

Are You Looking for an Easy, Effective, and Enjoyable Way to Lose Weight? Here's A Proven Method to Attain and Maintain Your Goal

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When I became an adult, my pediatrician in my last meeting with him said, “With your height and body frame, you should not allow your weight to exceed 165 pounds. Several years later, I had gained a significant amount of weight; I was almost 30 pounds over the 165 maximum.

About that time, I was looking at a photo of my wife and our infant daughter, who I was holding in my arms, and the thought pierced my mind, “I have to do all I can to be here for my family, so I don’t die prematurely.” Even that long ago, medical people were alerting the public to the dangers of being overweight and obese, the latter of which is now [epidemic](#).

Both overweight and obesity are linked to [many serious diseases and health conditions](#), and obesity is [increasing in the United States](#) and throughout the world. The World Health Organization [reports](#) that “Worldwide obesity has nearly tripled since 1975...Most of the world’s population live in countries where overweight and obesity kills more people than underweight.” The U. S. Centers for Disease Control [reports](#) that “In the United States and worldwide, obesity is also associated with the leading causes of death, including deaths from diabetes, heart disease, stroke, and some types of cancer.”

When I saw that picture and thought of the above, I immediately resolved to lose the weight and to keep it off as long as I live here on earth in this phase of life. After many decades, I have succeeded in doing so, and you can too. Here’s how.

Essential, Vital, and Practical Guidelines and Their Implementation

1. Don’t ever be discouraged. Begin with prayer, asking God’s help. In constructing, implementing, and following a plan to lose weight, all of us, and especially those of us who struggle greatly with this matter, need the help of God, who loves us, and whose all-sufficient help can enable us to do all we must do in order to achieve our goal. His guidance will give us success, especially if we daily keep in touch with him, e.g., asking him for help when we’re tempted to eat or drink something we shouldn’t at that time.

God is constantly with us and willing to help us. We will receive his greatest help if we follow his will, by daily reading his Word, a passage in the Bible, and praying to him alone. I have explained about how to seek and obtain God’s help in my PowerPoint program, [Essential Christianity: Historic Christian Systematic Theology—With a Focus on Its Very Practical Dimensions, Including Answers to Our Great Questions of Life—For Now and Eternity](#), located on the [Christian Theology](#) page of my [general Website](#) and on my [academic Website](#). After opening the *Essential Christianity* document, use the “Find” feature to select the subject, e.g., God, God’s will, salvation.

2. Next, ask your physician what he or she recommends for your desired weight. Then begin with the proven plan in this brief essay to reach that goal...and maintain it!

3. Keep in mind that once you have committed to losing weight, doing so is basically a matter of math. The simple fact is that one pound equals 3,500 calories. Each human being has what I call “a *caloric line of demarcation*,” which is the amount of calories he or she needs to survive and thrive, i.e., to function in order to accomplish the required tasks of the day.

This line of demarcation varies for each of us individually, depending on our height; body frame; physical wellbeing (e.g., presence or absence of any physical disability that reduces calorie-expending activity); lifestyle, including the work we have to do and how many calories we spend each day in doing that work; the amount of exercise we typically do; and other daily activities that require energy from calories. On a given day, any calories above that line of demarcation brings us closer to 3,500 calories and another pound of weight added to what we now weigh. Conversely, on a given day, any accumulation of calories that total less than one’s line of demarcation, subtracts from the 3,500 and results in a loss of weight; when the total loss reaches 3,500, one pound of weight has been lost.

You can find out what your own unique line of demarcation is by first looking at a chart of calorie allowances for men and for women, which are available in calorie books or online (e.g., <https://www.calories.info/>). The calorie allowance figure is the estimated number of calories needed per day for people in your category. In my case, I had to use a calorie book; the Internet had not yet been invented, and there were no personal computers in that day. On the chart for your sex, weight, and age range, locate the average calorie allowance for people in your category. This calorie allowance figure is the average line of demarcation for people like you.

