

Rick Warren's 'The Daniel Plan' Details Biblical Approach to a Healthy Lifestyle

Rick Warren, founding pastor of Saddleback Church and best-selling author of *The Purpose Driven Life*, has partnered with renowned Drs. Daniel Amen and Mark Hyman to co-author *The Daniel Plan: 40 Days to a Healthier Life* releasing Dec. 3.

The Daniel Plan details a healthy lifestyle program based on five essential principles of faith, food, fitness, focus and friends. The program was developed and originated at **Saddleback Church** in 2011 and within the first year more than 15,000 church members lost a collective of more than 250,000 pounds while experiencing decreases in health issues and stress and increases in spiritual growth and energy.

"The Daniel Plan is far more than a diet; it is about living a healthier life based on biblical principles," explains Warren. "While all five essentials are necessary, it is the components of faith and friends that I believe are the secret sauce that make the plan so effective. When you have God and a group helping you stay on track, you have far more than willpower driving you to make positive changes and you are far more likely to stay consistent."

Each essential within *The Daniel Plan* is intended to hold up one's life, enliven one's body, enrich one's mind and fill one's heart. Warren dives into **spiritual health** and the importance of building a foundation on God for all other areas of life. Hyman, a family physician and Functional Medicine expert, discusses the power of food as medicine and a source of abundance, noting that eating real, whole food can be a

doorway to reverse chronic disease, create resilient health and easy weight loss and a clear mind. And Amen, a physician and double-board certified psychiatrist, helps readers boost their brain's physical health to turn his or her mind into a powerful tool to fight off cravings, bad decisions and toxic thoughts.

"The health of the U.S. is going the wrong way. Two-thirds of us are overweight; one-third are obese. It is estimated by 2020 that 50 percent of the U.S. population will be obese," says Amen. "Until now, many churches have been places of illness rather than health ... think spaghetti dinner, pancake breakfasts, ice cream socials, potlucks and donuts on Sunday morning. The Bible Belt has been widening, but not in a way ordained by God."

The Daniel Plan focuses on practical tips such as eating real, whole food; viewing physical activity as play, rather than exercise; setting SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time-bound) goals; and finding a group of individuals to provide encouragement for healthy lifestyle choices.

"Today, America has become the United States of Diabetes with 70 percent of Americans and 40 percent of children overweight, and one in two Americans having pre-diabetes or type-2 diabetes," notes Hyman. "By 2050 at current rates, one in two Americans will be obese and one in three will have type two diabetes.

"Diabetes drives our national debt, threatens our national security because kids are too fat or unfit to serve, and our global economic competitiveness because kids who are sick and overweight cannot learn leading to an achievement gap with the rest of the world. We need a clear, doable, scalable program that can become a movement. 'The Daniel Plan' is not a book. It's a movement."

The book also outlines three simple exercise programs as well as a balanced meal plan, complete with recipes.

For Warren, *The Daniel Plan* has been three years in the making, ever since the vision for the program was developed in 2011. In the book, Warren honestly addresses the issue of setbacks in maintaining a healthy lifestyle, referencing his own experience following the loss of his youngest son to suicide last April.

Warren, who had lost more than 50 pounds prior to the tragedy, admits to returning to his previous unhealthy choices brought on by physical and emotional exhaustion during his subsequent grieving period, and his recommitment to The Daniel Plan lifestyle.

“As anyone in recovery will tell you, setbacks are part of the process of making any long-term change,” Warren writes. “Rather than beating myself up, I simply asked God and my close friends to help get me back on track.”

The concept for The Daniel Plan, on which the book is based, was developed by Warren after baptizing 827 adults in one day by lowering each under the water and lifting them back up. At that time, Warren literally felt the weight of America’s health problems while being simultaneously convicted by his own unhealthy weight and habits.

He enlisted Hyman and Amen, as well as Dr. Mehmet Oz of *The Dr. Oz Show*, to develop The Daniel Plan, which was conceptualized from the Old Testament biblical account of Daniel, who refused to eat the rich foods from the king’s table and challenged the ruler to a 10-day health contest.

“I witnessed firsthand the Daniel Plan’s impact on an entire congregation’s health,” says Oz. “The wisdom in this book will protect the temple of your soul.”