

When Man Meets His Maker

When Jordan Rubin was dying of Crohn's disease, he heard God tell him to change his diet. Today the author of The Maker's Diet says healthy eating saved his life.

If a picture is worth a thousand words, then the shocking image of Jordan Rubin at age 20 could fill an entire volume.

Slight and sickly at 111 pounds and sporting a scraggly beard, the young man in the picture looks like an escapee from a refugee camp. Even though his body was broken by Crohn's disease (which is marked by painful inflammation of the small intestines), he had the audacity to vow that one day he would help thousands experience health as God has intended.

Consider Rubin today.

The man is confident, the picture of health and success. His book The Maker's Diet is a best seller. And annual sales at his alternative-health company, Garden of Life, have skyrocketed from \$2 million to \$58 million, all in just six years. Did we mention that this guy is only 29?

It's hard not to be impressed by Rubin's success. Even more impressive, however, is the journey that brought him to this point in life.

"I always had this dream during my illness that I was going to get well and share with others how God healed me", Rubin told Charisma at his office in West Palm Beach, Florida, where he and his staff of 149 distribute an array of nutritional supplements, including antioxidant pills, nutrient formulas, fish oils and whole food powders. I set my life on the fact

that if I can help just one person get healthy, help one person avoid this prison, then everything that I went through is worth it.”

If the brisk sales of The Maker’s Diet are any indication, Rubin’s dream is coming true.

Based largely on Old Testament dietary principles coupled with a daily prayer and hygiene regimen, the book chronicles Rubin’s journey from weakling to warrior and offers a biblical plan for reclaiming total health: body, mind and spirit. According to Rubin, it’s a message the church has ignored for too long.

I have a vision for the church to be set apart to be the healthiest people in the world, Rubin says. “The prayer list [at churches] is getting longer and longer for health needs. This is a spiritual attack, but we’re opening the door for it.”

A Healthy Upbringing

Like his passion for business, Rubin’s enthusiasm for holistic health was sparked initially during his childhood. He was born at home to Jewish parents with the assistance of four naturopathic students. His father, a chiropractor and naturopathic physician, made every effort to help his family practice the healthy lifestyle he advocated. Rice milk, soy cheese and tofu burgers were regular fare for the Rubin family.

“We ate healthy food all the time,” Rubin remembers. “When one of my friends came to our house, he wished he would have

visited the corner store first to get some food he recognized.”

Rubin’s parents came to faith in Christ at a Messianic Jewish congregation when he was 2 years old. This created tension for Rubin, who was outspoken even as a child about his faith in Jesus. He once told a 9-year-old Jewish friend that he was going to hell unless he believed in Christ.

“You can imagine how well that went over,” Rubin says with a laugh.

It was during high school that Rubin’s faith became more than just head knowledge. “I was invited to a youth camp with a friend of mine at a Baptist church, and I got plugged into the youth group,” he recalls. “That youth group peer-pressured me into spending time with the Lord, not going to parties, not being promiscuous in high school. I was really taught to live a moral life by my peer group.”

He remembers being really on fire for God, especially during my last few years of high school, sharing my faith very openly.” After high school, Rubin attended Florida State University on an athletic and academic scholarship. He became involved in student ministry and as a freshman served as the chaplain of his fraternity.

But that summer the course of his life took a dramatic shift for the worse. While working as a counselor at a Christian youth camp in Florida, he began experiencing digestive problems. He lost 20 pounds in just six days.

He was immediately rushed home, where doctors gave him

antibiotics and sent him on his way, but his condition worsened. By the time Rubin headed back to college in Tallahassee he had dropped from 185 pounds to 140.

"I was routinely running 104-degree fevers. I was in the bathroom 12-15 times a day. I started to get horrible, aching pain," he remembers.

"One time I was walking to class, and it felt like my hip cracked and came out of the socket. Despite hiding from my parents how sick I really was, I had to fly home and, for the first time in my life, I was immediately hospitalized."

Doctors diagnosed Rubin with Crohn's disease, which causes the intestinal wall to thicken-creating intense pain. He was hospitalized for 10 days and had to take seven different medications. But he never found relief.

"The women who have had Crohn's disease and have also had children say that the pain in your gut is similar to childbirth," Rubin explains. "It's a pain that makes you want to bang your head against the wall, pull your hair out. It's incessant pain, literally kept me out of church other than two times in two years. It was just devastating."

His health continued to deteriorate. He withdrew from school and spent his days traveling from doctor to doctor and following what he calls "crazy diets." In total, he visited more than a dozen conventional doctors and more than 50 holistic practitioners. He went to 70 health professionals in 7 different countries.

"I did therapies that I'm amazed I'm alive from," he says.

“Everything that I thought might possibly help me became my hope. With my father’s help we found all kinds of alternative therapies and spent a fortune, probably \$150,000.”

