

Living a Chocolate Life

SESSION 3 SATISFACTION

A CHOCOLATE SAMPLER

Check all that apply to you, and then discuss as a group:

- You live a rich, chocolaty life as you share God's sweet grace with others! (Share insights gained from the last session, and enjoy a Memory Morsel moment too!)*
- Chocolate-dipped fruits, fresh or dried, are among your chocolate passions.*
- You have driven across town or farther to satisfy a chocolate craving.*
- You feel better after consuming chocolate, your comfort food of choice.*
- You include chocolate on your list of daily needs.*

MEMORY MORSEL

"And my God will supply every need of yours according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus." Philippians 4:19

Cravings

I'm having a craving, and I want something that will satisfy me! At least one candy bar makes the claim that it *really satisfies*. So this is my theory: if *one* candy bar satisfies, then an entire box of bars ought to make my whole day, right? (Or so my craving says.) *What do you crave?* Chocolate-dipped strawberries? Fresh-baked chocolate chip cookies with a tall glass of milk?



CHOCOLATE FUN FACT
 Statistics consistently tell us that chocolate is the food most commonly craved by women in the United States. (Do we really need research to tell us this?)

Grandma's gooey Upside-Down Fudge-Sauce Dessert? (You're in luck! This mouthwatering recipe is just a few pages away.) Or maybe you crave a nice, juicy steak with all the fixings. (Occasionally, cravings do exist beyond chocolate, you know.)

It's quite natural for us to crave our favorite foods. God created us with physical hunger that needs sustenance and craves satisfaction. Our stomach longs to be filled with what satisfies us most. God provided every nutrient necessary to satisfy our physical needs, but He didn't stop there. He created fabulous flavors and vast varieties of foods for us to *enjoy*.

But what about other cravings besides our physical hunger pangs? What do we crave most in life? When do we confuse physical hunger with emotional and spiritual hunger? Maybe we are hungry for *love* because we are lonely. Perhaps we crave *peace* because our world is full of strife. Or maybe we crave *comfort* because we are anxious or afraid, dissatisfied or depressed. God created us with a spiritual hunger that needs sustenance and craves satisfaction.



TAKE A BITE
 What foods do you crave the most? Share!

Comfort Food

Give me comfort! Give me love! Give me chocolate! Sound familiar? Have you uttered words like these? Why is chocolate included in many lists of needs? Perhaps because some even call chocolate the ultimate *comfort food*.

We find such pleasure, calming comfort, and soothing satisfaction as we swallow boatloads of our favorite chocolate concoction. Oh, chocolate makes us feel so *good* when we are hurting and hungry! Subconsciously, we're drawn to it because we know it has made us feel better in the past. Research shows that a real physiological response occurs when we eat chocolate. Tryptophan, an essential amino acid found in chocolate, releases the feel-good brain chemical serotonin, which contributes to a temporary boost in our emotions when we indulge in chocolate delights. The resulting euphoric emotions have been compared to the feeling of falling in love.

We know, of course, that the feel-good response is short-lived. Where do we turn for comfort after the last square is swallowed? Is this really a healthy way to seek comfort for what hurts us, to find relief when we are afflicted, to fill a hungry hole that's not in our stomachs but in our souls? I'm all for a little feel-good chocolate, but when does my desire for chocolate become an unhealthy substitute for real pain relief—or my only coping mechanism when I'm feeling blue?

Fillers

In the food industry, fillers are foods that provide little to no nutrition. Also known as *empty calories*, fillers temporarily make a person feel full. They do little to satisfy real hunger; in fact, they leave the body longing for more. Much to my despair, experts have included some near-perfect foods on their *filler* list, foods such as cake, cookies, and chocolate bars. Bummer! I guess that means I need to choose my favorite filler foods sparingly—but my stomach is empty. It growls, and I think it is saying, "Quick! Fill me with chocolate!"

"Wait!" I tell my stomach. "I need to fill you with a good meal first; then we can talk chocolate."

We don't want to deprive our bodies of daily food for our physical nourishment, but what about our souls? There, we find a much deeper hole, a greater emptiness. We may attempt to fill that hole with all kinds of stuff that promises satisfaction. But instead of choosing nutritious, solid food, we often settle for fillers in an attempt to fill our emptiness.

"I'm so lonely! I will feel so much better after I polish off that quart of triple-fudge ice cream." "Maybe someone will finally notice me if I buy that new outfit." "I need those after-dinner drinks to take the edge off my anger." "When I finish this self-help book, I'll finally be happy." "This feel-good movie will make the hurt go away."

We recognize the common cry in these women's words, a cry of hunger and emptiness that longs to be satisfied and filled with love, peace, comfort, and more. While triple-fudge ice cream provides temporary relief, it cannot fill the hurting hole in a heart. New clothes, feel-good movies, and other fillers can't either.

