

## **Anorexia**

*He who conceals his sin will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes his sin will find compassion.*

*Dear Joellen,*

*I wanted to write to you because I care about you and want you to be warned about the seriousness of listening to any voice other than the Holy Spirit's, and being under the influence of any ungodly persuasion. In the Body, our lives are so intricately related one to another that ungodliness quickly spreads like leaven in a lump of dough. There is a strong and powerful spirit at work in the world today, which is destroying many people's lives. It is a crippling, enslaving spirit that would like to find an inroad into the only place on earth where it has been robbed of its power to captivate men. The A.M.A.'s name for it is **anorexia nervosa** (or something like that), I am sure you have heard about it.*

In the Little Flock, we have had direct encounters with this spirit, and seen personally its devastating effects on our beloved sister, Gudrun. It is a subtle, deceptive, lying spirit. Gudrun has been a *slave* since she was 18 years old. She is now 22 years old and weighs only 70 pounds. She loves food and is actually a very gluttonous person, but once she has over-eaten she makes herself throw up. She is now baptized into a new kingdom and should have nothing to do with this destructive spirit any longer. This has been very hard for her because she is so accustomed to obeying this spirit. She is terrified of becoming fat, and even sees herself as fat now in her present condition. She was continuing to throw up her food even after she was baptized, but she lied about it because she knew it was wrong. We could all see her eating not only her full portion but always munching on something between meals while she helped in the kitchen, yet she said she was keeping all her food down. This troubled everyone, but especially Kirsten and the other single women. They could not understand how she could consume such great quantities of food without gaining any weight on her skinny body. Right before our first communion in our new house, and Gudrun's first communion ever, we met together with her and the women. Yoneq confronted her with our question. She stood firm in her lie. She said she had not thrown up, but did have a bad case of diarrhea, which accounted for her not gaining weight. We continued questioning her, but her lie was so firm it made us seem quite unjust in doing this. Kirsten explained to her how she too had been under the influence of this spirit in the world, how that sometimes she had thrown up three times a day after times of gross over-eating. Kirsten said that after she threw up her body was again hungry, craving nourishment, so she would begin to eat again right after she had thrown up, only to again feel the pangs of guilt for overeating and return to vomit again. Kirsten said that when she returned to the church she was still tempted to fall into the same pattern, but knew she would have to confess it if she did it, so to avoid the shame of such a confession she quit doing it. But she was still plagued with the thoughts of being overweight, and even did gain weight the first few months she was back. This was very hard for her to take. She was tormented by the thought of being fat.

Finally Arthur had told her that she needed to accept herself just the way God had made her. He said it would do no good to just keep telling her, "Kirsten, you are not really FAT!" because in her perverted mind she saw herself fat no matter what anyone said. She just needed to praise the Lord for her condition and worship him. This she did, with much suffering...and eventually she leveled out in her eating and was no longer compelled by this overwhelming spirit of gluttony and self-destruction.

Gudrun listened but still denied throwing up. Each woman present gave their reasons for believing that she was still throwing up her food. She denied it. Yoneq then warned her of the seriousness of going to the table with unconfessed sin...his words penetrated her heart. She confessed that since she had been here she had thrown up nearly everything she had eaten, which was a lot. This was quite hard to imagine, because Yoneq had even gotten the women to prepare her a special diet between meals to try to alleviate the problem of her always eating while she worked in the kitchen. He told the women to serve her extra nutritious snacks several times a day so she wouldn't feel that constant hunger, which we thought was coming from her body being so

undernourished and now it was coming back to health. But in reality, even after we had been making special things for her (like milk shakes, cheese sandwiches, eggnog, etc.) she never gained weight or stopped raiding the kitchen all day long. Now we find out that she was eating all this special food and throwing it up immediately afterwards.

