

Moneywise Weight Loss

The Faith-based Plan for Building a
Better Body on a Budget

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Wellspring Omnimedia

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Dedication

I dedicate this book to all those who struggle with their weight, particularly those who might be weary in the journey right now.

Here's a little encouragement for you:

You may say "I can't,"
But you know that God can.
If His spirit is in you,
Then you know you can.
So now, ask yourself "Will I?"

Today, say "I will!" Heaven knows you are worth it!

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Introduction

“If you put a small value upon yourself, rest assured the world will not raise your price.”

–**Author Unknown**

MY STORY

My body and I had been enemies for as long as I could remember. It finally became my friend in my late thirties, and that was only after a painful wake-up call. I now see my body as God’s temple, the most precious gift He has given me. The joy I feel now has made it worth every step it took for me to get here.

I was once 240 lbs and a size 22. Following his usual lecture about my need to lose weight, my former gynecologist added something new. In frustration, he said that the effect my obesity was having on my heart was like asking an engine designed for a Volkswagen to haul the weight of a Mack truck.

Shaken by his blunt words, I sat down in my car and cried. But that wasn’t enough to motivate a change. Instead, I went home and

comforted myself the only way I thought I knew how: by eating the coconut cake in my refrigerator—the entire cake.

My problem wasn't lack of knowledge about health. After all, I was a registered nurse at the time and knew about nutrition and exercise. The problem was that I didn't *want* to do it. I enjoyed eating and it was the only self-nurturing method for which I made time. Food made me feel loved and special. It was the faulty way I chose to deal with the stress in my life.

Because I worked long hours, I had little energy to do much when I arrived home except watch television. It seemed easier to grab fast food instead of preparing meals for myself. And exercising? Forget about it!

Besides, nearly everyone around me was overweight including my friends and fellow nurses. Each time I announced my ambition to lose the weight for good, they would nod their heads with amused looks that seemed to say “Yeah, right.”

Unfortunately, they knew me all too well.

I had dieted and lost the weight many times, but it always crept back—and then some. This in spite of spending thousands of dollars on weight loss programs, exercise equipment, and workout regimens. But after a frightening wake-up call, I made a firm decision to lose the weight the right way and it never came back. You see, I finally learned to *stop putting my body's care last on my priority list.*

Two years after the doctor's "Mack truck" comment, I began having problems with my blood pressure. I have a strong history of high blood pressure in my family. In fact, my grandmother died from a stroke at the age of 47. Family pictures show that she was obviously overweight. Six months after her death, my great-grandmother also died from a stroke. My mother, aunt, and cousins all had high blood pressure and it appeared I was next on the hypertension hit list.

My general physician put me on pills to manage my condition, but these only made me feel worse. One night, I fell asleep on the sofa while watching television. Earlier, I had set the alarm clock in my bedroom and was startled

awake by the sound of it. As I jumped up from the sofa to run and turn it off, an excruciating pain slammed into my chest.

This pain was like nothing I had ever felt before. It was as if someone had reached inside of my ribcage, grabbed my heart, and gave it a brutal squeeze. The pain lasted only a second but it terrified me.

While I stood there, hand over my heart and afraid to take another step, I saw the truth of what I had been doing to my body with poor health habits. My little “Volkswagen engine” heart was at last rebelling against the extra weight I had forced it to carry.

It was also during that moment that I heard God’s voice: “It is not supposed to be this way.” I chose right then to believe Him and how my life changed! Later that week, I had an appointment with the doctor and I wrote on the back of the appointment card: *Today is the day I turn my life around.*

Those events occurred several years ago. Since then, I have shed 85 pounds and 14 dress sizes (from a size 22 to size 8). Just before I

made the decision to lose weight, I had taken a great class about managing money from a biblical perspective. At the time, I had an alarming \$19,000 worth of credit card debt. I set a goal to get out of debt in 5 years yet God graciously provided a means to pay it off in just 3 years, 11 months. I discovered the truth that when the student is ready, the teacher appears!