However, this is not necessarily your line of demarcation, because you are a unique person who have similarities with, but are not necessarily or likely the same as, the average person in your classification on this chart; hence this calorie allowance figure may not be yours. Now you need to determine whether it is or not, and that will take a bit of experimentation for a brief period of time.

Start by thinking about your lifestyle. Are you as physically active as the average person in your sex and age range? Are you more so or less so? Are you taller or shorter? If you exceed the average person in your category, e.g., in height and activity, or have other uniquenesses that affect your use of calories, you may want to raise the figure on the chart in order to obtain an accurate estimate of how many calories you need in order to function well each day. Then, use this higher figure for you on the chart for calculating how much less you can consume and still function well but use less calories in order to accomplish your goal.

The chart in my book showed that the average calorie allowance (line of demarcation) for my age was 3,400 calories. Since so much of my work was and is cerebral, and thus not as physically active as the average person in my category, I lowered the figure to 3200 and began to limit my daily calorie intake to that figure. I found I was still gaining weight, so I had to lower it more.

When I reached 2,700, I found after a week at that daily figure that I was neither gaining weight nor losing weight. I had discovered my caloric line of demarcation: Any more that day, and I'd be gaining weight; any less and I'd be losing.

Next, I had to set a measurable objective for my maximum number of calories I could take in each day, still be comfortable, and function well. I found that number to be 2,000 calories. That meant I was losing 700 calories each day; thus, every five days I would lose one pound. The 2,000 figure still allowed me to have the calorie intake my body needed to function well and accomplish my responsibilities while losing the weight I needed to lose.

The next question now arose: How do I maintain that commitment to not exceed 2,000 calories per day until I reach my goal? Here we see another of this plan's uniquenesses that makes it successful. It involves more science, but all in the awareness of God's involvement.

4. God's Word, the Bible, contains many passages that help in this weight management plan. One more of them is that "God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble." (Psalm 46:1) Of course, trouble comes in a wide range of degrees, on a continuum from very serious to less serious, and weight management surely falls somewhere on that continuum, more so or less so depending on the challenge our particular situation is, or at least appears, to us. The need to lose weight is certainly troublesome to a greater or lesser degree, which is why so many people try to lose weight and give up...but God can help us.

He helps us through what theologians refer to as his *special revelation*, i.e., his Word as recorded in the Bible, all of which focuses on the life and work of Jesus Christ, through prayer, and through his *general revelation*, the truths he has built into his creation (cf. Romans 1:18ff.), part of which include the observations of sound science that has carefully followed each step of the scientific method.* Pertaining to special revelation, we find very encouraging and practical help in such passages as Psalm 46:1 and Matthew 28:20, where Jesus says to his followers, "...surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." He is ever-present and able to help us in all the ways we need, including in the most important ways, our eternal salvation (which has many practical benefits already beginning now), the perspective in which it is most helpful to view all of life, and in our daily life situations and difficulties, including our weight management.

Thus, as we proceed in our plan, it is important to daily read God's Word and pray. In so doing, he helps us do what we need to do, and avoid doing what is counterproductive

5. Pertaining to God's help through his general revelation, he offers valuable guidance through sound science, in particular an aspect of human learning research called reinforcement theory. The aspect of this theory that provides a significant part of this weight management plan is the axiom that behavior which is reinforced, or rewarded, tends to be repeated. A corollary to that axiom, its converse, is also true: Behavior that is not rewarded tends to dissipate over time and eventually extinguish. How do these empirical findings relate to this plan?

* For more information on this important subject, see Edward D. Seely, "Science: Distinguishing Between Sound and Flawed Science," at <https://seelyedward.academia.edu/research#papers>.

a. *Behavior that is rewarded tends to be repeated.* You are undoubtedly familiar with this reality, though you may not have applied it to a weight management plan. This axiom is simply empirical evidence of a principle that is very effective for behavior modification, not only in humans but in animal species as well. For example, if you are a dog owner, it is the same principle you have used to train your dog to defecate and urinate outside and not in your house; you give your dog a treat whenever he or she behaves as you want. Conversely, you do not reward your dog when he or she “has an accident” in the house. If you are consistent, the animal quickly learns how to get the treat and acts accordingly.

