

An Exercise To Discern Both Good and Evil (Hebrews 5:14)

My Brother You Have A Self-Control Problem

Scenario:

A brother in Christ begins a weight loss journey. He has determined that he is overweight. He has determined that he needs to do something about it. He publicly talks about his weight loss journey. He publicly confesses that his weight gains are because he has no self-control when it comes to food. He even stresses that, even when he knows his diabetes is going to get worse because he eats something, he just cannot help himself. He publicly confesses that he believes himself to be a sinner, not because of his weight, but because of his lack of self-control. He states that this area of his life is not the only area of his life wherein he lacks self-control. He then adds that he is going to start an online social media page to document his weight loss journey. He stresses that he is doing so to keep himself accountable. He encourages the brethren to watch this journey and hold him accountable. As a short time passes, his weight loss journey crashes. His social media pages have been sporadic. He has not lost weight, he has visibly gained it. A brother in Christ approaches him about this, in front of other saints, and addresses the issue. One brother pays close attention to this. That brother who was listening to the rebuke about lacking self-control decides to take action with that information on a brother in the congregation.

Statement That Arises From Our Scenario:

The bystander mentioned above approaches a brother in the congregation and says: "We have just witnessed a brother among us sin because he is fat. I cannot sit by idly while he is rebuked for his lack of self-control and let you get away with the same sin. My brother, you have a self-control problem. You need to come before the congregation, confess your lack of self-control, and show fruit meet for repentance."

A Later Statement Is Made:

After the brother in Christ breaks down in tears and says that his weight is not a self-control issue, the rebuker states: "We have just learned that being overweight is a self-control problem. Now, you have to add to your confession and repentance that you are a self-deceived liar. You have till the end of the day or I am bringing this before the congregation. It is a public sin. Don't worry, there are others I will be talking to as well about this same sin."

For Discussion: What do you see in those statements?

- As we begin, we need to recognize that this scenario starts off with a man's human opinion (**Proverbs 3:5-7**). A person's weight is not something that can be legislated through the Scriptures. Furthermore, a person's choice, such as this, should not become a congregational matter. Allowing it to be such can/will likely create a false standard. Furthermore, we read that such concerns like diet and

An Exercise To Discern Both Good and Evil (Hebrews 5:14)

exercise profit little (**I Timothy 4:1-11**). See: https://www.wordsoftruth.net/bodilyexerciseprofitlittle_2019.html

- Pay attention: “He has determined”. Based on what? What caution needs to be taken here? His “confession” is based on his own opinion of what self-control is and is not (**Proverbs 14:12, Proverbs 16:25, Proverbs 21:2, Isaiah 5:21, and Jeremiah 10:23**). Is this the world’s influence (**Romans 12:1-3**)?
- What is a glutton (**Proverbs 23:20-21**)? The term translated glutton there means: “to shake (as in the wind), i.e. to quake; figuratively, to be loose morally, worthless or prodigal: — blow down, glutton, riotous (eater), vile...” (Strong’s # 2151). It is translated as “vile” in **Lamentations 1:11**.
- Is it sinful for someone who likes sweet foods? How about the application of **Proverbs 25:16**? Again, could the information put forth by the world POSSIBLY cause a brother or sister to think they’re in some kind of trouble that he or she is not?
- All of my previous statements of caution are because of this... He confesses sin. Again, I must ask and would do so publicly, based on whose standard is this confession being made? Confession of sin requires repentance (**Proverbs 28:13 and Luke 13:1-5**). How will that be measured in this case? What does he mean when he said he has “no self-control when it comes to food”? Does he eat until he vomits?
- To call something sinful, you must be able to establish that such is a transgression of the Law of Christ (**I John 3:4**). While **Romans 14:23** can apply to the personal conscience, it is not a collective standard when coming from one individual. If it is made the standard, how many will be withdrawn from, thus lost, because of that?
- There is a time to make a confession to the entire congregation, such as times wherein the sin [transgression of the Law] is public (i.e. **I Corinthians 5:1-13**; cf. **II Corinthians 2:1-11**). If his lack of self-control is not effecting the congregation, this would be a time to seek help from individuals who may be able to help and to determine if there is even sin involved at all (**Proverbs 24:6 and Galatians 6:2**).
- Remember, there is clear authority to seek help and guidance from INDIVIDUALS within the congregation rather than the whole congregation (i.e. **Titus 2:3-5**).
- Now that this becomes something expressed in public it becomes a potential problem on many levels as this scenario will play out. For one example, this will put some people in the area of judging in a sinful manner (**John 7:24 and James 4:11-12**).
- Lacking self-control, otherwise known as temperance, certainly is a matter than can be spiritually damning (**Proverbs 25:27-28 and I Corinthians 9:25-27**). However, it is also part of the growth process of a Christian and therefore cannot be easily put forth as a blanket standard that applies to all equally (**II Peter 1:3-11**).
- How a person handles carnal matters can be a reflection of how they handle spiritual matters (**Luke 16:10-11**). Again though, there are too many variables on matters such as this that are not clearly defined in the Scriptures to make judgments.
- He then says this his lack of self-control continues in other areas of his life. This is even more problematic as a confession. This is a general statement and would have to be clarified. It leaves and creates many unanswered questions. For one

An Exercise To Discern Both Good and Evil (Hebrews 5:14)

example, this will cause some who lack spiritual judgment to be tempted in the area of evil surmising (**I Timothy 6:3-5**) and being busybodies (**I Timothy 5:13** and **I Peter 4:15**). Why is he being allowed to continue with these statements? Somebody needs to step in and look out for him.