I applied the same principles I had used to gain control of my financial life to take control of my physical body. I hope to pass the same principles on to you in this book. I now teach them in my *Take Back Your Temple* seminars, which are designed to help others experience the freedom of building healthy lifestyles.

I truly believe that when you value something, you take care of it. You are *valuable*. May this book give you a new appreciation for your body, and what God designed it to do. I hope you will also take the principles to heart and use them to transform your body, health, finances, and ultimately your life. Ideally you will pass them on to others so they too can experience the abundant life that is available to all who are willing to receive it.

REVERSING THE OBESITY TREND

This book grew out of a series of speeches I had given at churches in the Atlanta area. Many times after my talks, I was approached by other women and men who told me about their own struggles with weight. I couldn't help but notice the quiet desperation behind each of their stories. I recognized it because I had felt the same way, hoping all the time that I would find a way out of the prison my body had become. I have discovered that there are millions in the same situation.

While rates of overweight have risen astronomically among Americans in general, the percentages are particularly high among certain minority groups. According to the American Obesity Association, over 69% of African Americans and 73.4% of Hispanics are overweight. High percentages of these populations are also classified as severely overweight (obese).

Just take a look at some statistics about how obesity-related illnesses are affecting

African American women specifically. This group is bearing the brunt of such illnesses. These statistics are from the *Healthwatch* organization and they are startling:

- Death rates from cardiovascular disease are 35% higher for African-American women than for white women
- Hypertension occurs at a rate of 34.2% in African-American females compared to 19.3% of white females
- Diabetes occurs at a rate of 16 to 26% in Hispanic and African-Americans, aged 45–74, compared to 12% in whites of the same age group

To see these statistics played out, you need not look very far. Just consider your family, fellow church members, co-workers, and friends. The chances are that you associate frequently with someone who is suffering from these diseases.

Why are these illnesses becoming rampant? Our society today actually fosters obesity. It has become all too easy to eat a so-called 'poor folks diet.' These diets feature foods that are extremely high in fat and sugar. They are cheap and fill you up, but provide

little nutritional value to the body. Worst of all these foods provide an extraordinary number of calories (energy units) in even small servings, so it doesn't take much of them to exceed the body's needs.

It is also easy to avoid exercise. Many of us have desk jobs that require us to exercise our minds, but not our bodies. We drive our cars almost everywhere, take escalators, use riding lawnmowers, and try to find the closest parking space at the shopping center.

To relax, we like to watch television, read, and play cards or board games. Our children play video games. There was a time when kids would play actively outside for hours; now parents can hardly get them *out* of the house. We have become an overly sedentary society.

The rates of obesity among children are increasing just as rapidly as those for adults. Not only that, but even young children are starting to show signs of heart disease and diabetes. At an age when they should be carefree, many children are being burdened by obesity-related

illnesses and the discomfort that goes along with them.

While surfing the Internet recently, I came upon a Web site that publicized the emotional pain which often accompanies obesity. The Web site contained letters from people who were battling the condition—and losing. The letters broke my heart. Can you imagine what it would be like trying to live a victorious life under these conditions?

- “I’m tired all the time....”
- “I’ve lost my joy over the years....”
- “I feel guilty for letting myself get so big....”
- “I am filled with depression and hopelessness....”
- “I don’t want my children to have to go through this....”

While I cannot relate to these statements anymore, there was a time when I could sympathize with many of them.

I wrote this book in an effort to prevent you from becoming (or staying) part of the obesity statistics. Even more than that, I want to

help you end weight as an issue in your life once and for all. We sometimes become so comfortable in our struggles with weight that they start to feel normal, especially if the people around us are in the same shape.

While God made us in all shapes and sizes, obesity is *not* our natural condition. We do not need to be geniuses to figure out that taking in more food than the body needs plus an inactive lifestyle will make us overweight. If the habits continue long enough we will eventually become obese. We must reverse the trend by eating foods that build healthy bodies and by moving our temples as God designed. We may not be able to eat a perfect diet or run a marathon, but we can do *better* than we are doing now. All it takes is for us to be willing to pursue good health, one small step at a time. We can start right where we are and have fun doing it!

