

My Problem With Traditional Diets

“What do you think about Weight Watchers?”

I received that same question twice via email on the very day I posted the “My Problem with Overeaters Anonymous” article.

When I saw the question, I thought. “Uh, uh—do I really want to get on my soapbox about traditional diets?”

Before I give my answer to the question, I need to give you some background about my own history with Weight Watchers.

In the over 20 years of struggling with my weight before I achieved lasting success, I used the Weight Watchers program at least twice. Although I did lose weight, I ended up gaining the weight back, plus more on top of that.

However, you’ll notice that I did not call this article, “My Problem with Weight Watchers.” That’s because my problem is not about Weight Watchers specifically.

My problem is with all traditional diets on the planet.

Ooh, it sounds like Kim is getting ready for a rant!

Yes, I know it is a strong statement. And to be fair, some weight-loss programs are good. I count Weight Watchers as a good program as far as traditional programs go.

However, my problem is because of a critical flaw within all traditional weight-loss programs.

The flaw is that a typical diet-industry program works on an external approach: outside in.

Here’s a good example. Back in the 1980s, I was a regular *Oprah Winfrey Show* viewer. (Interestingly enough, Oprah is

promoting Weight Watchers now.)

I will never forget the episode when Oprah emerged on the stage, looking slim and trim in skinny jeans, dragging a wagon load of fat behind her.

Oprah told viewers she lost the weight on a medically supervised liquid diet. Well, Oprah looked great. I needed to lose a lot of weight too, so I decided to do what Oprah did.

I discovered a local hospital offered the Medifast diet. It was very expensive, costing hundreds of dollars a month. I would be limited to eating two small meals supplied in a silver vacuum-packed bag along with drinking three protein shakes per day.

Plus, I had to have blood work done every few weeks to ensure my blood chemistry remained normal. After all, that way of eating is not normal for most of us.

I did the program for two months. The meals weren't half bad, but the shakes were horrible. They tasted like chalk. But I was willing to endure the shakes if I was going to end up looking like Oprah.

Well, you probably know the end of the story. I did lose the excess weight. I looked great, but I felt awful. My energy level was in the basement.

I couldn't wait for the diet to be over. As soon as it was, I threw myself back into eating the way I did before the diet. So did Oprah. We both gained the weight back—plus more.

What happened to us is the traditional-diet mentality in action.

The diet mentality says, "I'll eat this way until I lose weight, then I'll go back to eating the way I did before." That is why people are constantly losing weight and gaining it back.

Because they are always going back to what they see as normal eating for them.

Even though the diet works on their external actions, their hearts and minds remain unchanged. That's why they always go back to the place (habits) that caused them to gain weight in the first place.

So you need to go to a new place.

I believe a Christ-centered approach to weight loss works best. God's way to change is internal, inside out.

We know that the only way to lasting change is the way the Bible prescribes: "Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life" (Prov. 4:23).

"Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God" (Rom. 12:2).

Only a daily relationship with God through Jesus Christ has the power to change your heart.

Only abiding in His Word has the power to change your mind.

In the over 10 years I've had Take Back Your Temple online, I have discovered that many people who struggle with eating and weight issues have heart issues driving them. They also typically have beliefs that are keeping them overweight.

A traditional weight-loss program can never minister to issues of the heart and mind. But Jesus, the Great Physician, can.

As long as you only work on the outside and don't address what is driving your external behavior from the inside, you'll be doomed to riding the weight loss rollercoaster forever.

But when you slow down and decide you no longer want to live a diet, but want a way of eating that powers your purpose and

your life, you are on your way to lasting success.

Christians realize a larger issue is at stake than just looking good; after all, how we travel through this life has eternal consequences.

So the wisest thing to do is to “lay aside every weight” (Heb. 12:1b) that entangles us in this world so we can “run with endurance the race” the Lord sets before us (see Heb. 12:1b).

Be blessed in health, healing and wholeness. {eo}

*Once 240 pounds and a size 22, **Kimberly Taylor** can testify of God's healing power to end binge eating. She is an author and the creator of the Christian weight-loss website . Visit today for inspirational health and weight-loss tips.*

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