that I can control how food affects my health is ridiculous, but that doesn't mean I can just eat whatever I want because that would not be wise. So I do have to think through how to handle my body and how to handle food in a way that honors God, but not one that falls into any of those big ditches.



Alexandra: And I think in order to live in the balance of two ditches, regardless of what sin issue we're talking about, you have to be constantly growing in wisdom. So asking God who gives generously.

Janet: Yep.

Alexandra: But then also walking by the spirit. So just because I'm walking balanced today is no guarantee that next week I'm not gonna be fallen into a ditch. So this is something that the Lord has to continually be working on in our hearts.

Jocelyn: Absolutely.

Janet: And I would say living on mission. Like, I'm not gonna be so concerned about I gotta to eat what's gonna keep me from getting cancer, unless my main goal in life is to never get sick.

Jocelyn: Right.

Janet: But if my main goal in life is to live in a way that when I stand before the Lord, I hear well done and I'm gonna be there forever, not worried about it. I'm not gonna be as tempted toward, I have to make sure I never get sick.

Jocelyn: Right.

Janet: So if I'm living on mission, it's gonna make it easier to keep some of those things

Jocelyn: Absolutely.

Janet: Where they need to be.

Jocelyn: So, Allie, I've heard you talk about this and I think this is really important for our listeners to hear. How is an eating disorder sometimes a false idolatrous relationship that overpromises and under delivers constant companionship? Why would that be so tempting?

Alexandra: That's a really heavy question. But I love that you said, Overpromise and underdeliver. Cause that's what all idols do.

Jocelyn: Yeah.

Janet: Yes.

Alexandra: They all overpromise and underdeliver. And Jesus is the one who not only keeps all of his promises, but says there is more that you will find out, that you will discover, and it will thrill your soul.



Jocelyn: That's so beautiful.

Alexandra: So it's,

Jocelyn: That's so cool.

Alexandra: It's almost like he, I'm not gonna say he under delivers, but there is more than what we are experiencing now, whereas with idols it's the exact opposite.

Jocelyn: Yeah.

Alexandra: And so the sad thing about idolatry is that we go for something that is less than what Jesus has already paid for.

Janet: Yes.

Alexandra: And offering freely, one of the saddest aspects of eating disorders is that it causes, you to have tunnel vision, and I'll say extreme tunnel vision. When your obsession with food, eating, BMIs, pants sizes, number on the scale, as that becomes more important to you, your world actually becomes smaller and you start to care less about loving God and loving others. And more and more you become devoted to this idol. So it's a process and suddenly a number on the scale becomes most important. We see this in Hosea 9:10, Jeremiah 2:5, second Kings 17:14 and 15. I'll just -- so I'm holding up a book that I have had since I came to VOH. It's like my little book of verses that I, my,

Janet: and it's well used for those of you that can't see it.

Alexandra: It's, it's my,

Janet: that's cool.

Alexandra: I call it like my little, my ammo. So when I need to pull it out. But those verses that I just mentioned. Hosea 9:10, they meaning God's people, consecrated themselves to the thing of shame and became detestable, like the thing they loved. Jeremiah 2:5 says, thus says, Lord, what wrong did your fathers find in me? That they went far from me and went after worthlessness and became worthless. And so when I give into any habitual sin, I literally am making myself worthless in ministry.

Janet: Yeah.

Alexandra: In the eating disorder world, quote unquote. Eating disorders are often personified as someone named Ed. Now, I've been kind of outta the loop for like 15 years, but I used to go to like eating disorders anonymous groups. So that was popular then. But that concept of like your



eating disorder being personified, it is very creepy and dark. So Ed is viewed as a constant companion.

Janet: Wow.

Alexandra: Who is destructive but has the comforting presence of always being there.

Jocelyn: That's so sad.

Alexandra: It's viewed as an abusive relationship with Ed. So I actually have a book that I got when I was, before I came to Indiana, when I was going to these groups. So this book, it's called *Life Without Ed*, how one woman declared Independence from Her Eating Disorder and how you Can Too. This idea originated with this book, which used to be one of the top recommended books in eating disorder anonymous groups that I attended. So instead of viewing eating disorders as a sin addiction, it's viewed as a relationship that has both good and bad aspects to it and is a constant companion. So a common thought, which I have totally thought this when I was deep in my eating disorder, is when all else fails, I will still have my eating disorder. So I think that deep down,

Janet: Wow.

Alexandra: We long for that comfort of a constant companion that we can't get rid of despite our failures.

Janet: Wow.

Alexandra: But the Lord has given that

Janet: Yes.