1) This axiom works for us in weight management, and it makes a huge difference. Not using this axiom is one of the main reasons why many people, typically rather quickly, fail to follow through with their plan and “give up their diet.” Here is how we can apply this sound scientific principle and succeed.

Build into your plan the inclusion of all the foods you like, even those that are rich in calories. Don’t accept the thought from others, “I’m giving up dieting, because I don’t want to give up the foods and drinks I really enjoy.” Assuming none of them are the dangerous substances that no one should consume, you don’t have to give up something you enjoy.

In fact, these foods and drinks are crucial for attaining your goal. For items with high calorie counts, simply factor them into your calorie goal (for me that was 2,000 calories per day). Personally, I chose to drink beverages that were tasty but had no calories. It was more important for me, in order to not still feel hungry and to feel as full as possible after a meal, to use up my calorie limit in food bulk than to spend the calories on beverages that don’t give the more lasting feeling of being full. But you eat and drink what you want; just don’t go over your calorie goal for the day.

Including your favorite foods and drinks are your reward for maintaining the goal of your plan and staying well under your line of demarcation, which reward leads to the likelihood of your repeating your good behavior and successfully getting down to the weight you want to be.

➤ Be sure to note carefully and remember that there is one exception to this rule: if your physician has discovered you have a condition, such as high cholesterol, and he or she informs you that, in addition to the prescribed medication to control that condition, you should avoid certain foods or drinks, do so. Actually, you should do so whether or not you are on a diet plan, so that you can live long enough to reach your goals, and especially to be able to serve the Lord in the work he has for you in your family, in the church, at work, in your neighborhood, and elsewhere. Be sure to avoid what is dangerous for you, indeed, as dangerous as being overweight.

God has given us many nutritious and tasty foods; find a substitute for those you can’t or shouldn’t have. Your local grocer and produce manager can be a big help.

- 2) Of course, include in your meals healthy foods and drinks. Some of the most healthy foods in their natural state aren't as tasty as you might like, so use some healthy but tasty condiments to enhance them. They do exist! And you will enjoy them.
- 3) Another means of rewarding yourself, and in the process observing visual encouragement that further motivates your continued progress in the plan, is to graph your progress on a chart. Also expect, and do not be discouraged, by the likelihood of a slow start. Especially at the beginning when you are finding out your precise caloric line of demarcation, and your further reduced calorie goal at which you can still function well, you may not see an immediate drop in weight; do not be disappointed or discouraged. Early in my plan, I experienced a couple of weeks with no change, and then the graph, which I still have, shows a steady decline of an average of one pound per week.

Another experience you may have is at the end of the plan. When you've reached your goal, you may find, as I did, that after the steady process of regular weight loss, you continue to lose weight for a couple of weeks or so. As you return to your line of demarcation, the continuing weight loss will stop, and you will gradually return to your objective, the optimum weight your physician has said would be good for you, and which will be sustained by maintaining your established caloric line of demarcation and never exceeding it.

- b. The converse of the axiom that behavior that is rewarded tends to be repeated is also true: *behavior that is not rewarded tends to dissipate over time and eventually to extinguish.* This is one of the most common causes of so many people giving up on their diets: They remove rewards from their plan and punish themselves by leaving out so much of what they like that the diet becomes repulsive. It need not be, and it should not be.
 - 1) We've seen above how we should include in our meals all the foods and drinks we enjoy, that are not medically dangerous to us, and just factor them into our daily limit, e.g., 2,000 calories for me.
 - 2) Therefore, if you like dessert, be sure to have it. Maybe not just as much.

I really like dessert, and I always made sure to have some during the almost six months it took me to reach my weight goal. One of my favorite desserts at that time (partly because I truly enjoyed the taste and partly because it was a fast and easy-to-measure way to calculate my calorie intake) were vanilla sandwich cookies. In those days they were 50 calories each (they're more now). At every lunch, and sometimes at supper, I'd have three of those cookies for dessert. That was enough to satisfy me.

