

Eating Disorders

Diseases that affect the soul and body.

This article was written by Matthew Mikhail of St. Mary's Coptic Orthodox Church of Atlanta, Georgia.



“Or 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.” 1 Corinthians 6:19-20

Eating disorders are medical illnesses that involve major disturbances in eating behaviors. Eating disorders are usually triggered by environmental influences. The two most common types of eating disorders are anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa. These disorders are characterized by an intense fear of becoming fat, even when losing extreme amounts of weight. Another condition, binge-eating disorder or compulsive overeating, is also classified as an eating disorder.

It is estimated that one percent of the population in the United States is anorexic. People who are anorexic fear weight gain more than death. People who suffer from anorexia have a distorted image of their body and think of themselves as being overweight even

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when they are dangerously thin.

Unfortunately, it is very rare for a person suffering with anorexia to overcome their problem themselves. Anorexics tend to deny they have a problem. What is more troubling is that many of the characteristics of someone with anorexia nervosa goes unnoticed because dieting and being thin is socially accepted in our culture.

Bulimia nervosa is more prevalent than anorexia nervosa. According to some estimates nearly one out of every five women on college campuses may be bulimic. Though more prevalent in females, bulimia is also common among males.

Bulimics go through eating cycles. Their cycle begins with a large amount of food consumption, where they may eat up to several thousand calories in one session. Afterwards, they feel relief and satisfaction, which later turns into guilt and shame. Bulimics then purge the food they have consumed, usually by inducing vomiting or by using laxatives.

Binge-eating disorder is the most common type of the three eating disorders. Some symptoms of binge-eating disorder include eating what would be considered by most people a large amount of food, eating until feeling uncomforta-

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bly full, eating alone because of embarrassment of how much food is being consumed, and/or feeling disgusted, depressed, or guilty after overeating.

There are treatment options available for people who suffer from eating disorders. The biggest changes from these kinds of behavior come from a change in attitude. We have to be more accepting of who we are and putting our focus upwards towards God and less on ourselves. Of course however, eating

healthy, proper weight management and taking care of our bodies is extremely important and should be done for the right reasons.

“And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will accept. When you think of what he has done for you, is this too much to ask? Don’t copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will know what God wants you to do, and you will know how good and pleasing and perfect his will really is.” Romans 12:1-2



St. Phoebe A Reputable Deaconess

St. Phoebe was one of the forerunners of a vast array of woman believers throughout the years who have rendered loyal service to the Lord Jesus Christ and His Church.

We know about St. Phoebe only from two verses that St. Paul wrote (Romans 16:1, 2): **“I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a deaconess of the church at Cenchrea that you may receive her in the Lord as befits the saints, and help her in whatever she may require from you, for she has been a helper of many and of myself as well.”** Cenchrea was a seaport harbor, 6 miles from Corinth, in Greece.

St. Phoebe was very close to St. Paul in serving the congregation of the Lord Jesus Christ, and had a very high standing in the early Church. St. Paul speaks of her high status and the importance of her work. He addresses her with a term of equality in the spiritual Family of God.

A disciple of St. Paul the Apostle, St. Phoebe delivered a most important letter for him to the believers in Rome at the heart of The Ro-

man Empire, A.D. 57. When St. Paul’s work had finished in the Mediterranean, and he desired to visit the Roman saints, he wanted the letter to be personally given to those at the Church in Rome to prepare his way. St. Phoebe carried the letter to Rome, hidden beneath her robe. She carried what was to become the entire future of Christian theology.

St. Phoebe was in a service position as a deaconess and may have been the first deaconess in the service of the Lord Jesus Christ. St. Phoebe, a deaconess (Greek word diakonos), was a devout Christian and greatly served the Lord Jesus Christ.

She also ministered to the Lord’s new converts and St. Paul thought of her as a very reliable disciple. He also mentions how Phoebe was a great help to many people, including him.

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