

# Chapter One

## A passionate people

Thank you for opening this book. I feel that God has prompted you to search deeper for the solution to the life-draining problem of extra pounds. If you are overweight, you are undoubtedly seeking deliverance from the insulting enslavement of dieting, fat gram counting, taking pills, and constantly focusing on self. Many people feel like failures and wonder why they can't seem to get their weight, their eating, and their bingeing under control. After working for years with obesity, bulimia, anorexia, and some struggling Weigh Downers, I have witnessed unprecedented weight loss success, unbelievable healing, renewed hope, and restored relationships once the principles of Weigh Down were truly applied to the heart. I know that this message is God's truth. It is a message that will set you free from your struggle with food.

Many of you have already read my first book, *The Weigh Down Diet*. (If you haven't, don't despair. You will still be able to open your heart to the message presented in *Rise Above*, and you can learn more about the principles of *The Weigh Down Workshop* by reading Appendix A and Appendix B in the back of this book.) *The Weigh Down Diet* is the skeleton of the formula for permanent weight loss. It touches on how this formula of a transferred heart can make you thin. The book explains how you can learn to stop in the middle of a candy bar and have no desire to eat the second half. God did not put rocky road ice cream or cheese dip and chips on earth to torture us; such foods are for our enjoyment. However, He wants us to learn how to rise above the magnetic pull of the excessive food, so that we do not eat more than what our body is physically calling for. Food can be an enslavement just like alcohol, tobacco, drugs, money, or any worldly pursuit that consumes our lives. The problem is the same in each case: the person's heart and passion have been given over to something other than God.

Basic Weigh Down, whether in book or seminar form, teaches how to transfer this passion for food to a passion for God. It teaches that we were created with a need to be fed, both physically and spiritually. The stomach has a need to be fed with food, which the body uses as fuel in order to function physically. But for us to function emotionally and spiritually, the heart needs to be fed. All too often, we turn to food to feed the desires of the heart as well. However, food will never give you the true satisfaction you are looking for—it can never love you back. But as hard as it is to believe, you can become fulfilled by an invisible God who becomes more and more visible as you employ the suggestions made in this book. Thousands of people, some of whose testimonies you will read in this book, have done just that.

*Rise Above* picks up where the basic message left off. Strugglers need more motivation and heart-changing information to help them climb out of this miry pit. We all need someone and something to live for that is bigger than ourselves. We need Jesus Christ. No worldly pursuit—food, alcohol, tobacco, antidepressants, money, the praise of man, sexual lust, or whatever—will satisfy the longing heart. It is not the fault of the food, the alcohol, the money, or the tobacco. It is the effort to use them to fulfill a need that only God can satisfy that is the problem. A person who eats beyond what the body is physically calling for is bound for being overweight. A person who pursues an overindulgence of alcohol, cigarettes, shopping, or power will inevitably suffer the consequences of greed. There is nothing inherently evil about food, alcohol, tobacco, money, or credit cards. In fact, it is wrong to falsely accuse God and say that the things He has approved and given on earth for good use or our enjoyment are evil. First Timothy 4:1–6 shows you exactly what God thinks of people who don't have a clue about what is right and what is wrong:

The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron. They forbid people to marry and order them to abstain from certain foods, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and who know the truth. For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, because it is consecrated by the word of God

and prayer. If you point these things out to the brothers, you will be a good minister of Christ Jesus, brought up in the truths of the faith and of the good teaching that you have followed.

This Scripture points out that demons and people with deceiving spirits teach you that certain foods are evil or wrong. So the food is not evil. There are no good foods or bad foods (Mark 7:19; Ps. 104:14–15). If you don't realize that your being overweight is not the food's fault, you will never get out of the deep pit of obesity because you will be concentrating on the wrong thing and blaming the wrong thing. The foods are not evil; the problem is the greedy heart of man. We want more than our share.

The solution to being overweight is to go back to a reliance upon God and a trust in Him instead of all the man-made rules that have inundated our society in the last few decades and have left us increasingly heavier. According to the American Dietetic Association, one-third of the population is obese,<sup>1</sup> and many more are overweight. At the rate we are going, one-half of the population will be obese in the next twenty years. It is not genetic, it is not congenital, it is not inherited, it is not a disease, and it is not our mothers' fault anymore.