Rubin’s weight fluctuated between 104 and 120 pounds. He couldn’t sleep. He would wake up every hour and be sick in the bathroom.

But the ordeal helped Rubin develop compassion for sick people. “Illness is the No. 1 tool that the adversary has to suck the life out of us,” he says. “I didn’t smile. When you’re sick, you can’t smile. I was a completely vivacious teenager, and I had turned into nothing.”

Despite his condition, Rubin never lost hope that he would one day recover fully. He clung to the promise of Hebrews 11:1: “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (NKJV).

“That’s where the Holy Spirit came in,” Rubin explains. “I was sold out to God’s plan. God built faith in me.”

As evidence of his faith, Rubin talked his mother into taking the now famous “before” picture Rubin uses to sell people on his diet. It provided his most powerful testimonial tool to prove the dual power of faith and a healthy diet.

Tipping the Scales

Rubin says a phone call from an “eccentric nutritionist” in 1996 was a key to his recovery. The man told Rubin that he was ill because he was not eating “the diet of the Bible.”

At the time, Rubin was considering a radical surgery that required the removal of most of his intestines. He ditched that option and decided to give the Bible diet a try.

“I ripped open my concordance and found every ... reference to food or healing,” he explains. “For the first time in my long battle, I saw some improvement in my health after integrating the nutritionist’s program with my own findings about nutrition and health from the Bible.”

The program that Rubin developed eventually became the foundation for The Maker’s Diet. He bought a small motor home and moved near the ocean, where he could isolate himself and commit 40 days of his life to the Lord: physically, spiritually, mentally and emotionally.

“I lived the Maker’s Diet program. I got ocean air, I got sun. I remember starting at 122 pounds, completely sick. And in 40 days, I weighed 151 pounds. I had crossed a was a person again.”

By Rubin’s 21st birthday he weighed 170 pounds. He stocked shelves at a health food store and began pursuing an education in naturopathic medicine and nutrition. Eventually he earned degrees from two nutrition schools.

In 2000, he began selling health products and educational materials. He then launched the Garden of Life company out of a garage with a \$70,000 line of credit from his father, along with help from his wife and one part-time employee. That year, he did \$1.9 million in sales.

By the end of 2003, he had 140 employees and did \$43 million in sales. Almost 700,000 copies of The Maker's Diet have sold since its April 2004 release.

Although his initial market was the mainstream health food industry, today he enjoys reaching a growing Christian audience that includes a growing number of charismatic and Pentecostal church leaders. Rubin serves as personal nutritionist to popular author and Southern Baptist pastor Charles Stanley, who allowed Rubin to introduce the diet to the 200 staff members of his In Touch ministry in Atlanta.

"I had been praying for over a year that God would show me a health plan that was based on the Bible and proven by science," Stanley says in the forward to Rubin's book. "God took Jordan through the valley, delivered him and positioned him to affect the lives of millions. His one and only focus is to help deliver people from the bondage of sickness and disease into the promised land of health."

Since his popular book hit store shelves, Rubin's diet has been promoted heavily among charismatics. He has appeared on the Trinity Broadcasting Network, Daystar and the Inspirational Network. He was a guest on Paula White's daily program, and his appearance on Richard and Lindsey Robert's show convinced Lindsey to go on the diet. (She told an audience recently that she has already lost 24 pounds.)

Rubin is also making fast friends with prominent charismatic leaders Bishop Paul Morton of Atlanta; Ted Haggard of Colorado Springs, Colorado; Bible teacher Kenneth Copeland; and pastor Jentezen Franklin of Gainesville, Georgia-who dubbed Rubin a "health evangelist." In January, Rubin introduced The Maker's Diet to thousands of Atlanta-area Christians during a multi-

week “Maker’s Diet Experience” that brought together churchgoers, health professionals and vendors from 20 health food stores.

“There is so much excitement among charismatics about this message,” Rubin says, “They are so open to healing.”

But Rubin says charismatics are not necessarily more healthy just because they teach and believe in healing. “The need for this health message is just as great [in charismatic churches],” he says. During a recent Kenneth Copeland conference, Rubin said, Copeland acknowledged from the podium that many Spirit-filled people don’t honor God with their bodies.

A Healthy Message?

That Rubin’s program is based largely upon Old Testament dietary principles poses a problem for some Christians, who say that the diet smacks of legalism. Rubin argues that God’s purpose behind those laws was for the overall health of His people, and that this has never changed.

Old Testament laws forbid the consumption of pork, shellfish and other exotic meats. Rubin believes many foods on grocery store shelves today are unhealthy because of how they are grown (with toxic fertilizers or hormones) or because they are laced with chemical preservatives or similar substances.

