



15 CHALLENGES FOR SUCCESSFUL CHRISTIAN WEIGHT LOSS



These are challenges, not requirements. Each challenge we are able to address and master brings us one step closer to successful weight loss. The first 7 challenges set the stage or prepare the path. They are just as important as the next 8 which deal with the physical aspects of weight-loss. Be careful not to underestimate the power of the first 7 challenges. Once these preparatory steps have been taken, the process of losing weight is easier and more successful.

- 1) Pray every day, for yourself and for others.**
- 2) Read your bible every day.**

Communication is a basic requirement for any relationship. These two steps allow us to build and strengthen our relationship with God. Praying is our way of talking to God. Reading the bible is God's way of talking to us. We must do both to create two-way conversations.

I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.--Phillippians 4:13

Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.--Proverbs 3:5

- 3) Find or form a support group and attend the meetings faithfully.**
- 4) Call or visit with at least one other group member at least once a week, especially if you are unable to attend a meeting.**

Meeting with a group and visiting with other members makes us part of a community. Transforming old habits into new healthier habits is difficult to do without help. We need to know that other people are interested in our well-being and our progress. Sometimes we need the opportunity to focus on others and their well-being instead of our own. Sharing our experiences keeps all of us from feeling isolated.

If you are unable to find or form your own group, then consider Overeaters Anonymous, Celebrate Recovery and meeting with another friend or two. Following this program alone is very difficult. Losing weight with a partner or group increases your likelihood of success.

As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. --1 Peter 4:10

But exhort one another daily, while it is called Today; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.--Hebrews 3:13

5) Ask for help when you need it.

A lot of us have tried to lose weight on our own. Most of us have been unsuccessful. We get to places where we are stuck. We have bad days and hard weeks. We have months that test our resolve. Some of us have had years of swimming in darkness. We lose our sense of humor and we forget to pray. This is when we need to ask for help. Whether it is a little pebble in our path, or a big boulder, we don't have to do it alone. We can call on God to help us, and we can call on other human beings too. A good time to ask for help is when we feel confused, frustrated or hopeless. When we think we are undeserving of help, and that no one wants to help us anyway, that's our signal. It's time to open up to others. Whenever feelings like this creep into our minds, it is a sure bet that the time has come to pray. Call a group member or a friend right away. Before you know it, things will start to make sense again.

Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.--Matthew 7:7

I will bless the LORD, who hath given me counsel.--Psalms 16:7 (a)

6) Follow your doctor's health recommendations.

7) Take your medications regularly and on time.

If you have been diagnosed with a medical condition, or have health concerns, then your doctor may have recommended you make some lifestyle changes. You may have medications you must take everyday to maintain or achieve optimum health. If we want to be as healthy as we can be, then we need to follow our doctors' advice. If we have daily medications, even something as simple as a multivitamin, we need to make it a priority in our daily routine. Some medications work best if they are taken at the same time everyday. If this is the case, then we might as well set a time and stick to it. Doctors really do have our best interest at heart. We have an obligation to ourselves and our loved ones to follow their directions.

What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's. --1 Corinthians 6:19-20

The following challenges deal directly with the physical aspects of weight-loss. Be sure to make peace with the first 7 challenges, before embarking on the next 8.

8) Drink at least 8 glasses of water every day (64 oz total).

Water does a lot of good things for our bodies. It keeps our bladders and kidneys functioning properly. It improves our skin and makes our wrinkles less noticeable. Water keeps us hydrated so we have more energy. It flushes impurities out of our bodies and puts a spring in our step. Soda pop, coffee, tea and kool-aid do not count as water. Water counts as water. If you don't like your tap water then drink filtered or bottled water, or keep water in your fridge.

Thou gavest also thy good spirit to instruct them, and withheldest not thy manna from their mouth, and gavest them water for their thirst.--Nehemiah 9:20

9) Write down everything you eat every single day.

