

Instead of a Diet, Try This Simple Spiritual Weight-Loss Plan

Why do we have to complicate everything? Why can't we just live simply so we can simply live to follow Christ?

This is so true of weight loss. It really isn't complicated, but many want us to think it is.

I won't lie. For those of us with weight issues, weight loss can be the most difficult thing we've ever had to tackle even for a Christian. It may be hard, but the best plan is to just start with one simple thing, and I don't mean a diet.

Why Diets Don't Work

Anyone who knows anything about me knows I've lost 250 pounds, yet I am not a proponent of diets. Since I once weighed 430 pounds, I've been on most every diet imaginable.

The thing I hated about most diets was their complexity. Many had various lists of foods. I could choose some from this list, one or two every once in a while from this list, none from this list, at least one a week from this list and all I wanted from this list.

I had to keep track of macros and nutrient content, weigh my food and keep track of my calories or points. Or I had to eat only prepackaged food I bought from the company, which was never enough for me. Some had menu plans I had to follow exactly.

With every diet, as soon as I stopped paying the diet company money, I would go off the plan and start gaining weight again. Even though they had maintenance plans, it was an extra cost and that just didn't interest me.

All or Nothing

Every diet felt like an all-or-nothing proposition. Before the diet, I was eating all I wanted of anything and everything. Then, bam, I'd go on the diet and totally change everything at once and basically eat nothing.

There was no plan for permanent lifestyle change. It was simply go on this plan, lose 100 pounds and then live happily ever after at the new weight. That never worked. I hadn't changed the way I ate. I couldn't wait until I got off the diet and could eat all I wanted again.

When I finally got the point where it was lose weight or die, I wanted to figure out not just how to lose weight but how to change my lifestyle. I was ready to live, really live a full and happy life. I wanted to learn how to do that.

Start With One Thing

The easiest, most uncomplicated thing I learned is to just start with one thing I wanted to change. We all have bad habits. They can be things we eat, drink, lack of exercise, bad sleeping habits, even emotional, mental or spiritual issues.

It doesn't work to just stop a bad habit. If we tell ourselves, for instance, that we are going to stop eating sugar, all we are going to think about is sugar, sugar, sugar. So instead of stopping, we eat it all the more because we're thinking about it even more.

Eating way too much sugar was my biggest sin. So kicking sugar was first on my list. However, I also knew from past diets that stopping sugar cold turkey never worked for me. I could power through it for a while, but then I'd go off the diet. The minute I gave into temptation, I couldn't stop eating sugar and I'd gain the weight back again.

Habit Change

I wanted to do this the right way. I needed a way to stop eating sugar a little at a time, but make it permanent. My mentor explained that to stop a bad habit, I needed to start a good one. I needed to put all my emphasis on starting the good habit while putting firm boundaries around the bad habit I was stopping.

For my mind to understand what I was doing, both the bad and good habits had to be specific and identifiable. Most of all it had to be something I really wanted to change.

For my first habit change I decided to stop eating candy. This worked well because my mind couldn't trick me into wondering if it was candy or not. I put firm boundaries around candy.

Instead, I focused my attention on getting to my water exercise three times a week for 30 minutes. Since I was doing no exercise, this was a great start. I put this on my calendar and planned any appointments around that time.

How It Worked

That was at least eight years ago. These days, my goal is to exercise five days a week for 45 minutes to an hour. I rarely miss my exercise time. It has become my time to unwind and even to communicate with God.

Stopping candy was easy when I focused on establishing my new habit of exercise. As that became firmly embedded in me, I moved on to other habit change areas. I tried to make sure I had one habit change firmly in place before I added anything else.

As I stopped eating candy, I began to see I was going to other sugary treats like cookies and baked goods. One at a time I started eliminating those things and starting other good habits that would help me on my journey, such as learning to

eat salads, getting to bed earlier, spending quality time with God, learning to cook new, healthier meals and so much more.

'It Ain't Dat Hard'

Each time, I was only stopping one thing and starting another. I did this with the help of a coach and a group where we discussed our successes and failures.

Like a coaching client said, "It ain't dat hard. It had to be easy for me to be able to do it!" I say losing 250 pounds is the easiest hard thing I've ever done because I had God's strength to help me.

Truth is, I could not have achieved this monumental lifestyle change without God's power. I knew I couldn't lose the weight without His help. I tried and failed way too many times. I am weak around sugar. Admitting my weakness became the portal to God's mighty power that is living in me. (See 2 Cor. 12: 9-10, TPT.) It is the only way I was able to lose the weight and keep it off.

It also helped for me to know that God truly does desire that I succeed and prosper and be in good health physically as my soul prospers spiritually (See 3 John 1:2, AMP.) His desire is that all people be healthy and alive to fulfill the destiny He has for each of us.

Live simply by simply living following Christ. It is what He wants for us. {eoa}

Teresa Shields Parker is the author of five books and two study guides, including her latest, *Sweet Journey to Transformation: Practical Steps to Lose Weight and Live Healthy*, and her No. 1 best-seller, *Sweet Grace: How I Lost 250 Pounds*. She is also a blogger, spiritual weight loss coach (check out her coaching group, *Overcomers Academy*) and speaker at .

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