

Introduction

Welcome to Food and Faith!

God's truth can be hard to see when the world we live in has clouded our vision. The world has a tremendous impact on what we believe and how we act. We have become distracted by what the world says and have forgotten that God's Word provides us with amazing truth to help us in all areas, including nutrition and health!

God made food to be both nutritious and pleasurable. Sadly, we often place too much emphasis on one or the other of these purposes and fall into a number of traps that leave us desperate for truth. This "Food and Faith" journey is designed to help us change the way we think about food, our bodies, health, and everything else related to this area.

As we search our own hearts (Ps 139:23-24) and ask God to do the same, we must remember the gospel truth as it motivates our hearts to make meaningful change.

The Gospel

God created this world in a perfect manner, but the woman and the man chose to disobey God which caused creation to unravel. What once was perfect is now littered with disobedience and sin. Thankfully, God had a plan for this world and for His people who love Him. He sent His son, Jesus Christ, to be born on this earth as the perfect example for us. Jesus was then sentenced, although completely innocent, to death on a cross. This was God's plan. Jesus would die on the cross in our place. Even though He lived a perfect life, He took our punishment (Romans 5:8). When we believe this simple yet complex truth, we become part of God's family.

Let us continue learning as we hold fast to the gospel! You came to this resource probably because eating, food, health, or body image is a struggle for you. God wants you to know that He loves you and He is here to help you. I pray you will let the Word of Christ dwell in you (Colossians 3:16) as you grow in your faith!

About Me

I am a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist and a Christian. I truly believe that God's Word applies to all areas of our lives, even nutrition! As humans, we tend to compartmentalize our lives leaving God on the sidelines. This is not the way it should be! Everything we do should be affected by God's Word.

I confess that I have struggled in these areas. The Lord has taught me so much, but I am by no means perfect. For about 10 years, I struggled intensely with sugar addiction, body image issues, unhealthy dieting, and exercise addiction. God has rescued my soul in many ways from a very unhealthy relationship with food. My own issues have spurred me into helping others overcome their unhealthy mindsets about all things related to nutrition.

About the Program

Here is what you can look forward to in our journey ahead.

- Week 1: Transforming our Minds
- Week 2: Finding the Right Motivations
- Week 3: Finding Peace (with Food and Our Bodies)
- Week 4: Practicing Self-Control
- Week 5: Banishing Lies
- Week 6: Patience and Perseverance
- Week 7: Finding Joy
- Week 8: Emotional Eating
- Week 9: Making Plans

This Food and Faith Program is designed to be 9 weeks in length, 5 days per week. Please plan to spend 15-20 minutes each day rather than trying to do the entire week in one sitting. God often uses time to help us meditate and apply what we are learning.

Here is what to expect:

1. Read the Key Scripture for the day.
2. Read the devotional text.
3. Answer the reflection questions in your journal.
4. Do the daily challenge. Note some challenges might be done later in the day depending on what the challenge is.

We will use science-based nutrition knowledge to help us understand our “what:” how to take care of our bodies well. You will get started with this today by looking through the anti-inflammatory keys in Appendix 1. Most of these recommendations are helpful for everyone, but as always, we are each unique and may have different needs. Be sure to reach out to a health professional you trust for specific recommendations for your body.

We will also be using the Bible to guide us in understanding what our attitudes and motivations should look like. I pray that you will grow in your faith; transform the way you think about food, health, and your body; and transform your minds and hearts which will lead to transformation in your actions. I have put together a list of encouraging verses in Appendix 2.

Take a moment to review “My Progress” worksheet in Appendix 3. As you begin this “Food and Faith” program, you can use this resource to help you keep track of your progress and growth. You will also use it to write your prayers, nutrition wins, and what the Lord is teaching you. Take a few minutes at the beginning of each week to review and update this worksheet. Don’t worry, I will remind you!

This program will help you explore, identify, and resolve your issues through amazing faith and grace that is only given by our Lord and Savior. God has the power to change you through this journey. What a blessing to know that you are not alone. Amen! Are you ready? Let's pray the Lord will open our eyes and ears to see and hear what he has to teach us about food, health, and body image through the lens of His Word!

Disclaimer: As you take this journey, you may uncover some difficult memories and/or feelings. You may discover that some of your behaviors related to eating or exercise are related to unpleasant past experiences or even trauma. First, please know you are not alone. Second, please understand that the program is not designed to walk you through healing from that trauma. If you uncover some of these difficult feelings and memories, please seek out a licensed counselor to help you navigate them. You can take a break from the program to focus on healing, or you can continue through it as you also meet with your counselor.

How to Use this Book

You can use this book on your own, or you can read it together in a group. Many of us struggle to find a healthy relationship with food and their bodies, and this book can help to work through some of these issues.

1. This book is designed to work through over 9 weeks. I recommend beginning with an introduction week and then assigning readings to the women in your group. This means you can use this book through a 10-week period.
2. There are 5 days to review each week. Some weeks have multiple scriptures to review and may take a little more time. Be flexible and allow time to meditate on God's word.
3. Each day has 2-4 questions. It is unlikely as a group that you will be able to review all the questions in one group. The leader should take time to highlight one or two questions from each day to cover in the group setting.
4. Many of the questions involve vulnerability. If you are leading the discussion, lead by example and share some of your own struggles. If you are participating, don't be afraid to share. It is likely many of the other women in the group have a similar struggle.
5. Make sure to have participants review the Small Group Guidelines in Appendix 4 at the introduction meeting. This is important to establish confidentiality and to create a safe space to learn and grow.