#1 dig in!

- a. Your favorite fillers may not be bad, in and of themselves. So why can't any of these things fully and permanently satiate our emotional and spiritual hunger? What's the result when they are used to attempt to fill a hunger for love, peace, comfort, and more?
- b. Open your Bible to **Isaiah 55:2**. Isaiah asks a couple of curious questions. On the surface, it appears that he is speaking of physical food. Is he really? What do you think he means when he asks why people are spending their money and labor on that which does not satisfy? How does this also speak to us? What kind of rich food is he referring to, and what does it do for us?

✦ TAKE A BITE

What things do you crave most in life? Maybe you have already thought of more cravings; write them here. We'll discuss our cravings further when we *Dig In*.

God alone provides the perfect, nutritious, soul-satisfying food to fill the hurting hole in us, giving us real sustenance and strength. Only He can fully satisfy. Jesus said, "**Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied**" (**Matthew 5:6**). Jesus offers "food" that revives hungry sinners like you and me: the forgiveness of sin paid for with His death on the cross, new life He gives through His resurrection from the dead, and righteousness that's ours by faith in Him. Only Jesus satisfies our hunger for a Savior!

Satisfied!

In the Gospel narrative recorded for us in John 4, Jesus and His disciples were traveling north from Judea to Galilee. Many Jews would have gone out of their way to avoid Samaria, the land that lay between them and their destination, as they despised the Samaritans. But on that day, there was a special purpose for Jesus' stop by a well just outside a Samaritan town.

#2 dig in!

- a. Read **John 4:3–15**. What was the reason for Jesus' request for water from the Samaritan woman? What kind of water was He offering *her*, and why would a person never thirst again if he or she drank it?

✦ TAKE ANOTHER BITE

What "fillers" do you choose in order to find something that satisfies? Take a quiet moment to think about and write down the fillers that you choose, or those you've chosen in the past.

- b. Now take a look at **verses 16–18**. Jesus made another request of the Samaritan woman. What did He reveal that He knew about her, and why would He ask if He already knew the answer? How might her lifestyle tell us something about her attempts to satisfy her hunger in life? In **verses 25–26**, what did Jesus reveal about Himself?

Jesus brought living water—the gift of eternal life—to a woman who was parched and empty, who was in desperate need of a Savior. He came to her in the midst of her sin and pain, and by His amazing grace, He satisfied her greatest need—her thirst for salvation.

- c. Look closely at **verses 28–29** and **39**. Immediately after Jesus revealed to her that He is the Christ, what did the woman do (**vv. 28–29**)? What is surprising about the people’s response, considering the reputation she likely had with them (**v. 39**)? What does this say about God’s grace, freely flowing through forgiven sinners like you and me?

As Jesus came to this woman, satisfying her *greatest* need, so He comes to each of us, satisfying and supplying our *every* need. **“And my God will supply every need of yours according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:19)**. (That’s today’s *Memory Morsel!*) In Christ, we are fully and richly satisfied!

Comfort Food for the Soul

Yes, our Savior satisfies our every need. In His mighty power, He fills us with longings for food, as **Isaiah** said (**55:2**), that really satisfies. We yearn for a bountiful supply of *comfort food for the soul*.

We crave a steady diet of *prayer*. We desire heaping helpings of *worship*, where we are fed with the Word and the Sacraments. We hunger for healthy doses of *God’s nutritious, delicious Word*, savored, chewed slowly, and digested daily.

1 Peter 2:2–3 speaks of craving God’s Word the way an infant craves milk. Just as a baby is satisfied by milk, so those who have **“tasted that the Lord is good” (v. 3)** find that His Word satisfies our deepest needs!

#3 dig in!

- a. **“For He satisfies the longing soul, and the hungry soul He fills with good things” (Psalm 107:9)**. Listen as God’s Word in the Psalms speaks to us about the satisfaction only He can give. With what does He provide and satisfy us? As you write down or share, personalize His provision to include your specific needs today. Discuss.

• Psalm 63:1–5

• Psalm 90:14

• Psalm 103:1–5

• Psalm 145:15–16

- b. And what is the psalmist's response (and therefore ours!) to His rich provision? Personalize your responses in a prayer of praise to the Lord, who truly satisfies.

God speaks to us across His Word about the things we crave most in life—things like *love*, *peace*, and *comfort*, as mentioned earlier.

#4 dig in!

LOVE: About our hunger for love, His Word says, “**See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are**” (1 John 3:1). The following verses are just a sampling of God's words of unconditional love to us. Look for specifics that define the depth of His love, and personalize them as you write and share. (“God loves *me* with an everlasting love. . . .”)

- Jeremiah 31:3
- Romans 8:38–39
- Ephesians 3:16–19
- 1 John 4:9–10

#5 dig in!