Due to man-made rules, America has been encouraged to lust after food. The dieter is asked to think about food content, consider the fat gram count, examine food pictures, discuss food and recipes in support groups, depend upon the scales (a focus on body and self), and prepare special meals. This focus on food makes it irresistible, for you fall in love with what you focus on. It would be like telling an alcoholic to examine all the alcoholic drinks, memorize the ingredients, drink only low-alcohol-content beverages, look at pictures of low-alcohol-content drinks, meet with support groups that discuss low-alcohol-content beverages and sample them all, hand out recipes for making your own concoctions, and then expect the addicted person to be less addicted or to abstain or drink in moderation at ten o'clock at night when no one else is around. Impossible. You fall in love with what you lust after.

This worship of food has robbed us of emotional stability, comfortable clothing, and many relationships. The solution that was introduced in The Weigh Down Diet is to trust God with the way He made our bodies. He has created the instincts of all animals, all infants, all children, all men, and all women with the ability to sense when they have eaten too much. Man-made rules have unplugged and confused this instinct to sense fullness and appropriate volume, and they have caused us to be greedier and to expect more self-indulgence than ever before. Dieting, which is the use of man-made rules, works only on making the food behave—not the heart of man. This is big! All animals, infants, and children that have been untouched by the man-made rules still have the strong innate capacity to recognize and respond to correct volumes of food. Dieting—including fat gram counting, pills, bulimia, suction-assisted lipectomies, and excessive exercise—has created and exacerbated an excused greed that has grown to monumental heights in this country. Greed is at its zenith. Our plates of low-calorie, fat-free foods are larger, our demand for more has increased, the seats are larger, and the clothes are stretchier. The present volume that can be eaten in polite company would have been completely embarrassing at one point in our history. Do you know what else? The word binge is understood by even young children. It's a word that rolls off our tongues on a daily basis with no guilt.

We are not lacking for information now; we are hurting for motivation and heart-changing cultivation to employ God's plan for permanent weight control. This is the book to keep by your bedside for morning motivation, to keep on your desk at work for heart-grabbing temptations, to keep in the kitchen to convict you into a whole-hearted response to the heavenly Father, and to leave by the nighttime reading chair for tearful conviction. It is full of Scripture that will soften your heart, make you satisfied with less, and therefore bring you to permanent weight control.

A major goal of this book is to introduce a holy fear of God. I am convinced this is a foundational characteristic in my heart that has moved me to obedience. Jesus delighted in the fear of God (Isa. 11:3); it cleared His mind and His path for doing God's will daily. Second Corinthians 5:10–11a says, For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body,

whether good or bad. Since, then, we know what it is to fear the Lord, we try to persuade men. I pray the words in this book will help you develop this holy fear. I truly live for that one day called Judgment Day, and my prayer is that instead of being a dreadful day for me, this day will be romantically delightful, like a bride meeting a groom (Rev. 21:2). I picture it as a huge reception hall with everyone dressed in the most elaborate clothing. The King will spot me as I enter and allow me to walk into His presence, seeing Him face-to-face.

You are not a failure. You are a prize to be won, and there are two contenders for your heart: food (the world) and the invisible jealous God. We are a passionate people—that is why we will see people anywhere from twenty to three hundred pounds or more overweight. This represents our longing, our passion, and our lust. We salivate for more. Passion is not the problem. Our problem is where we direct our passion and our hearts, and where we are grabbing for more.

Dear weary ones, God can make you thin. Don't give up. Our problem is that we have swallowed the lie that says because we have been created and we now breathe, we deserve more. We can ask for more, my friends, but we must wait on our good God to provide it. Grabbing for more will depress us, will frustrate us, will kill us. James 1:14–15 tells us, But each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death. But waiting on God to decide when and how much to feed us will bring life—the opposite of death—plus a thin body due to less greed in the heart. God knows you will feel better thin because He designed your body that way.

It's not about us—it's about God. I now get up every day and ask God, What do You want me to do today? When I consider myself and my wishes and my wants as secondary and put God's first, He takes care of me. Nothing is sweeter than knowing that someone is considering your wishes and your wants, and it is far sweeter than grabbing for and taking care of your own self. I can testify again and again to this truth. This basic law will radically transform your entire life, and your eating is the place to start testing, employing, and plastering this concept into your heart and mind.

Whether or not you are familiar with the foundational principles of the Weigh Down Workshop program please take the time now to refresh your memory by referring to Appendix A and Appendix B before reading chapters 1 and 2, which will give you a firsthand look at how God led me to develop the Weigh Down seminar, and how He has guided us through a true media explosion!