

5 Myths about Weight Loss... and the Truth Revealed

Cindy Shufflebarger, MPH, RD

Myth #1: Weight loss will make me happy.

We all think we'll be happier when we lose those unwanted pounds. But, the truth is if we haven't addressed the underlying issues that led to the weight gain, we won't be any happier once we've lost the weight. OK, so we might experience some temporary joy, but unless we resolve the issues that influenced the weight gain, we'll end up right back where we started. Our source of happiness must come from our relationship with Christ and who we are as a child of God. He loves us unconditionally and we're created in His image, so we need to celebrate that. When we start believing that and living it, we might just find that happiness results in weight loss instead of the other way around.

See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! 1 John 3:1

Myth #2: I'm too busy to take care of my body.

Taking care of your body is an act of worship and you'll be blessed when you make it a priority. The Bible tells us that our bodies are a temple... we are filled with the Holy Spirit. Our health shouldn't become an obsession (that would then tip the scales in the direction of worshipping a false god), but we will feel better when we get adequate sleep, drink lots of water, eat plenty of fruits and vegetables, and get regular physical activity. If we're totally honest with ourselves, we can probably find time to do something healthy. It might require a sacrifice, like turning off our favorite TV show, but the rewards will be great.

Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies. 1 Corinthians 6:19-20

Myth #3: If I follow a diet, I'll be able to lose weight and keep it off.

Restrictive diets can create a preoccupation with food that is counterproductive to weight loss. When we tell ourselves we can't have something, we begin to want it. Look at Eve. She was told to stay away from one tree. They could have anything else they wanted. And what happened? She was tempted by the fruit of that tree. Diets can indeed produce weight loss. However, they're not typically successful in producing long term results because we end up being consumed with thoughts of food and can't maintain the diet. If diets were successful for the long term, we'd see a decrease in the rate of overweight and obesity instead a continued increase in prevalence. If you're currently on a diet, this is not meant as discouragement, but instead a cautionary note. Take an inventory of your thoughts. If you're feeling so deprived

because of strict diet rules, you may want to make adjustments in your approach so that results will be sustainable. Be careful that you don't become captive to thoughts of food.

Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak. Matthew 26:41

Myth #4: Certain combinations of food will help me lose weight.

There is no magical way to lose weight. There aren't certain foods that help burn calories... only exercise can. We need a balance of carbohydrates, proteins, and fats to help our bodies function properly and efficiently so eliminating certain food groups is risky. God ordained the consumption of fruits, vegetables and grains at creation and later gave us animals for food after the flood.

Then God said, "I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. Genesis 1:29

Everything that lives and moves about will be food for you. Just as I gave you the green plants, I now give you everything. Genesis 9:3

Myth #5: Food is the enemy.

God created food and it is good! As you read about creation in Genesis, you'll notice that we were made to eat, even before the fall. God created us to need daily sustenance – perhaps as a reminder of our need for daily dependence and renewal in Him. And look at the wonderful creativity of tastes, textures, and smells that He created. He didn't make everything taste like dry, overcooked chicken. He created a rainbow of colorful foods for us to enjoy... kiwi, cantaloupe, blueberries, strawberries, grapes... He intended food to be a blessing and He even gives examples throughout the Bible of food being a part of celebrations and feasts. Note how He refers to the Promised Land – a land flowing with milk and honey. Much like money though, it's not the food itself that is the problem, it's the love of it and the excessive value we place on it. Sometimes we elevate it to an improper place – we use it for comfort, we are consumed by thoughts of it, and we depend on it for things other than nourishment. So, it's our attitude about food that is the issue, not the food itself.

Go and enjoy choice food and sweet drinks, and send some to those who have nothing prepared. This day is holy to our Lord. Nehemiah 8:10

Taste and see that the LORD is good. Psalm 34:8