Another reason dessert is very helpful, especially for people such as I, is that dessert helps stop the craving for more, e.g., going back for "seconds" (and "thirds+"). When I finished my third cookie and its accompanying cup of coffee or decaf (both black without cream or sugar), I was able to stop eating. If you want cream and sugar

in your drink, go for it; just remember to include those calories in your daily calorie limit, so you don't exceed your daily calorie goal.

6. Avoid or carefully monitor snacking between meals. Depending on what you have for your regular meals, and how much time elapses between your main meals, you may need a snack in order to keep your blood sugar at a healthy level in order to function normally. If you do snack, be sure to factor the snacks into your daily calorie limit so that you do not go over your limit.

In working out my plan, I did not snack. When I did need something to “tide me over” until my next meal, or until bedtime, I found a soft drink that I really enjoyed that had no calories and yet gave me a sense of filling that got me through without consuming any calories. That drink was a can of Fresca. There are also other tasty and healthy drinks with few or no calories.

This is how I was able to maintain my plan during my most challenging time of the day. My precious wife and daughter, neither of whom had the weight problem I had, used to have a snack at 10:00 at night, and it was one of my favorites. Knowing I wouldn't have any, and that it was just fine with me (I didn't want them to go without just because I was in my six-month weight management plan, and I wanted to progress as rapidly as possible), my wife made two generous and luscious dishes of ice cream—one for herself and one for our daughter—consisting of a generous mound of ice cream with a large cap of whipped cream and topped with a maraschino cherry and covered by a cascading flow of chocolate syrup. I greatly enjoyed those times together with them, but I did so with my Fresca.

7. This story illustrates another key weight management strategy: Find a low or non-calorie substitute for something you enjoy that has a lot of calories, to help you reach your goal more quickly. You can still eat your high calorie favorite—just factor it into the daily limit—but any time you can get by with a substitute you're making progress in the right direction much faster.

Whenever you are tempted to cave in to a desire to go over your daily limit (thinking, e.g., “just this once [an unwarranted and deceptive assumption] won't hurt”), or worse give up, immediately pray. Ask God for the help you need, remembering what the Holy Spirit inspired the Apostle Paul to write to the church in Corinth, Greece:

- “No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.” (1 Corinthians 10:13)

8. Maintain a vision of your goal, not just in terms of your precise weight you want to attain but other benefits you'll experience in achieving your objective. Keep in mind also your vision of how you want to look, including the clothes you want to be able to wear; of how you will feel better, including having increased self-esteem, being healthier, reducing the likelihood of

developing one or more of many diseases (*op cit.*), looking nicer, receiving your physician's and others' affirmation, and of the enjoyable activities you want to engage and will be able to do that you cannot do with excessive weight. Think regularly of your loved ones and how you can be there for them longer than you would otherwise and of how you can serve the Lord in other ways and longer. Consider the financial advantages of losing weight, e.g., reduced amount of medications, fewer cost challenges pertaining to your health insurability, increased positive perspective of your present employer and/or the elimination of concerns in any job application by HR personnel or a future employer worrying about how much your weight will cost the company in insurance, lost time on the job, frequent health issues, and other matters.

Successful Results and Maintaining the Results

1. Once you've reached your goal, keep in mind how good you feel having reached that goal. You've achieved a major accomplishment that will benefit yourself, your family, and others, beginning with having you around longer.
2. Keep following the guidelines that, with God's help (he's the giver of "every good and perfect gift" [James 1:17]) he has enabled you to achieve. And thank God for his daily help.
3. You no longer have to "count the calories." By now you have been doing that long enough so you have an idea as to how many calories most, if not all, of what you are eating have. Your careful attention to the amount of calories during your weight loss process (your "dieting") will have become part of your mentality. You'll know by now how many calories are in each food and drink you are considering at each meal, and during snack times, and you'll automatically take that into account as you select what you choose to eat and the amount of the portion you take. Throughout the day, you'll know roughly where you are in your calorie intake for that day and how far away, or close, to your line of demarcation you are at that time. You can then decide to take some, and how much, or pass, or opt instead for a calorie-free, or low calorie, drink that will be filling but without calories.