Make a decision to take this journey for the sake of your friends, neighbors, coworkers, spouses and for your children. Most importantly, do it for yourself because you can

only give the best of yourself to others when you are strong, healthy, and vibrant.

I believe God's desire is for you to care for yourself so you can be fit to care for others. You honor Him when you are good to your body. By taking care of yourself, you demonstrate good stewardship of this wonderful gift He has given you. Eating a healthy diet and getting regular physical activity is one of the best ways to affirm your worth and value.

The God of the universe designed and built your body. It was He who described it as a temple, a dwelling that is beautiful, sacred, precious, and valuable. But unlike an actual temple made of stone or brick, your body isn't stable. It is fluid like water. It is dynamic, constantly changing in response to the food you eat and the movement you make. With your daily choices, you promote health or sickness in your body. God's desire is for you to choose wisely.

Your first important choice is to love your body, respect it, and appreciate its worth. According to a *Wired* magazine article, the human body is worth more than \$45 million if

you consider the value of your tissues, fluids, organs, and germ antibodies. So start thinking of yourself as a *\$45 million dollar baby!* Value your body exactly the way it is now while you are losing weight and rebuilding your health, not just when you achieve your goal. This will keep you motivated. God loves you unconditionally and cares for you no matter what size you are. So should *you*.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

The title *Moneywise Weight Loss* speaks to two important points. The first is to encourage you to stop spending your money on quick fixes to lose weight, like extreme diets, pills, potions, and the like. After years of trying these methods myself, the only thing that ultimately ended up lighter was my wallet. My advice to you is to save your money and get healthy the lasting, scriptural way.

Everything worth achieving takes time. Changing your body does too. If you want your changes to last, which is the key, then you need to make sure that you are making them in a

way that builds up your health rather than tears it down as quick fixes tend to do. You also want to make sure that you build *fun* into the process, which is the missing ingredient in many health programs.

The second point is that you can *save* money on certain foods that will help you lose weight. That is what distinguishes this book from any other on the market. Many diets plans are expensive, providing tasty recipes but with ingredients that put a serious dent in your wallet.

Moneywise Weight Loss recognizes that most of us don't have access to unlimited funds. It respects the fact that you may be budget conscious and so provides suggestions for meals, snacks, and recipes that use economical ingredients that are easily obtainable.

Another of the book's key features is a checklist of tips at the end of each chapter. You'll select the ones that will work best for your life. At the end of the book, you will compile the small steps into a complete roadmap for losing weight that is customized for you.

The following is some additional information about how the book is structured:

- Part 1: *Laying the foundation* helps you establish your vision for the health goals you want to accomplish. You will also learn about the spiritual and mental aspects of losing weight, which will keep you on target with your goal.
- Part 2: *Building a Better Body* gives you the tools and materials you need to start creating your health vision, one small step at a time. You'll learn about simple methods to prevent overeating and how to save money on healthy food. Furthermore, you'll discover how to fix your plate to lose weight with every bite, and increase your energy and strength by moving your body creatively.
- Part 3: *Finishing Touches* answers the question, "What do I do after achieving my ideal weight?" It provides a plan for maintenance to ensure that you continue to pursue good health long after you have read the last page.

THE PROMISE OF THIS BOOK

I want you to take away the following message by the time you finish this book: Caring for your body is ultimately about wise stewardship, not about size. It is not important whether your weight is higher than society's "ideal." What matters is that you eat and exercise in a consistently healthful way. God can give you the power to make your health vision a reality, but you must make it happen.

It's not too late. All you have to do is decide that you are willing to take the steps. Come on, it's the least you can do as a \$45 million dollar baby. I promise you no regrets! Don't wait to start looking your best and feeling your finest. There's no better day to start than *today!*

Mark 9:23: "Jesus said to him, 'If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes.'"