

A Christian Woman's Journal to Weight Loss

By Patricia Thomas



INTRODUCTION

Tired, fatigued, unmotivated, drained, uncomfortable, embarrassed, self-conscious, insecure, ashamed, let-down, disappointed, sad, disgusted, lonely, misunderstood, defeated, miserable, angry, drained, overlooked, side-lined, overweight. These are some of the feelings I had on any given day when I was overweight. Physically, I would often find myself exhausted, not able to do the things I wanted to do. Usually, I would muster up enough energy to meet the obligations and commitments I had made. But, I had no energy left for me. Emotionally, I was so disappointed in myself and sometimes even depressed: how could I let this happen to me? Spiritually, I felt fruitless I was so concerned with my weight that I was not walking in my purpose at all. It is hard to be used by God when you can't see beyond your circumstance.

When I really took the time to analyze my situation, I realized being overweight was about to take me out, emotionally, spiritually, and physically. I was slowly shutting down, but no one knew it. I was able to function everyday as if everything was normal. I am sure I even smiled. I was going through the motions, feeling very empty and robotic. I even remember my doctor saying that my cholesterol was now borderline. Not only did I not want to hear that, I planned to share this new revelation with no one. Normally a healthy person, full of life and filled with the joy of the Lord, this was a new place for me.

There were times when I thought about how things used to be, and I would ask myself: how did I get here? I remembered that I used to have energy to study the word; I used to make the time to spend in prayer. I had lost sight of the importance of spending time with God. I had gotten so caught up in getting through my days, realizing that that was all I was doing—getting through my days. I wasn't living in victory; I wasn't seeking God's face, and I wasn't worshiping outside of church. I was disconnected from the source of my strength, and I was reaping the harvest, which wasn't a very healthy one.

I am not a nutritionist or an expert on health, but I am a woman sharing her true story, giving others a glimpse into the realities of weight

loss. My credentials for authoring this book include twelve years of battling with weight and, at 42, finally reaching my goal. After trying diets and weight loss gimmicks, I realized that achieving a positive self image is about so much more than food. I have also realized that women everywhere want to know what is working for other women. So, in January, I decided that I would not only lose the extra pounds, but I would keep a journal of my journey and share it with other women who are also struggling with their weight. Over time, it has developed into a daily devotional that I use to stay focused, encouraged and inspired to make myself a priority.

Like most women who are overweight, I wanted to find a personal solution that worked I wasn't interested in quick-fix drug solutions, and I wanted lasting results. If you are battling with a weight issue, I can only hope that reading this devotional and starting your own weight loss journal, will allow you to experience the fulfillment of achieving a positive self image and your weight loss goal. The benefits of weight loss are priceless. Becoming strong in soul, mind, and body can allow you to reclaim what every woman deserves: her health, her energy, her relationships, her life.

WEEK ONE

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

—Romans 12:1

One of our neighbors was planning a trip, and they asked my family if we would take care of their tadpoles. While our neighbors were away, we made sure we followed all of the care instructions very carefully. We fed them the right amount of food at the right time. We made sure the lighting was adequate and the correct water level was maintained. When our neighbors returned, their tadpoles were healthy frogs that had been well cared for.

In comparison, that week I am sure I ate more than I should have. I probably didn't get enough rest, and I know I didn't exercise at all. Is this how we care for the body that God has entrusted us with?

Yes, all too often, we care for the things around us better than we care for ourselves. How can we present our bodies as a living sacrifice, holy, and acceptable unto God, if we are not at our best? Since I have been overweight, I feel sluggish, frustrated and on edge. Today, I am making a commitment to take care of this body. Being victorious through Christ includes conquering this thing called obesity and living a healthy lifestyle.

It's not just about food; I know this. We all know what we should or shouldn't be eating.

And if we didn't know what to eat, there are hundreds of diet plans out there to tell us. But I don't think I need one. I believe the bigger question is not what we eat, but why, how much, and when?

Today I pledge to care for my body. I know it is going to be a lot of work and even as I write this, I am not looking forward to it. Then I weigh my options. I don't want to continue the cycle of taking care of

WEEK TWO

*No temptation has over taken you except such is common to man:
but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond
what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape,
that you may be able to bear it.*

—1 Corinthians 10:13 (New King James Version)

How long will we be fooled by the enemy and our flesh? We don't need that extra piece of bread! We can live without that dessert! Now I am not being unrealistic in thinking that I will never enjoy some of the wonderful foods that are available to us, but I know that in my effort to lose weight I have to be able to say "no", and be willing to eat healthier foods. The word tells us that in everything there is a season, and I know that during this season that I am in right now, I have to push away from the table.

I remember being able to eat anything I wanted to and never gaining a pound. Those were the days, but those days are GONE. So, even though I am tempted to continue to eat that way, I know I can not. It is a new day, and my plate has to reflect that.

I am going to look for my way of escape when I am tempted. I give in to temptation more often when I am hungry. I added six glasses of water into my routine today, and I was less tempted. Water can really fill you up.

WEEK THREE

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to His purpose.

—Romans 8:28

Very few things today come with a ‘lifetime guarantee’, but Christianity does. The word tells us that, all things work together for good to them that love God. This also gives us a clue that every day or every situation isn’t going to work out the way we have planned it. There will be those days when we stumble or don’t make the best decisions, but it doesn’t have to stop there.

Knowing that some days are going to be a real struggle, I am learning to plan for the struggle. As a Christian, we plan for the struggles when we live by the word, so that when trouble comes we can stand. During this weight loss journey we have to do the same thing. We need to be prepared for those tough days when we want to eat everything in sight. Have a plan.

Having meals planned out ahead of time helps me stay on track. I am less likely to make that unhealthy choice if I already know what I am going to eat. I will make it to the gym if I schedule it as a part of my day. As women we plan to get everything else done, we deserve to be on our own schedules.

WEEK FOUR

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.
—Philippians 4:13

Remember when Jesus called Peter to walk on water. The scripture says that Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and he came toward Jesus. It wasn't until he took his mind off Jesus and looked at his circumstances that he began to sink. In spite of his victory, he began to think about the water around him, his limitations. If he had only kept his mind on the limitless ability he has through the power of Jesus Christ.

What are we focusing on? Are we empowering ourselves with our thoughts or are we crippling ourselves? Doubt or a lack of faith can destroy a dream, keep us from achieving our goals and following God's plan for our life. I have tried to lose weight so many times, and eventually doubt crept in. I would begin to think that I would never lose the weight, I would convince myself that I didn't have time to exercise and that I couldn't possibly eat less.

I am not giving in to doubt this time. I know that I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me, if I just don't give up. When it comes to weight loss, I have decided that faith coupled with works, equals victory. We can get so caught up in what we see today that we don't believe in what tomorrow can bring if we stay committed.

I have decided that working out in the morning is what works best for me. If I don't do it in the morning, my day gets so busy it will not get done. It actually wakes me up and it seems to give me will power throughout the day. I am less tempted to have those chips or waste my workout on a cookie.

