

Perry Noble: 'I'm Fat!'

It's funny, but as I write the words *I'm fat*, I really do believe that they are true about me because of how many years I spent embracing a lifestyle of obesity.

I know from personal experience that body image and weight issues are two of the most overwhelming things a person deals with on a daily basis. Being overweight isn't something you can just take charge of and overcome immediately. It takes time and consistent effort to get results.

If you are overweight or obese, I completely understand how you feel (even though you often make fat jokes to disguise the fact that you are hurting). Here are five things I did to fight through my battle with obesity:

1. Take responsibility. I finally had to accept the fact that no one was holding me down, slamming cupcakes in my mouth and making me drink sodas all day long. I was in my condition because of choices I had made—period.

2. Talk to your doctor. I highly recommend getting a *great* family doctor and allowing him/her to check your heart rate, cholesterol and blood pressure. A conversation with a doctor is essential to seeing healthy and realistic goals.

3. Understand the way you take care of your body is a spiritual issue. All too often people want to quote the verse in Corinthians about the body being a temple only in reference to sex, but I learned that reference means my body is a temple and I needed to seize control and downsize it!

The Holy Spirit reminded me one evening through the words of a friend that self-control is listed as one of the fruits of the Spirit, and the way my body looked was demonstrating the fact that in this area of my life, I was clearly out of control.

4. Eat right. Please notice I did not say diet! As far as the eating right goes, talk to your doctor. Please! Stay away from fad diets; otherwise, you will be angry as a hornet for the entire time you are on that fad diet, and then you'll binge-eat like crazy and feel so guilty afterward that you will most likely quit the diet altogether.

You don't have to quit eating good food. You can simply make better bad choices! (At least that's what I do!)

5. Exercise. You're going to have to do some sort of exercise. Remember, you've got to start somewhere, and *something* is better than *nothing*! You don't have to run a marathon, but going out and walking a mile may be an excellent way to begin the process. And exercise will increase your energy level and help you achieve your fitness goals faster.

As far as wrestling with how you feel, the only thing that has helped me is continually striving to find my identity in Christ and not my body image. This is especially difficult if you are a woman, but it is possible through discipline of the mind.

As a former huge person (I was over 300 pounds and wore a size 50 in the waist), I am telling you that weight does not have to be the overwhelming issue that dominates your life.

I recently wrote a book titled *Overwhelmed*, where I talked through my battle with depression and what I learned through it. I didn't know it at first, but part of my depression had to do with the fact that my mom died of cancer when I was 12 years old. It was then that I began running to food for comfort.

During my depression, I was able to sort through my past, and afterward I had that much more peace and clarity about my personal health as well. I was able to truly understand that my identity is in Christ and that I need to seek Him for comfort. It's because of the Lord's faithfulness that I was

able to overcome my battle with depression, anxiety, worry and even stress.

Let's be honest: No one who reads those four things is surprised. However, the thing I can promise you is that if you are feeling overwhelmed when it comes to how much you weigh, you can do something about it.

Maybe you're feeling stressed and anxious about your weight. Maybe you have given up trying to get healthy. Hopefully my story will encourage you because it *is* possible to overcome and win this battle. Information plus consistent application equals transformation.

This applies to health and fitness as well. Knowing what you need to do and applying that knowledge by eating right and exercising on a consistent basis means that you will see a transformation in your weight for the better. If I can do it, I promise you can too!

Perry Noble is the founding and senior pastor of NewSpring Church in South Carolina. The church averages 25,000 people during weekend services at multiple campuses throughout the state. Perry is a gifted communicator and teacher, convicted about speaking the truth as plainly as possible. God has given him a vision and a passion for helping people meet Jesus, and each week he shares God's Word and its practical application in our daily lives.

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