

GOD'S DIET PLAN: Seek Him First



*A 31-Day Devotional Guide
for Healthy Eating and Weight Loss*

Linda Ross Shoaf

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Dedication



Dedicated to all who struggle with weight loss or healthy eating
and desire to live a healthier lifestyle

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Preface

Most likely, you are reading this devotional book because you have an interest in a healthier weight, or you desire to help someone close to you find the courage to shed excess pounds. Weight is a complex issue. One thing we do know, since the 1960s, the number of obese adults has more than doubled and continues to rise. Why is that? With the increased number of those experiencing excessive weight has come greater susceptibility to diseases and illnesses.

According to health care standards, a Body Mass Index (BMI) between 19 and 24 is the preferred weight for optimal health (See Body Mass Index Appendix 1). A BMI between 25-30 is considered overweight. Figures above 30 represent obesity (See Classifications of Obesity Appendix 2). To determine our starting point, the BMI tells us where we are and where we need to be for a healthy weight.

We often hear grim health statistics for obesity. Physicians may advise us to lose weight to help some physical problem. Many of us want to look better and believe losing a few pounds will accomplish our goal. There's nothing wrong with that either.

Sometimes we try over and over to lose weight and fail. We overeat or make unwise choices. And if honest, we know certain foods are tempting, yet we yield. Are we doomed to weigh more than health charts suggest is healthy? Some of us hit a plateau and nothing we do moves that scale downward. For a few of us, illness or medications hinder our efforts. A small number are predestined by heredity or genes to remain overweight—but a very few. While past studies insisted the obese can be just as healthy as their thin brothers and sisters, current research tells us that isn't so.

How does God feel about our weaknesses when we make unwise food choices? Will he punish us if we fail to lose weight? What about those who struggle and can't get pounds off? When we do our part, God understands.

First, know that God uniquely created each of us. He loves us and desires what is best for our lives, every part, including size. God wants us to stay as healthy as possible.

In these thirty-one days of devotionals, we will 1) come to a greater understanding of God's unending love, 2) explore how to care for our bodies, 3) learn God's plans for our lives through encouragement, 4) praise God for the insights and blessings we experience, and 5) find his will for us.

Each devotional begins with a Scripture focus. "Prayer with Purpose" follows each devotional text to guide our petitions and fellowship with God while "Thoughts to Ponder" leads us to reflect on our actions. "Lesson for Life" provides the key to move forward each day in a closer walk with God's desires for our lives.

Each devotional concludes with "Digging Deeper" which lists questions for meditation and application in our daily lives. These are designed for individual use or combined after

each section for group study to draw deeper into God's Word and reflect on the spiritual aspects of the week's devotionals.

The back of the book includes nutrition information for further study. It provides useful facts to nourish and maintain our bodies for service to God.

Together, let's study the Scriptures to determine if God cares if we are fat. And then we can work and pray together for answers to become nourished in body and spirit.

Dear friend, I hope all is well with you and that you are as healthy in body as you are strong in spirit.

3 John 1:2

PART I
God's Love



1

Image of His Love

Then God said, "Let us make human beings in our image, to be like ourselves" So God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

Genesis 1:26-27

When we gaze into a mirror, it reflects our image and the many characteristics of our ancestors. We see a newborn and soon decide who the baby looks like. The turned-up nose brings images of its mom or the bushy eyebrows resemble dad's. As the child grows older, we recognize various traits of family members. From two people God gave this child many characteristics of generations past.

After God created this world and everything in it, he declared it good. God, the one and only architect, fashioned earth. In six days, he formed light and darkness, land and sea. He completed this marvelous planet and formed humans to share his universe which continues today as he uniquely molds each of us.

Not only did he make us, but he created us to be like him. Just as that tiny infant acquired traits of its parents, God molded us into his image with a soul and spirit. Genesis states, "Let us make human beings in our image." Us refers to the Trinity, the three in one; God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. John in his gospel

says, “In the beginning the Word [Jesus] already existed. The Word was with God, and the Word was God. He existed in the beginning with God” (John 1:1-2). Jesus, as part of the Trinity, was God who made everything through this Word, and in turn, gave life to everything created.

Just as we as parents take pleasure in watching our children grow and develop their abilities and personalities, our Heavenly Father loves watching us become more like him. He made us, men and women, to rule over this earth, and his handiwork pleased him. We teach and influence our children's actions during formative years and desire for them to develop into healthy adults. In the same way, God cares about our every thought and action, even to what we eat. How could we ever doubt his unconditional love?

PRAYER WITH PURPOSE:

Lord, thank you for creating me in your image. Keep me mindful that every life is a product of your almighty hand and reflects you. Amen.

THOUGHTS TO PONDER:

- God created men and women after his own image.
- Regardless of the characteristics inherited from ancestors, we are formed in God's image.
- God's love for each of us is unconditional.

LESSON FOR LIFE:

Out of inexpressible love, God created mankind in his own image.

DIGGING DEEPER

1. What do you see as the correlation between God's creation of the heavens and earth and his creating of mankind?

2. How does knowing you are formed in God's image affect your decisions and actions?

2 *Perfection of His Love*

I pray that your love will overflow more and more, and that you will keep on growing in knowledge and understanding. Philippians 1:9

God formed Adam, the first human, like himself for a heaven-earth communion. Adam was the perfect human symbolism of God, yet he needed a compatible companion. Eve became his female counterpart. God created them for fellowship with himself to share in a close, personal way. He placed his human creations in a perfect garden to daily walk and talk with him. Satan's lure through deception caused Adam and Eve to break God's command about eating fruit from the tree of knowledge of good and evil (Genesis 3:1-7).

The intimate relationship between God and mankind changed forever. Through disobedience, this perfect couple with their gift of free will introduced sin into a flawless world. Despite mistakes, God still loved them. But the sin of Adam and Eve did not go unpunished. Their sin passed forward to all future generations. Yet, God's love never ceased.

God as our potter fashions us as clay in his hands (Isaiah 64:8). He chooses unique characteristics and abilities for each of us and molds us into the best we can be. However, he allows us freedom to make choices. Just as Adam and Eve chose sin over an

unblemished world, so we have the independence to make life-changing decisions. While God desires for us to make healthy food choices, we choose what we eat, often with consequences. Jesus said in the book of Matthew that we were to be perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect (Matthew 5:48). Because of sin, that is impossible. But God loves us even in our imperfections. He is willing to direct and provide every good thing, including decisions about food (See Strategies for Developing a Better Eating Pattern Appendix 3). Almighty God desires to commune with us through prayer and the study of his Word.

PRAYER WITH PURPOSE:

Lord, my creator, you have fashioned me like yourself for fellowship. Keep me from sins that may interfere with a godly relationship with you. Amen.

THOUGHTS TO PONDER:

- God expects obedience from his human creations.
- Sin disrupts our fellowship with God.
- Actions affecting our bodies reflect either praise or disregard for how God made us.

LESSON FOR LIFE:

Disobedience to God in every aspect of life may result in unpleasant consequences.