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# THE + DANIEL PLAN

40 DAYS *to a*  
HEALTHIER LIFE

#1 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER

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# How It All Began

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**W**ow! *Everybody's FAT!*

That shocking thought kept reverberating in my mind one bright spring day as I was baptizing 827 adults.

I'll admit it wasn't a very spiritual thought for a pastor to have, especially while baptizing! But I was getting tired, since our church baptizes the way Jesus was baptized in the Jordan River — by lowering people under the water, then lifting them back up.

That day, based on the average weight of Americans, I lifted more than 145,000 pounds!

I had read plenty of articles about the growing epidemic of obesity, diabetes, and heart disease in America, but that day I actually *felt the weight* of America's health problem in a dramatic way.

While my first thought was that everyone I baptized was overweight, my second thought was more personal and pointed:

*But I'm fat too! I'm as out of shape as everyone else is!*

In that moment of clarity, I realized the terrible example I was giving with my own health. How could I expect my congregation to take better care of their bodies if I was such a poor model? I had ignored my own growing problem for thirty years.

Let me explain:

I grew up in a family that didn't drink alcohol or smoke, but all food — no matter how unhealthy it might be — was considered okay. And growing up, much of my life centered around food.

## 14 The **Daniel Plan**

Every memory of my childhood, both good and bad, was connected to food. When we were happy, we celebrated by eating. When we were sad, we consoled ourselves with comfort food. If I had a difficult day as a child, the antidote was cookies and milk or a piece of fresh pie.

Living on five acres in the country, my dad grew a huge vegetable garden, my mom loved to cook, and we all loved to eat. Eating was our entertainment, and we had huge meals every night. In fact, our handmade fourteen-foot dining table made of a single four-inch slab of redwood was the largest piece of furniture in our house. It dominated our home, and our family life revolved around the meals we shared together.

Blessed with good health, a high metabolism, and an active life, I could eat everything I wanted and as much as I wanted and never gain a pound. When I married Kay, I was as thin as a flagpole even though I rarely exercised and ate junk food constantly. I paid no attention to my health.

Then, in 1980, at age twenty-five, I became the founding pastor of Saddleback Church in Southern California. As the church rapidly grew to thousands of members, I worked long days, ate meals on the run, and spent hours sitting while leading meetings, counseling people, and studying for sermons. I began adding a few pounds every year, but because my energy remained high and I didn't care much about appearance, I ignored my growing health problem. By 2010, I was severely overweight.

Ironically, over the past decade I had sent nearly 21,000 of our church members overseas to 196 countries to serve the sick and the poor through a program we developed called the P.E.A.C.E. plan. The C of the P.E.A.C.E. stands for "Care for the sick," and our members had compassionately cared for the health of others around the world who were suffering from poor nutrition, poor water, malaria, and HIV/AIDS. But I ignored my own declining health and that of my own members.

That baptism was my wake-up call to the health issues in my life

and in the lives of those in our congregation. I knew drastic changes were needed, so I began educating myself about preventative health. What I learned shocked me:

- For the first time in history, as many people are suffering from the result of *too much* food as malnutrition. While millions of people suffer from not having enough to eat, millions are struggling with the effects of being overweight.<sup>1</sup>
- Seven in ten Americans are overweight.<sup>2</sup>
- Diabetes, heart disease, and other “lifestyle-based diseases” now kill more people than infectious diseases worldwide.<sup>3</sup>

The next Sunday, I stood before my congregation and made this public confession:

Friends, I’ve been a poor steward of my health and a terrible example for you. While we’ve been helping many around the world, I’ve ignored the problem here at home.

So today I am publicly repenting, and I ask for your forgiveness! God expects us to take care of the bodies he has given us, but I have not done that. Now, I’ve only gained two to three pounds a year, but I have been your pastor for thirty years. So I need to lose ninety pounds! Do any of you want to join me in getting healthy?

The audience responded with sustained applause.

Honestly, I expected that maybe a couple hundred people would join me in my quest to get healthy, so I was overwhelmed when more than 12,000 people Saddleback Church members signed up in the first few weeks! Now I needed a plan. It had to be simple, inexpensive, and scalable. Since I was preaching that day about a man in the Bible named Daniel who refused to eat junk food and challenged a king to a health contest, I named the program The Daniel Plan.

Since I knew nothing about getting healthy, I recruited three nationally known doctors — Dr. Daniel Amen, Dr. Mark Hyman, and Dr. Mehmet Oz — to coach me in getting healthy and help me design

## 16 The Daniel Plan

The Daniel Plan to be used in our church. All three doctors graciously volunteered their expertise and time for free because they care about our health.