We were glad she finally confessed. We saw the depth of the hold that this spirit had on this young woman. She would die soon of this were it to go on. She really didn't want to throw up but was compelled by this fear of fat. She had been taught in the past to call this a sickness, but Yoneq clearly told her that it was not a sickness, but an evil spirit. This spirit causes her to lie, to steal, to be a glutton, and to murder (murdering herself). Gudrun wants to be free. But she must want this with all her heart. We prayed for her that day before communion and she was able to partake with a pure conscience. But this was not the end of her encounters with that spirit. The next week she reluctantly confessed several times of throwing up. Yoneq said this must stop, that she could not pray before each meal, "Thank you Father for this food, so I can go and throw it up." The evil spirit saw that the end of his tyranny was in sight, so it started telling her to leave her place of freedom. She almost left several times that first week, but through the exhortations of her brethren, she overcame and remained. This is very serious and she needs much prayer. John says that he believes she will soon die if this bodily torture is not stopped.

This destructive spirit is not always so evident and blatant as it is with Gudrun. We must not be influenced by it in any way. The church is a place of freedom where we can be saved. This spirit has found fertile soil in today's weight-watching women. But the world's weight consciousness comes from a different source than ours in the church. We don't want to fall into gluttony, and its obvious outcome — fat. But some people who are overweight not because they overeat but because of a physical problem which they can do nothing about, only the Master can help them if they turn to him. As Yoneq has said, "We will be judged for every ounce of fat we have on our body that has not been resisted with at least an ounce of self-control." Our Master hates gluttony. Karin was a glutton when she came to the church. She was baptized and took action against her condition. She did nothing radical but by the power of the Holy Spirit into whom she had been baptized, she began practicing self-control. She allotted herself a very small bowl from the kitchen in which those who were serving the portions at mealtime were to put her food. It was smaller than what the children were served in. She started jogging every morning. Her weight dropped steadily. Now after several months (10), she has lost about 100 pounds.

Sabina wasn't such an easy case. She didn't want to lose weight, even though she was about 40 pounds overweight. She liked her large manly appearance. She was under a homosexual, woman's lib influence, and resisted the "feminine look." She was told to lose weight, and her resistance to this exposed this deeper root. Once that was dealt with, it was only a matter of her will — dying to her flesh. She didn't lose much weight for a while but finally after receiving a word of public rebuke about her slothfulness in being obedient, she took action like Karin had and the results were immediately evident. She is now within 15 pounds of her normal weight. Gluttony should not be tolerated in the church, but neither should any vain and destructive motive in losing weight. We do all things for His glory, if we eat or drink or whatever we do (1 Cor 10:32).

I write this to you because you have oftentimes had difficulty in properly discerning yourself in areas such as these. In one letter you wrote to us in Germany you spoke of having changed your mind about not having any more children because your motive for not having any more was because of your desire to keep a 'lean' body. This was good news and we rejoice to hear that you will soon be having another child. But we have also heard word of something that has greatly alarmed Yoneq. That is about the 'extreme' use of the sauna at very high temperatures for the purpose of weight loss, even among pregnant women such as yourself. Although there have been no 'official decrees' to the contrary, the midwives have always suggested that women do not take saunas during pregnancy. We should always give heed to the hints of those with wisdom, lest there be need for a *law* (1 Tim 1:8-11). The law must come externally only to those who will not give heed to the law which is written upon their hearts. The New Covenant put the law in our hearts. The external law is for criminals who won't listen to *sound teaching*. The midwives are God's authority, under the direct supervision of the elders of the church. Only a dull heart would not give heed to their council.

The sauna is not for *extremes*, but for the health of the body. It is not for people to see how hot they can

make it and still survive. This is fanaticism and there is no room for fanaticism in the church. This extremism does not come forth from the Holy Spirit. What is the motive behind it? To glorify God? What is the motive for extreme, unhealthy, 'self-control' in eating? For you it may be a delight to abstain from eating much food, whereas for others it is the cross. Some people find much satisfaction in extreme asceticism, but this is not the mind of the Lord. Outside the church one's personal eating habits are surely their own business, but in the organic structure of the Body of Messiah every area of our behavior is inter-related. We must be on guard that what we approve does not cause a brother for whom Messiah died to stumble (Rom 14; 1 Cor 8). If we have done this we must repent.