Rubin defends his strict views by saying that Jesus Himself ate according to the Mosaic law: “Jesus came to free us from the law of sin and death and to free us from bondage. Freedom from bondage is being healthy. I don’t care what you want to

call it, the consumption of food that God said not to eat causes ill health."

He also rebuffs concerns that the diet is simply an outgrowth of his Jewish roots. "I learned to understand the importance of a biblical diet after I got sick," he says. "The fact that I'm Jewish" people say, "Of course, you're going to do it." It wasn't because of that."

According to Rubin, Christians have been scammed into believing that "health is the absence of physical symptoms."

He says the health industry is part of the problem. Although alternative medicine and dietary treatments can sometimes be better alternatives to certain medications, most diets and supplements over-promise and under-deliver, Rubin says.

"People just don't know what is good. They get fed up and they eat whatever they want to. I understand why because plenty of these health experts are giving bad advice. It changes all the time."

Rubin says the church is less healthy than the world because so much of Christian culture revolves around eating. Sunday after-church buffets and potluck dinners can pack on the pounds. He points out that although many believers pray for healing, they're not willing to eat right or exercise.

He adds: "Would we dare take a big pile of our weekend garbage and dump it in the sanctuary? Never! Yet every day we dump garbage into the temple that God established. He didn't establish a building; He established a people."

Rubin thinks it's "ridiculous" to pray for healing while practicing poor health. "God can heal us supernaturally. But I truly believe a lot of supernatural healing, if you do a follow-up, you'll find that people continue to do what allowed them to get sick; it's not long-term," he says.

Rubin designed his program so that anyone can do it. But the first step, he says, is understanding the body-spirit connection.

Says the author: "How many times have believers been in a worship service or heard the Word of God and been spiritually on fire under the anointing. How do you feel physically? It's unbelievable.

"It's the same thing when you're in better physical health you are more able to enter into God's anointing to be spiritually healthy. You can't have one without the other so when we're abusing our bodies, our spiritual life suffers too."

For people who are struggling with serious health issues as he once did, Rubin has this reminder: "Anyone who's ill needs to seek God's will in it. It's not always punishment.

"Sometimes it's for the best and we don't know it. Sometimes it's teaching, it's training."

Rubin believes God can use even our illnesses to glorify His name. He adds: "God does what He needs to do to give us an opportunity, to use us, and in my instance I'd like to say that the only tragic thing I've experienced is my loss of

health.

“The reality is, God always uses that tragedy for somebody else, and we can’t figure out why. It stinks, but if you surrender to God’s will, if you have faith in His plan, you can turn tragedy into triumph.”

For his part, Rubin seems to have found his calling.

“The biggest thing is, what drives you? My mission and my purpose is to help God’s people get healthy. Every day of my life I have the ability to live His purpose, and that’s the greatest thing you can have.

What Is The Maker’s Diet?

Move over, South Beach and Atkins. The newest diet to hit the market is based on proven Old Testament laws and is meant to be a total approach to health.

While more and more overweight Americans are turning to popular diets such as South Beach, Atkins or Jenny Craig to shed pounds or looking to pills and herbal remedies Jordan Rubin says Moses had the secret all along.

Rubin’s unique new dietary regimen, outlined in his book The Maker’s Diet, is divided into three, two-week phases that are designed to attack “the three I’s”: insulin, infection and inflammation. By attacking these three I’s, Rubin says you can improve appearance, enhance energy and reverse the process of accelerated aging. Additionally, each phase includes a hygiene regimen designed to stave off illness.

“The Maker’s Diet is not all raw vegetables and twigs,” he says assuringly. It’s not something that you can’t eat when you go to restaurants. It’s not something that keeps you from socializing. It doesn’t keep you from doing anything, except it might keep you from getting sick.”

1. Phase one restricts carbohydrates such as grains, pastas, breads and potatoes, emphasizing instead lean meats, fish, dairy and vegetables, along with “good” fats and oils.
2. Phase two reintroduces a greater variety of foods into your daily diet, including fruit, nuts and seeds.
3. Phase three is the “maintenance” phase of the diet, which reincorporates healthy grain foods and food higher in sugars and starches, such as potatoes.

Additionally, Rubin devotes 11,000 words of his book to listing more than 200 companies that provide foods, supplements and skin-care solutions that fit in with his health plan. Although many people follow The Maker’s Diet to lose weight, that isn’t the ultimate goal, Rubin says. Rather, the program is designed so that “people can take charge of their own health.”

Rubin adds: “It’s not a diet, although it’s called one. It’s a lifestyle, but it’s not just for keeping people healthy or getting them over diseases—it’s about performance. ... People are going to have more energy to work, to play with their kids and to serve in ministry. They’re going to succeed in their job and their life and their ministry better.”

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Christian men's magazine ().