Over the first year of The Daniel Plan, Saddleback members collectively lost more than 250,000 pounds! But even more important, we learned insights, developed skills, and established habits for a lifetime of healthy living. The Daniel Plan is far more than a diet. It is a lifestyle program based on biblical principles and five essential components: Food, Fitness, Focus, Faith, and Friends. These last two components — faith and friends — are what I call *the secret sauce* that makes The Daniel Plan so effective. When you have *God and a group* helping you, you now have far more than willpower helping you make positive changes, and you are far more likely to stay consistent.

Let me be clear: There is no magic pill, no quick fix, no instant formula, and no shortcut that will make you healthy overnight. You must make wise choices *every day*. You will likely have setbacks. I have! In fact, as I write these words, I am recovering from a recent setback. My family experienced a tragic loss that was devastating to all of us. In my grief, I didn't sleep much, and that left me exhausted, both emotionally and physically. Overwhelmed by sorrow and fatigue, I stopped making healthy choices and began to add unwanted weight. All those pounds I had lost kept finding me! But as anyone in recovery will tell you, setbacks are part of the process in long-term change. Rather than beat myself up, I simply asked God and my friends to help me get back on track.

The plan you will read about in this book is really quite simple. Dedicate your body to God. Ask for his help, and get involved in a small group of some kind that will support you on your journey. Then start making healthy choices — such as replacing donuts with fresh fruit and making exercise a part of your daily routine. Make whole foods a regular part of your diet. Live a more active lifestyle. Get more sleep. Cut down on your stress. It's not rocket science. It's just good, common sense. After all, God expects you to use the brain he gave you.

Many diets and fitness plans use guilt as a motivation, but that never works in the long run. You can guilt yourself into doing anything short-term, but the change will last only as long as the guilt (or fear) does. In contrast, The Daniel Plan is built with *love* as the motivation: Experiencing God's unconditional love for you, learning to love him back, learning to love whom God made you to be, and learning to give and receive love from others in a small group setting.

The Bible says, "Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance" (1 Corinthians 13:7 NLT). It is love — not fear, not guilt, and not peer pressure — that causes us to keep going when we feel like giving up.

The Bible also tells us that lasting change begins with *committing your body* to God. Romans 12:1 – 2 says, "... give your bodies to God. ... Let them be a living and holy sacrifice — the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him. Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think" (NLT, emphasis added). Notice the strong mind-body connection in this verse. Two thousand years after this verse was written, we now know that not only do our minds affect our bodies, but also our bodies affect our minds.

What you do with your body sets the tone for everything else. Physical health influences your mental health, your spiritual health, your emotional health, your relational health, and even your financial health. How many times have you read a book, heard a message, or attended an event that motivated you to make some change, but then you didn't have the physical energy to do it? Instead, you laid down on your couch and watched TV.

A major motivation for me to be physically healthy is that I want the energy and alertness to make other changes in my life. My guess is that you too have other areas of your life you would like to improve. So we are going to begin by raising your energy level, since you can't do anything without a body! We are going to start at the most basic level of your life: your physical health.

## WHAT DOES GOD SAY ABOUT YOUR BODY?

The Christian family I grew up in attended church services every week. I have listened to thousands of sermons on what God has to say about our souls, our minds, our wills, and our emotions. But not once had I ever heard an entire sermon on God's view of our bodies. The subject was completely ignored. This is why most people still have no theology of health. While our culture is obsessed with physical beauty and sexy bodies, many believers ignore their bodies as if they don't matter. But they do.

God has a lot to say about the importance of the body he gave you. It is talked about through the Bible. But for the sake of brevity, let me show you just one chapter of the Bible, 1 Corinthians 6:12 – 20:

“I have the right to do anything,” you say — but not everything is beneficial. “I have the right to do anything” — but I will not be mastered by anything. You say, “Food for the stomach and the stomach for food, and God will destroy them both.” The body, however, is not meant for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. By his power God raised the Lord from the dead, and he will raise us also. Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ himself? Shall I then take the members of Christ and unite them with a prostitute? Never! . . .

Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a person commits are outside the body, but whoever sins sexually, sins against their own body. 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.

Wow! This is definitely an in-your-face, tell-it-like-it-is, no-holds-barred description of what God considers to be the right and wrong use of our bodies. In this and other passages of Scripture we learn five radical truths about our bodies that run counterculturally to everything you hear today.