PEACE: We long for peace, and Jesus says, “**Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid**” (John 14:27). Read the following verses. What is peace and how do we receive peace with God? Can we have peace in the midst of trials and difficulties? Explain.

- Romans 5:1
- Philippians 4:6–7

#6 dig in!

COMFORT: We hunger for comfort and learn we have a Father “**who comforts us in all our affliction**” (2 Corinthians 1:4). Read the following verses from God's Word, the ultimate comfort food we can savor daily! Recall a time when you received comfort in your suffering or struggles. Were you later able to comfort others in theirs? How can you comfort someone now in a situation similar to yours?

- 2 Corinthians 1:3–4
- 2 Thessalonians 2:16–17

#7 dig in!

God's Word speaks directly to us concerning our every hunger and craving. Our Savior fills us and satisfies every need as only He can. Early in this session when you were asked to **Take a Bite**, did you think of other things that you crave most in life?

How about *security*, *strength*, and *contentment*, to name a few? Read and personalize a sampling of God's many promises to fill even more cravings:

- *Security*: Psalm 40:2; Proverbs 18:10
- *Strength*: Isaiah 40:29–31; Colossians 1:11–14
- *Contentment*: Philippians 4:11–13; 1 Timothy 6:6–8
- *Others*: Search the Scriptures now or during the week ahead to find for your soul even more food that supplies and satisfies every need.

Women commiserate with one another in our afflictions. Often we bring chocolate to a friend's aid. So go ahead and grab a bit of feel-good chocolate. Take some to a friend who is seeking comfort, looking for something sure to satisfy. But as you do, much more important than a sweet treat is God's Word. Take His *comfort food* with you and share it generously. Share the ultimate comfort we receive, knowing that salvation is won for us in our Savior, Christ Jesus!

*Living a Chocolate Life,
we find satisfaction in Christ!*

PRAYER

Sweet Supplication

Lord Jesus, forgive me for seeking quick fixes to fill my emptiness, my need for You. Thank You for filling me instead with Your faith-giving Spirit. Satisfy my hunger and thirst, my every need, according to Your glorious riches. Lord, You loved me and gave me eternal comfort and good hope through grace. Comfort me, that I may comfort others in Your name. Thank you, Jesus! Amen.

Grandma's Chocolate Upside-Down Fudge-Sauce Dessert

1 c. flour	2 tsp. baking powder
½ tsp. salt	¼ c. sugar, divided
1 oz. unsweetened chocolate	1 tsp. vanilla
2 tsp. butter	½ c. milk
½ c. chopped nuts	½ c. brown sugar
1 c. cold water	
4 heaping tsp. unsweetened baking cocoa	

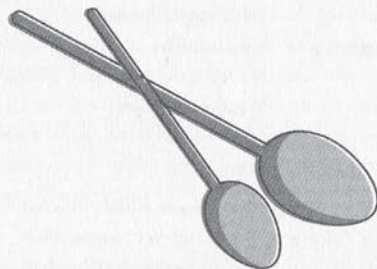
Preheat oven to 300 degrees. Grease an 8-inch square baking pan. Sift together flour, salt, baking powder, and ¼ c. sugar. Melt chocolate with butter; blend into sifted ingredients. Blend in milk, nuts, and vanilla; pour batter into prepared pan. Combine cocoa, brown sugar, and ½ c. sugar, and sprinkle over batter in pan. Pour cold water over all. **Important:** Bake at 300 degrees for 40 minutes, then at 350 degrees for 20 minutes. The top becomes crisp, the middle is a warm, moist cake, and the bottom turns into fudgy sauce. This dessert satisfies a chocolate craving like no other when served warm à la mode!

CHOCOTIVITY

Chocolate-Dipped Spoons

Purchase **plastic spoons** (any color), **chocolate melting pieces**, **clear cellophane**, and **ribbon**. Melt chocolate; dip spoons and lay them on waxed paper until chocolate is firm. Cut cellophane into 8-inch squares and wrap over dipped end of spoons. Tie ribbon to hold cellophane in place. If desired, print labels or small cards with a verse, such as **“He satisfies the longing soul, and the hungry soul He fills with good things” (Psalm 107:9)**; attach verse to spoon handle with ribbon.

The additional beauty of this gift is the reminder of eating that the spoon provides. We hunger for His Word and He satisfies our every need. Choose a time and place to give these small gifts, perhaps along with a *Living a Chocolate Life* devotion book (available at cph.org, item 37-0141). As you give these gifts, share that there is only One who truly satisfies, and allow your gifts to serve as a gracious reminder to every recipient.



✦ TAKE A BITE

How have these *comfort foods for the soul*—prayer, worship, and Scripture—fed and nourished you? How and where might you dig into them more deeply?