Alexandra: to us already through Christ's death and resurrection, and that is the Holy Spirit. So I think all of us on this earth long for that. A relationship that we cannot shake, we cannot get rid of this. And unfortunately, when you're deep in an eating disorder, you view your eating disorder as that abusive relationship that you know is wrong. You know it's destroying you, but you love it and you can't get away from it.

Janet: It makes me think about the Thomas Chalmers quote, the expulsive power of a new affection. Because what you're saying is not get over it. Stop being that way. Stop wanting that. It's saying, I understand that you want that close companion. Let me tell you about a real one.

Jocelyn: Yeah.

Janet: In the Holy Spirit.



Jocelyn: Yes.

Janet: Like this is a false refuge that under delivers. The Holy Spirit does not. You know, I just, it makes me excited thinking about it. If that's how somebody's viewing it, we have something better to offer.

Jocelyn: Oh, so much better.

Janet: Very cool. So what are some of the idolatries that we might see typically when we're thinking about our bodies and food?

Alexandra: So I was looking at different eating disorder books like that are not biblical and what the hope that they offer. And in the titles, the two biggest things that I kept seeing were acceptance and self-care. And I think if you're looking at the minutiae of what that communicates is, you need to lower your standards of yourself. Your standards are too high and you will be happy when you lower them down. And I think this is why almost all clothing stores right now are portraying models who are very unhealthy. If we talk about disorderly eating and it being unhealthy, it's called fat shaming right now.

Jocelyn: Yeah.

Alexandra: I think that all of us long to behold beauty and we long to behold perfection. The problem is that we're so obsessed with ourselves that we think that we are the answer to that.

Janet: Yes, yes.

Jocelyn: Or the standard of it.

Alexandra: Right.

Janet: Yes. Instead of we're supposed to behold his perfection.

Alexandra: Exactly. Exactly. So Hebrews 1:3 says that Jesus is the radiance of God's glory.

Janet: Yeah. Not us.

Jocelyn: The exact representation of God. Yes.

Alexandra: Yes, yes. And so don't lower your standards. And actually opposite, raise them up to reality. We were never meant to worship ourselves. We were created to only worship Jesus. And when our lives are actually centered around that, it will be completely soul satisfying because that's what we are created for.

Janet: Yeah.



Alexandra: Eating disorders are very glorified in our culture. Anytime something that is not holy is being glorified, it actually means that it is stealing glory that belongs to our pure and righteous God. So there is nothing that can glorify itself, if anything is trying to, it's literally just stealing glory

Janet: Yeah.

Alexandra: from the one who is full of glory, if that makes sense.

Jocelyn: Totally.

Janet: Yeah.

Alexandra: So some specific ways that I see eating disorder steal glory from God. I think that a lot of people use it as a tool to control their internal or external chaos in their life that's often caused by a poor response to external chaos. I know I'm using the word chaos a lot.

Janet: Yep, yep. But that's true.

Alexandra: But I definitely struggled with that. And I think the way to counsel ourselves is we can go from Genesis to the book of Revelation and we see that God is continually through the Bible bringing order to chaos.

Jocelyn: Absolutely.

Alexandra: We see it in creation.

Jocelyn: Absolutely.

Alexandra: And it continues throughout the gospel narrative. I think also eating disorders, seek worship from others. We behold nothing worthy of worship. God alone is worthy of worship. Isaiah six is a beautiful passage that can help center us, that God is alone, worthy of worship.

Janet: Yes, yes.

Alexandra: I think that the world really endorses new age principles that would say that abstaining from eating is a form of power. But the Bible says that abstaining from anything as a form of earning righteousness is a religion. And that does not please God. And we can see that in Colossians two verses 20 through 23. Christ's righteousness has been imputed on me and my sin was imputed on Christ at the cross. And like I said, Jesus said it is finished, which means anytime I try to earn God's favor with righteous acts, it's deeply offensive.



Jocelyn: There are just so many ways we can use the good things that God's given us, our bodies and food, to try to worship something other than God, which is so offensive to the God who gave us our body and food.

Janet: Right.

Jocelyn: And like you said, there's so much worshiping of control and I also think there's worshiping comfort or worshiping escape or even worshiping pleasure or worshiping the attention of others. So it's important that we're thinking about the why, like why are we doing what we're doing? And if it's not to glorify God, then we probably need to look at what's going on. So what are some ways we can take steps of growth in the way we view and use our bodies and food?

Alexandra: Well, I think it would be wise for us to all periodically ask ourselves if we have a healthy and God glorifying view of food and eating. I don't eat perfectly. Jocelyn doesn't eat perfectly.