Before we get to where we're going, we need to know where we are. Before we can follow a new food plan we need to know what we are eating today. It's not easy to write down everything we eat. As a matter of fact, for some of us it is extremely difficult. It still has to be done. Some of us may wonder why we have to keep track of the chaotic way we eat. After all, we know the old chaos isn't working, that is why we are ready to change. Writing down what we eat brings order to the chaos. It helps us come to face to face with our own behavior. Forming a habit takes 3 weeks. Writing down everything we eat for a week or two, without the worry of following a meal plan yet, gives us a head start on this habit.

The sluggard will not plow by reason of the cold; therefore shall he beg in harvest, and have nothing.--Proverbs 20:4

10) Follow your food plan everyday.

Choose a food plan or diet plan. It can be the Exchange Plan Diet, the USDA dietary guidelines, or another healthy food plan of your choice. Be sure to check with your doctor before you begin. Next, look over the records you've kept for the past week or two. Make note of any trends in your eating behavior. For instance, you may notice that you don't always eat enough vegetables or that you eat a lot more fat than your plan allows. Keep these things in mind and address them in your plan. Our weaknesses are the pathway to success. When we can see the weak points in our behavior, we have the opportunity to overcome these weaknesses and turn them into strengths.

And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.--Galatians 5:24-25

11) Measure and weigh your portions.

The only way to consistently maintain our calorie level is to measure the foods we eat. Food or postal scales are available at office supply stores, hardware stores and most discount department stores. Most of us already have measuring cups and spoons. It's hard to spread a teaspoon of margarine or butter on a slice of toast when we don't know what a teaspoon of margarine or butter looks like. It's smaller than one thinks. Measuring and weighing our portions keeps us honest and on track.

For the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty: and drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags.--Proverbs 23:21

Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; --1 Peter 2:11

12) Exercise 3 to 6 times a week.

Exercise builds muscle. It increases metabolism and decreases appetite. It gives us more energy. Exercise makes us stronger. People who exercise regularly struggle less with depression and mental fatigue. Exercise is easier to do with a friend. If you have a friend you can exercise with, Great! If you don't, you can still exercise by yourself. Plan on spending 20 to 30 minutes a day, 3

to 6 times a week, doing some type of healthy physical activity. Talk to your doctor or health professional about what type of exercise might be best for you.

How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? when wilt thou arise out of thy sleep?--Proverbs 6:9

13) Weigh yourself once a week, no more, no less.

Weighing ourselves everyday or several times a day is the same as measuring the length of our hair or fingernails everyday. It is a waste of our time. It will tie us up in knots and plant us firmly in the valley of confusion. The scale is only one way of measuring success. It may not always be the most accurate way. Do yourself a favor. Decide to weigh yourself once a week, and be content with your decision. Obsessive scale use only leads to disappointment.

Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.--Philippians 4:6

14) Keep the dishes done and the kitchen clean.

When the sink is full of dirty dishes and the kitchen is cluttered, we can't cook. If we can't cook then we go hungry or eat unhealthy snack foods or go out to eat. All of these results sabotage our success. Cooking and eating homemade food brings us closer to our goals. Going hungry, eating out and eating processed or convenience foods makes it more difficult to reach our goals. The easiest way to cook at home is to keep the dishes done and the kitchen clean. Not everyone has this struggle, but many of us do. If you already keep your kitchen tidy, that's super! If you don't, then you are encouraged to make it a higher priority.

The slothful man roasteth not that which he took in hunting: but the substance of a diligent man is precious. (Anyone too lazy to cook will starve, but a hard worker is a valuable treasure. - CEV) Proverbs 12:27

15) Do something very nice for someone who doesn't deserve it, at least once a week.

Lots of us eat as a response to frustration, stress or anger. When we feel these feelings we need to find an alternative to eating. Being nice to someone who doesn't deserve it is a great substitute to eating. When our kids or husband or a friend or sister are doing everything they can to get our goat, we don't have to eat a candy bar or a bag of chips. We can think up ways to be nice to the offending person instead. Sure it is difficult. Sure it is challenging. It is still worth doing. We can turn this weakness into a strength. We can turn our wills to God and allow him to work inside of us when we are confronted with unfair treatment and unfair demands.

But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.--Matthew 5:44

In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil. It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones.--Proverbs 3:6-8

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Thanks -- Maggie