Everyone has certain burdens of their own which only they can bear; others we must bear for one another. Bearing one's own burdens most usually comes in the area of one's own self-control. For different people their problems with self-control may be different. For one it may be involved with controlling the influence of past deviant sexual behavior, others it may be in areas of eating, others with holding their tongue, others with being contentious, etc. All these involve self-control and it is a burden that only the person involved can carry. Gal 6 — That is why it says, "If anyone is caught in any trespass... gently restore him." This is involving the burdens we must all carry. We must encourage one another for it is easy "to lose heart" (Gal 6:9) in areas like these. We often see our brothers' weaknesses in areas like these, when they fall. We must be careful not to disdain our weak brother, *thinking that we are really something*, deceiving ourselves just because our own burden might be less obvious (verse 3). Here comes the test of truly loving others on a daily basis. We must be faithful to our Master's words in Matthew 7, getting the board out of our eye. In some ways it may be better to be outwardly fat than to be covering over a 'root of bitterness' which will end up defiling the whole community, permeating the whole loaf (Hebrews 12:15). In the same way, not using self-control in judging our critical spirit is much more dangerous in the body than overeating, for it is an undermining influence that is much more subtle and less easy to recognize than a fat belly.

Yoneq recommends concerning someone who wants to lose weight that he eat only the portion of food which is served him at mealtime, and no more. The persons responsible for the serving of portions should be aware of each person in their household and their special needs. This should be under the guidance of the shepherds of the household. The portion should be received with thanksgiving as being just what the Lord wants that person to have. When Larry and Mary Ann came to the church in Europe, Larry was fat, 20 pounds overweight, and of course everyone knows Mary Ann's problem. Their conditions were exposed to the household and their food was portioned out to each according to their need, and with their agreement — both desiring to be helped and normal. They could and should eat all of it, and be thankful. (This is naturally difficult at times, but that's okay because we all want to die to our flesh — we must remember our baptism.)

As for you, your health and the health of your unborn child is of utmost importance to the Lord. Would Moses' mother had taken the vain notion to go on a starvation diet, not telling the destruction this may have caused in God's plan for his people. Her selfishness could have frustrated the purpose of God if it had adversely affected the child's physical or mental health. This is of course a drastic example, but we need to see the importance of our seemingly innocent actions. Getting over-heated in the sauna certainly doesn't seem like common sense during pregnancy unless the pregnant woman has a hidden desire to hurt her baby. Let love motivate all our deeds. May we have the common sense, God's wisdom, in the things we approve of. Let us not 'laugh-off' Godly council. We don't live unto ourselves any longer. Our lives have an effect on others. Not only upon our unborn babies, but upon the others around us who follow our example. It may not hurt us, but will it hurt the one following me. If so, who will be judged for it?

This is a serious word, but it must be said. Yoneq is concerned about these extremes, and what these extremes indicate about our spiritual condition. He wants you not to lose hope at this time before your birth, but to trust in the Lord who can help you just as he helped Charlotte. She was able to completely give up her medicine, and yet with proper portions and plenty of exercise she was able to continue to lose weight. She is surely not 'skin and bones' now, but she is a healthy weight for her body, and her husband is pleased with her — that is what is important. Now if she does get pregnant (which she desires very much), her child will also be healthy — Lord willing. You should not be afraid to trust Him.

In distrusting God, we resort to our own devices to work things out ourselves to the way we hope God wills them to be, fearing deep inside that if we don't *do something* ourselves things won't work out right. We really fear what God's will might really be. Self-effort results from this fear. We want to take things into our own hands. Like with Paulette. There was a great tendency to resort to the flesh to accomplish what we had prayed that the Lord would do. This is like Abraham who produced Ishmael in his own effort — something that he would always regret and which brought devastation down through the centuries. The arm of the flesh, self-effort, is the greatest enemy of the seed of Abraham. The Lord only gives help to the seed of Abraham — if they will let him! If they will trust Him and wait for him to take action. Only in communion with him can we be in a place where we can *act* by faith. Faith comes from hearing his voice and obeying. This is faith, obeying what you have heard the Lord say.