Jocelyn: No way. Yeah.

Alexandra: Janet doesn't.

Janet: For sure.

Alexandra: There was only one person that ever existed who did eat food perfectly. And so I think it's good to, for all of us, to periodically ask ourselves and evaluate, am I in a healthy place with this? I know that for me, overeating happens consistently when I have too much entertainment in my life. That's just a red flag that I've noticed about myself. They are intimately connected in my life. So, I believe that entertainment in a variety of ways, shapes our appetites. For me, it's literally. So I have to guard myself from not giving in to excessive entertainment, cuz I see it infiltrating my eating a lot. So because Jesus is the one that did eat perfectly, he has every right to tell me how to view food and how to eat, et cetera. So just as God has every right to be extremely specific about stuff in-- my husband and I were talking about the temple yesterday, cause we were comparing like your body's a temple of the Holy Spirit and like how does that relate to the Old Testament? And just that the call to holiness and preparing for the temple and you know, God is our Lord and he has every right. Just like when they were constructing Solomon's temple, it was very specific.

Janet: God told them exactly what he wanted them to do.

Alexandra: Exactly. And he had every right.

Jocelyn: Yeah.



Alexandra: And just in the same way, he has every right to tell me how to live and how to view food and how to eat. First Corinthians 6:19 and 20 says, do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price, so glorify God in your body. God also commands us to kill our sin to mortify the sins of the flesh. Romans eight, we don't have time to go into it, but Romans 8:12 and 13 literally is a command. Mortify your sin, kill your sin. I think also guard yourself against self-pity. If you are someone who is struggling with an eating disorder and you are trying to get counsel and walk in repentance, really put up high walls to guard against self-pity. Rosaria Butterfield, who is the author of Confessions of An Unlikely Convert, and a lot of books, actually, she shared in an interview that she was once feeling sorry for herself about all that she was giving up for the gospel. And she said that a woman in her church said to her, you know what? Go around the church and ask different people what they had to give up for Jesus, and then come back and tell me if you had to give up more. And so, you know, there's this idea of yes, if I have found my identity in my body and that is all being broken down, that is hard. And God wants me to lament to him. But I also have to keep that into perspective that just because a life of obedience is hard, I need to look at what God is calling all sorts of men and women

Janet: Yeah.

Alexandra: In the history of the church and keep it into perspective of, is it really the end of the world that I have to eat teriyaki chicken tonight for dinner? No.

Janet: Right.

Jocelyn: And no amount of sacrifice that we, Christ followers make will ever compare with a sacrifice that he,

Alexandra: Amen.

Jocelyn: Our master made.

Janet: Yes.

Alexandra: Amen.

Jocelyn: And so we're called to look at his example and live like he does. We will never be asked to give up our life to save

Alexandra: Yes.

Jocelyn: Billions of people.

Alexandra: Yes.



Jocelyn: But we are asked to give up our gluttony.

Alexandra: Yes.

Jocelyn: And we are asked to give up our sinful pursuits of comfort. And that's not too much to ask. Jesus is worth it.

Alexandra: Yes.

Janet: Well, and to think it's only bothersome to me because I've idolized it. Yes. So whatever that is, that's drawing me to self-pity is probably what I'm worshiping instead of God.

Jocelyn: Absolutely. Really good indicator.

Janet: So God is graciously surfacing that.

Alexandra: But I have seen that attitude a lot and I struggled with that too, that my life is over now that I'm leaving my eating disorder, and it's just not true.

Janet: Right.

Alexandra: So another thing that I think is helpful, which I don't even remember your question, but I'm just gonna share this because this is something that's really, I have girls who are, who graduate from VOH and they're just like, can you help me understand life after you've finished a program? What does that look like to walk in faithfulness when you still have the temptations?

Janet: Yep.

Alexandra: And for me, I love, love the passages that talk about, don't even look at your old way of life.

Jocelyn: Yeah.

Alexandra: I've got a bunch right here. Galatians 5:1, Isaiah 43, Luke 9:2, Hebrews 12:1-3, Philippians 3, I love 7 through 14 it was like, I clung to those verses. Ecclesiastes 7:10, Proverbs 26:11, which says, as a dog returns to vomit.

Janet: Yes, yes.

Alexandra: You know, that's just,

Janet: Who wants to do that.

Alexandra: When I returned to my sin, that's what got this. Oh, that's the reality. Second Peter 2:21 and 22. Luke 17:32, Genesis 19:26. All these passages remind me that, you know, when I



am looking behind me at my sin and the old life that I walked away from, I am robbing myself of ministry opportunities. I'm not fit for the plow.