To this day, over half a century after I achieved my weight loss goal, I still have in mind throughout the day roughly where I am in my calorie accumulation for the day, how close I am to my 2,700 caloric line of demarcation. This mental exercise is not burdensome; it just comes naturally from the good habit formed as a result of the reward-motivating self-discipline of following my plan to its successful conclusion. And you can have this enjoyable experience too!

4. Keep in mind that after you finish eating, you will have just as much satisfaction with a smaller portion of all you eat and drink as you would with a large portion. This reality is one of my biggest surprises in constructing, with God's help, and following this plan. In fact, do you know what? You'll even have more satisfaction with the smaller portion, knowing that you enjoyed what you ate just as much without the increased calories that would be adding to your weight.

- Others will observe and benefit from your success in additional ways. A considerable number, who also need to lose weight, will ask you how you did it, and you can tell them and help them do so.

A while after I reached my goal and was maintaining it, one of the women in our church remarked about my substantial weight loss, saying that she and others have observed what I accomplished, and asked if I would be willing to speak to their TOPS (Take Off Pounds Seriously) group and tell them how I did it. I said I'd be glad to do so.

After my presentation, one of the women who was sitting in the back of the room told me, "When you entered the room to speak to our club, several of us who saw how thin you are said to one another, 'What is this, some kind of a joke! What does he know about the struggles we're having with weight and how hard it is to lose it'—until you described in such vivid detail about your wife and daughter with their ice cream, large topping of whipped cream, and the cascading chocolate syrup topped with the maraschino cherry, and you with your Fresca—then we knew: He understands and has real help to offer!"

- I write this brief essay testifying that this plan works well, and it has a track record. It's now been well over half a century, and I'm at the weight goal I reached by following this plan so many decades ago, and applicable aspects of which I still follow. Try it. It works and you'll like the results! So will your spouse and many others.
- Since God has built into our creation the capacity and desire for fellowship, it is especially helpful to engage this plan with the help of a caring spouse, another family member, and/or a close friend or friends who will be encouraging and supportive in other ways, even in participating in a weight management plan for him or herself, or themselves. My wonderful wife was a great blessing to me, as she always prepared superb meals with healthy foods and drinks.
- Again, be sure to thank God. Strong empirical research links gratitude with mental health, including more optimism, energy, better sleep, improved relationships, and reduced physical pain, stress, and depression, the latter two being at the top of mental health issues today, and all of which are counterproductive to reaching goals, in particular weight loss goals. Thanksgiving to God, the giver of all that is good, is most important.

The Hebrew word, תָּדַח (tôdāh), means thanksgiving. *Tôdāh* is used 32 times throughout the Old Testament, and it is always only expressed to God—individually or liturgically—it is never used to thank human beings. Notice, e.g., Psalm 100:4, the verb "Enter [יָבֹאוּ (bō'û) his gates with *tôdāh*]" is in the imperative mood—it is a command—and in doing so we honor and glorify God, and we also are blessed extensively and continually, what God is always pleased to provide for his people who follow him.

Is the successful attainment of your goal good? If it's good, it's from God, the giver of every good and perfect gift, including all you needed to accomplish your goal. (James 1:17) Read and follow God's Word and pray every day. In these ways you'll have the most helpful

resources to deal with the challenges of life that tempt people to escape their problems through one or more of the many kinds of euphoria—including overeating—that temporarily take their minds off their difficulties. However, since the euphoria—but not the calorie increase—quickly vanishes, the unaddressed problems remain, resurface, and result in more weight gain. Thanks be to God, and with his help, we can overcome our trouble and find peace and joy with him and with other believers in and followers of the Lord Jesus Christ.