Our self-control cannot come forth from self-effort. The only hope of having self-control, which is the fruit of the spirit, bearing your own burdens or bearing others burdens, or being able to restore one who falls with a spirit of gentleness, (thus ruling with the Lord) is *receiving the life of the Lord* into your own heart, as a transforming presence (Rev 3:19-21). All else will lead to asceticism, fanaticism, “harsh treatment of the body” which has no value in truly dealing with one's flesh (his own self-effort) and no value in checking true ungodliness. This communion with the Father in his Son must be the founding source of all our deeds, including our self-control and self-denial. Self-denial does not mean a mere denying of some ‘thing’ to one's self, because any miser, or ascetic, or egocentric of any sort can do that easily. Ambitious people have always denied themselves of leisure time, pleasure, luxury, etc. in order to attain their set goal. When Yahshua spoke of self-denial, he meant a radical reversal of Adam's choice of asserting self in place of God. He meant saying no to this pretentious self who wants to be God. The fall is reversed — Adam's choice is denied — by our following Yahshua. The Messiah enables us through the cross to die to self that we might live with God. That pretentious self is crucified with Messiah and all who belong to Messiah have done this.

The self asserts itself when we want to take more or less than our portion. Self is wanting to be God.

Joellen, you need to take your portion, not more and not less. Your portion is just what you need for your health in order to serve the Lord in His purpose. The Lord always deals in portions (Rom 12:3,6; 1 Pet 4:10-11).

Whatever we do needs to be in pro-portion to our faith. We all must meet up to our portion, our proportion. If not, we are going to come up to judgement with “incomplete deeds.” Rev 3:2 — incomplete in his sight. We must meet up to our full portion. This applies in every area of our lives. Your portion of food may be a small one, but it should be enough to enable your body to attain maximum health. (Abstinence now may seem to be okay, but your body will break down at the age of 40 and you will be worthless.)

*Whoever belongs to Messiah has crucified the flesh...* (Gal 5:24). Though outward abstinence might appear to be the flesh crucified, it may be only asceticism for the purpose of self-glory, even unconsciously.

All in all, the total man is in trouble, beyond his own power to remedy his plight. He is fallen in his thinking, in all of his aspects. Man is in trouble in his emotional responses, in the choices of his will, in his moral values, in his bodily expressions, and in his relationship to God, others and things. This means that the “Salvation” he requires must be more than information or revelation for the mind, more than the advantage of having a good example to follow, more than a tranquilizer for the emotions or an ascetic discipline to curb bodily impulses, more than something for external application to achieve a religious ritual. The *Salvation* required must come from a Source higher than man and it must include the cleansing and renewal of the *soul* — the total person. The Salvation of the Soul — the total man.

Joellen, it is so wonderful that we can live in Salvation, that we won't have to live our whole lives in vain but we can be healed. Each of us are being saved in many ways. I have learned so much about myself in the last year or so since we have been in Europe. I have seen how much I have depended in the past on my own self-effort. I realized this when the Lord finally got me into places where I could do nothing in myself to change things — no amount of my own maneuvering could work things out — and I saw that real faith was all about and it was a bit frightening. Yoneq said that sometimes we live like there is *no God*, because we aren't really living by faith.

We can do no more than our faith allows. But saying we don't have the faith should never be our cop-out. We should cry out for faith.

May your faith increase. May you function in the full portion of faith you have received. May your life be a blessing to others.... When I think of you Joellen, I think of a true friend. I value your life in the church very much. I know the Lord will continue to raise you up as a true son who receives his discipline. He loves you and I love you. This letter has come forth mostly from a burden on Yoneq's heart for you as well as many others in the church there who may need to hear this word. May you receive it and share it in the spirit in which it is sent. We are 'with you'.