Jocelyn: Right.

Alexandra: As Jesus says. And so keep looking forward at Christ. In reality, walking away from an eating disorder is my sin becomes less glittery and I see Jesus for who he really is. And when I love God more, then I start to hate my sin. That is the only cure.

Janet: That's right.

Jocelyn: Yeah.

Alexandra: That's the only cure. And I will give you a real, authentic, vulnerable example. So, and I do not struggle with a lot of this, any of this stuff really anymore. But the roots of it, I still very much do.

Jocelyn: Sure, sure, of course.

Alexandra: But in Thanksgiving we had just a lot of company over and we were traveling a lot and I gained a little bit of weight cuz of just feasting with family and all this kind of stuff. And that was fine. And I just, for the first time in a really long time. I told my husband, I said, I'm thinking a lot about how tight my pants are and I don't want to go there. And he was like, babe, we're gonna study Revelation again. You told me last year you were gonna study it. We are going to listen to John MacArthur sermons every day. And I don't know if you've ever listened to John MacArthur's sermons on the book of Revelation. The first sermon is Revelation 1:1a.

Jocelyn: Oh my word.

Janet: Oh, funny.

Alexandra: It is very intense. And so, but that's, that's, I know. I know myself. I know that I have to constantly be growing in my love for Christ.

Janet: Yes.

Alexandra: That is the key for my freedom. And I am convinced that is what everyone needs. We need to be seeing Jesus for who he really is, and we can just so easily get caught up in deception.

Janet: Yes.

Alexandra: We're so easily deceived.



Janet: I love though that Stephan didn't say, which wouldn't have been wrong, let's study how to think about your body. Let's study the fact that there's no pant sizes in scriptures that we need. But what he recognized is, I need to help you worship, and grow in thinking about something that really does matter. Because as you do that other things get where they need to be. You know? I love that. I love that.

Jocelyn: And I, I love it that I think it might be Luke seven, I need to look this up for sure. But it says, he who has been forgiven much, loves much. Oh, yeah. Yeah. I think it's Luke 7: 47 possibly. But I love that as we see our sin for what it is and forsake it, and find the forgiveness of a Christ who died for us, that causes me to love him more.

Janet: Yes.

Jocelyn: So, part of the way that my love for Jesus grows is dealing with my sin seriously. And I'm just baffled that Jesus would continue to forgive me for the same stupid things that I would do and keep doing, even though it is a dog returning to

Janet: Yeah.

Jocelyn: It's vomit. But as we deal with sin, seriously, it is going to increase our love for God's

Janet: That's right.

Jocelyn: and it's gonna make us equipped to do what God gave us bodies to do and why he gives us food. I just, I love it that God says He gave us bodies for a reason and he gave us food for a reason. I have been reflecting on Act 17:26 through 27, a lot where it says from one man, he created all the nations throughout the whole earth. He decided beforehand when they should rise and fall, and he determined their boundaries. His purpose was for the nations to seek after God and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him though he's not far from any of them. And 1 Corinthians 7:17 says this, each of you should continue to live in whatever situation the Lord has placed you and remain as you were when God first call you. So God is intersecting our lives with the lives of thousands of different people. And he said the point of all of them. Is that they would seek after God. And he placed your life right in the middle of other people's lives, and you are going to have an impact on whether that person seeks after God, by the way that you live your life. And without a body and without food, we can't do that. So it's so good that we could talk about this big, huge topic.

Janet: Yeah.

Jocelyn: And see what God says about bodies and food and, you know, we can get into some pretty bad ditches in any way if we're not careful. But God has given us a lot to think about on these topics.



Alexandra: And I just wanna add that I, I think just being on the other side of the eating disorder world and, and having not been in that deep trench for many years, it can be easy for me to look very critically on how women who struggle in that way. But I, my kids and I were going through the Chronicles of Narnia audiobooks. And I listened to in the Voyage of Dawn Treader when Eustice, who was a character in the book, he was greedy with treasure that he discovered and that greed turned him into a dragon. And I'm gonna share a little bit about this story just real quick. But it reminded me of how painful it really is to walk away from an addiction.

Janet: Yeah.

