

Lose It for Life

Losing weight is a resolution you can keep, with God's help.

I am finally going to lose that extra weight and keep it off.” How many of us have uttered these words? Determining to lose weight is one of the most common New Year's resolutions people make. They get a renewed sense of hope when the new year rolls around that they can rid themselves of the excess baggage they've been carrying. My private practice used to be flooded with enthusiastic weight-loss clients every January.

Unfortunately, by February, most were discouraged and ready to throw in the towel. Losing weight is hard work. It usually requires confronting pain and difficulty that has been numbed with food.

If you are struggling with your weight, you are in good company. Obesity is a veritable epidemic in our society. Nearly 65 percent of American adults, or more than 120 million people, are considered overweight or obese. And despite billions of dollars spent on diet books and health products, we Americans are fatter than ever.

Look around. For all our obsession with weight-loss gimmicks, we continue to experience record rates of obesity.

So do we just give in and give up? Hopefully not. But we must understand that losing weight and then maintaining a healthy size requires changing our lifestyles, learning to eat sensibly and doing what most of us hate—exercising.

I know this doesn't sound exciting or terribly new. It isn't.

But it is a long-term strategy that works.

I recently co-authored a book, *Lose It for Life*, with best-selling author Stephen Arterburn that is aimed at helping people lose weight sensibly while growing stronger spiritually. In preparation, I read through the most recent research, looked at all the diets and kept abreast of the growing genetic research on obesity.

Though we are learning more about the biological mechanisms of hunger, weight gain and metabolism, change still happens by eating less, exercising more and changing life habits. There is also a need to recognize the connection between body, mind and spirit and the importance of being empowered by the Holy Spirit.

If you are one of the many who have failed to lose and keep your weight off, I encourage you to try again. But expect to take a lifelong journey, not a short weight-loss trip.

Any diet will help you lose weight. The issue for most of us is keeping the weight off. You can lose it for life. If you do, you will:

1. Improve your health. Research shows that losing even a small amount of weight can bring physical benefit.
2. Be free of the guilt and shame that often accompany being overweight.
3. Become defined by who you are, not what you weigh.
4. Gain an awareness of the difference between physical, emotional, and spiritual hunger and learn ways to satisfy all three.
5. Become more in tune with your body as you accept God's design

for you as good.

6. Take your negative thoughts captive, renew your mind, and think in more positive ways, attacking the lies that keep you stuck and feeling as if you have failed.
7. Assume responsibility for your behavior and give up the victim position.
8. Practice managing your emotions instead of allowing them to manage you. Emotions won't be frightening when you learn to confront them head-on and work through the pain instead of numbing yourself with food.
9. Make new and healthy connections with others. This is an important part of anyone's recovery.
10. Learn how to preserve spiritual gains and persevere to the finish.

Losing weight and keeping it off is a resolution you can keep, with God's help. It will require surrendering the food, acknowledging the pain that may have caused you to use food to numb hurtful feelings, confessing to God your areas of weakness, taking responsibility for your spiritual and physical health, and forgiving your own shortcomings and those of other people. As you work on all these things, God will transform your pain and struggles for His glory. Then you can preserve the gains by staying intimate with Him and accountable to others.