- When it comes to judgment... Is diabetes solely a weight control or food problem? Where does genetics come in? Are all diabetics people who lack self-control? On what Scriptural basis comes such determinations? Can this brother have some medical condition that causes him to have an appetite that could be considered unhealthy? Who are we to determine such things? Speaking from experience, I once weighed 320 lbs (2007). As I write this I weigh 186 lbs. I often stick to a strict, self-imposed diet. I do enjoy eating foods I like in moderation. I workout hard 6 days a week, often for multiple hours at a time. I can eat 1800 calories in a day, run 5 miles, and lift weights - and then gain 2 lbs. I have a genetic disadvantage to my personal goals. I can eat the same diet as my wife, she stays slim and trim. I will gain weight quickly. My doctor says it's genetic. I am not a standard to follow in these things. Neither is anyone else my standard to follow in these things. Listen, some people (not all) are just going to have more body fat than others. It is miserable to be a slave to a scale. Why would anyone want to do that? I don't do that. That is not living. Remember, we have the liberty to enjoy food (**Ecclesiastes 5:18** and **Matthew 11:19**).
- Then a person who says he lacks self-control is going to further his trials by making a public record of his situation? WHAT! Again, step up brethren. If he needs to grow or repent in regards to temperance, this step will just make it harder. It will be one more added thing for him to keep up with. If we become judges of what another eats, what danger is in that (**Colossians 2:16**) [context is about binding the Law of Moses]?
- He then asks for accountability, but not for help. The two are not the same. There is asking for a hand up (**Ecclesiastes 4:9-10**) and then the other that asks for brethren to judge your actions. Again, what Scriptures can be used in this unclear situation to judge righteously? How many will be scripturally merciful (**James 2:12-13**) and how many would be tempted to be unjustly critical (**Matthew 7:2**)? How much potential exists in this unclear situation for sin to abound?
- Of course, his public situation crashes. He has a problem with self-control. This causes an escalation. Now he is getting what he asked for - accountability. Yet, as I would fear, it comes from one whom "pays close attention to this." Food, in many cases, is an area of authorized liberty and now someone has become a judge regarding this. This is too dangerous (**Romans 14:4-20**).
- Regarding the one paying close attention to this... There is the need for us to examine fruit (**Matthew 7:15-20**). Actions speak louder than words (**Titus 1:16**). However, there is also the need not to take that too far (**I Samuel 16:7**, **Psalms 119:110**, **Isaiah 29:21**, **Jeremiah 5:26**, **Luke 6:7**, and **John 16:1-3**).
- We need to be very cautious in not condemning the just (**Proverbs 17:15**). See this study: <https://www.wordsoftruth.net/wotvol12/wotbulletin11202011.html> and this: https://www.wordsoftruth.net/discerngoodfromevil/whythisstudy_2019.html
- Lest someone say this person approaching this brother, in front of others, is a violation of **Matthew 18:15-35**, be careful. This is not a private, personal matter of

An Exercise To Discern Both Good and Evil (Hebrews 5:14)

sin against another. The errors here stem from allowing this situation to begin and grow into further issues. We once had a sister come forward to express something publicly that never should have been made public. Then we had members who took their examination of that too far that lead to, in part, a whole family falling away.

- Then things escalate further. In the statement that arises from this scenario. Someone sees this example being set forth, that all started with human opinion, and has now used this situation to bring about action on another in the congregation. What authority does anyone have to take what some individual has stated is his or her on personal conclusion and then turn and use that to judge someone else? Isn't that in fact wrong (**II Corinthians 10:12**)?
- What Scripture defines "fat"? What Scripture says being "fat" is sinful? What Scriptural reasoning suggests an ideal weight and what constitutes the violation of that ideal weight? What standard has been set in this congregation by allowing this to play out as it has (**Galatians 5:7-9**)? See how I keep coming back to this!
- When this statement that arises from this scenario comes forth: "I cannot sit by idly while he is rebuked for his lack of self-control..." This is the problem. A standard has been created. Now, the congregation is accepting a concept that is unscriptural. A person judged, in the flesh, as being overweight will be viewed as lacking self-control. Consistency will have others dealt with using this judgment. It is like when Jeroboam introduced idolatry (**I Kings 12:25-33**) and that become the standard to follow for many generations until the ten tribes were put (**II Kings 17:20-23**) away by God (**I Kings 13:34, I Kings 14:16, I Kings 15:30, I Kings 15:34, I Kings 16:2, I Kings 16:26**, etc...). Incorrect inferences continue for generations to cause many to err (i.e. **John 21:20-23**).
- In the later statement, the incorrect standard being set forth then makes a potentially false accusation. Brethren who err in judgment end up making slanderous charges (**Romans 3:8**). That is called persecution (**Matthew 5:10-12**). Think about how this unscriptural standard has caused brethren to persecute one another! How is that "brotherly love" (**Romans 12:10**)?