Alexandra: So Eustice again, he was turned into a dragon. He was very miserable as a dragon. And so Aslan says to Eustice, follow me. Then Aslan tells Eustice to remove the scales from his dragon body. And no matter how many layers of scales Eustice takes off, he is still a dragon. So after Eustice has done all that he can, Aslan says, You need to let me do it. And Aslan, who is a lion, tears into his skin to remove these scales. Now, I was at Vision of Hope residential treatment center for six months when I first read that story. And I remember thinking, I relate to that process. It is so painful to kill sin that I love very much. And there's the reality of I need to work really hard at this, but ultimately I have to also submit to God and let him tear those scales off of me. And it is very painful. So I would hate for us to walk away and. To have anyone think, oh, I just need to send this episode to someone, and their, their life will change in 30 minutes. When in reality this is a very complex issue that takes a lot of counseling and is often a sinful Yes. But a sinful response to legitimate suffering.

Janet: Right.

Alexandra: And so.

Jocelyn: and is deeply, deeply connected to what's going on inside of our heart.

Alexandra: Yes.

Jocelyn: And that's sometimes difficult to work through.

Alexandra: Yes. Very messy and complex. And so I definitely recommend biblical counseling. I have been through other types of therapy and I have found the most success with biblical counseling cuz it gets to the root of what are you worshiping?

Jocelyn: Well, we have some great resources that we're gonna include in the show notes, but I also just wanna say how much joy my heart is experiencing right now watching you open your mouth and pour out grace.

Janet: Yes.



Jocelyn: Because that's such a huge change. You mentioned that you were a tough, crusty person.

Alexandra: Yeah.

Jocelyn: When you first came to this area and it's cool to see how God has transformed you.

Alexandra: Thank you, Jocelyn. That means a lot. Thank you.

Janet: It's beautiful. So do you have, I have one resource that I want to mention. I don't know if you guys have any, the one that I thought about as you guys were talking about really what is our body for, I like Sam Albury's book. What God Has to Say About Our Bodies. I think that's a really good book. It's not about disorderly eating, it's about the purpose of our bodies.

Jocelyn: Bodies, Yeah.

Janet: So that's really helpful. You mentioned, Alexandra, Addictions, A Banquet in the Grave by Ed Welch. We'll definitely have a link to that one.

Jocelyn: Yep.

Janet: Are there any other books that you, that you wanna bring up? Anybody have resources that we'll also put in the show notes?

Alexandra: I think a book that I found to be really helpful on a practical level to kind of dissect my thinking is Love to Eat, hate to Eat by Elise Fitzpatrick. I know a lot of people that call it love the book, hate the book

Janet: Oh, funny.

Alexandra: Because it really does reveal a lot. I just found it to be really practical.

Janet: Yep. Yeah.

Alexandra: I have been really enjoying a book. I'm a big puritan nerd, and this is not necessarily about eating disorders, but I think a lot of if we had the time to kind of dissect what each eating disorder like tended to veer towards in their idolatry a lot of it comes back to do I trust God

Janet: Yeah.

Alexandra: Is sovereign, do I trust that he is good? So I've been reading a book by Thomas Watson who is a Puritan called All Things For Good, which really breaks down Romans 8:28 and 29 in a way that I have never studied before. It's been really, really cool.

Jocelyn: That's exciting. I wanna check that out.



Janet: And I'm looking at the book, she's showing it to us. It's not, it's not huge.

Jocelyn: Yeah. It's little.

Janet: So it's doable.

Alexandra: It's a part of a series's called Puritan Paperbacks. Each book is like \$9. I'm obsessed. There's about 40 books. But ultimately I think really if you are someone who's struggling with this and you want help, get into your Bible, there is literally no other resource that is going to help as much as the living,

Janet: Yeah.

Alexandra: active word of God.

Jocelyn: Absolutely.

Alexandra: And figure out who is Jesus, what is the gospel? And allow your love of the Trinity to grow. And that really, I know it sounds simple, over simple, but really that will help you hate your sin more.

Janet: Excellent. You know what I would really like to just end with prayer. Why don't we pray? Father, you know that we all come to you needing help in this area. Such a basic area. How do I use my body? What is my relationship with food? And I have yet to speak to a person on planet Earth that doesn't need to grow in this. And you are so patient and you are so kind. And God, I pray that we would also be that, that we would be grace filled with each other. And that each time we have to think about that in our own lives, it would draw us to gratitude and draw us to you. The only one who used his body perfectly and thought about food and used food perfectly and did that on our behalf. So I praise you for that. And would you help us to not settle for anything less than Jesus. These other false refuges. They do, they overpromise and they underdeliver, but not so with Christ. And so would you help us, Father, that these areas of struggle would not be things that would hinder our faith, but that they would be things that crowd us back to Christ. Thank you, Father, that you give us answers that are far better than the things that we are going after, because that's the kind of God you are. All because of Christ, we can pray. Amen. Amen.

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