

Question: "What does the Bible say about eating disorders (i.e. anorexia, bulimia)?"

Answer from GotQuestions.org: There are two major eating disorders: anorexia, in which people purposefully under eat, and bulimia, in which people binge on food and then purge. (Some people consider gluttony an eating disorder, but for the purposes of this article, we will not address it. Please see our article on [gluttony](#).) Polls taken have reported differing numbers, but at least 1 out of every 10 women will have experienced an eating disorder at some time in their lives, and some polls suggest that as many as 1 out of 4 will. Eating disorders do not only affect women, either: approximately 10% of those with an eating disorder are men.

Eating disorders have many reported causes: stress, personality traits (obsessive compulsive, perfectionism), media, and unhealthy relationships. However, eating disorders have at the root an over-emphasis on self, usually in a very negative way. This kind of reverse self-esteem can be very destruction to the health and well-being of an individual, not only to the body but to the spirit as well. It also can have profound effects on the sufferer's family.

For the Christian, anorexia and bulimia fly in the face of what God has revealed. [First Corinthians 6:19-20](#) tells us "... don't you know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourself, for God bought you with a high price. So you must honor God with your body" (NLT). Add to this passage such passages as: [Romans 14:7-8](#), "For we are not our own masters when we live or when we die. While we live, we live to please the Lord. And when we die, we go to be with the Lord. So in life and in death, we belong to the Lord" (NLT). If our bodies belong to the Lord, then He is the master of them and the way we treat them either honors or dishonors God. Eating disorders do not fall into line with Scripture, and it is incumbent upon a Christian suffering from one—and his/her family as well—to seek as much medical and spiritual help as necessary to treat the problem.

Jesus Christ has the power to break the bondage of eating disorders, but it will often take biblical and dietary counseling for the person under such bondage to realize their predicament. Needless to say, this is a matter for much prayer. God is able to free us from all types of bondage through the power of His Holy Spirit. If we are His in Christ, He makes that power available to us.

Recommended Resource: [The Monster Within: Facing an Eating Disorder by Cynthia Rowland McClure](#).