**1. My body belongs to God.** It is his property, not mine. I don't own



it, God does. He created my body, and he expects me to use it the way he intended for it to be used. Now we naturally rebel against this idea. Our culture teaches us, “My body is mine to do whatever I want to with it.” But God says, “No, you’re wrong. It’s not your body, because you didn’t create it. I made it, and I loaned it to you to live in while I put you on earth, and I expect you to take care of my creation.”

The fact is, everything you can see on earth was created by God. He made it, and he owns it. What you think you own is really on loan. The Bible says, “The body ... is not meant for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body” (1 Corinthians 6:13).

Today we make the same common mistake Greek philosophers did thousands of years ago. Aristotle, Socrates, and Plato believed in dualism,<sup>4</sup> which included the idea that your mind (or spirit) is important, but your body isn’t important spiritually. They devalued the body. In fact, some Greek philosophers taught that your body is evil, so it really didn’t matter if you messed it up.

The Bible tells us the exact opposite. Your body is holy because God made it, and everything God makes has a purpose. We are to bring glory to God with our bodies, so we can’t compartmentalize our lives and think that we can divorce our bodies and live as if only our spirit matters. God owns your body!

**2. *Jesus paid for my body when he died for me on the cross.*** As we saw earlier, 1 Corinthians 6:19–20 tells us that our bodies have been bought!

Millions of TV viewers love watching *American Pickers* and *Pawn Stars* because it’s fun to guess how much old items are worth. The owners often think something they own is more valuable than it really is. But the reality is that something is only worth whatever someone is willing to pay for it! You may think your house is worth more, but it’s really only worth what a buyer is willing to pay for it.

God has never made a person he didn’t love. If you want to know how valuable your life is to God, just look at the cross. With his arms outstretched, nailed to the cross, Jesus was saying, “This is how valuable you are to me. I love you *this* much! I’d rather die than live without you.” You are priceless.



Now, if you are worth dying for, don't you think God wants you to take better care of yourself? If you bought a million-dollar race horse, would you feed it junk food and keep it up all night? Of course not! You would protect your investment. The fact is, Jesus has made an investment in you. He paid for your life with his life, and he expects you to take care of his investment.

**3. *God's Spirit lives in my body.*** When you say yes to God, accepting by faith what Jesus did for you and trusting his grace and forgiveness to save you, then God puts his Spirit inside you as a guarantee of your salvation. The Bible says it like this: "Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God?" (1 Corinthians 6:19).

When God puts his Spirit inside you, your body becomes a temple of God, a residence for his love. So let me ask you this: If you saw someone vandalizing or damaging a temple dedicated to God, wouldn't you consider that a crime? Of course! But you abuse and vandalize God's temple, your body, when you deprive it of rest and sleep, overeat, put too much stress on it, and fail to take care of it.

**4. *God expects me to take care of my body.*** I am not the owner of my body, but I am the caretaker, or manager, of it. The word for *manager* in the Bible is *steward*. Taking care of my body is an issue of spiritual stewardship. In fact, God tells me that one day I will have to give an account for how well I managed everything he gave to me, including my body. I will stand before God and have to answer the question, "What did you do with what I gave you?"

In *The Purpose Driven Life* I explain how your life on earth is a test, a trust, and a temporary assignment. This life is preparation for our next life, which will last forever in eternity. God is testing you on earth to see what he can trust you with in eternity. He is watching how you use your time, your money, your talents, your opportunities, your mind, and yes, even your body. Are you making the most of what you've been given? God isn't going to evaluate you on the basis of the bodies he gave to other people, but he *will* judge what you did with what you have been given.

**5. *God will resurrect my body after I die.*** God never wastes anything. He gets the maximum use out of all he creates. Right now you are living in the 1.0 version of your body. You will get the 2.0 version of your body in heaven. The Bible says, “By his power God raised the Lord from the dead, and he will raise us also” (1 Corinthians 6:14).

We don’t really know what our resurrected bodies will be like, but we do have a few clues. We know that after Jesus came from the grave, he walked around Jerusalem for forty days in a resurrected body. He was seen multiple times by many different groups of people, including one event where more than 500 people saw and talked with him. So we know that other people will still recognize you in the new 2.0 version of your body in heaven, but there will be one major difference: in heaven your body will be perfect, with no blemishes, no broken parts, no wounds, and no pain.

Did you notice the phrase *by his power* in that last Bible verse? This is what makes The Daniel Plan different from other approaches. It is built on trusting in God’s power to help you change, not merely your own willpower. Let’s be honest. Willpower works for a few weeks, or maybe a month or two at best. This is why New Year’s resolutions never last. Trying to change by willpower alone is exhausting. You can keep it up for a while, but it feels unnatural and stressful to force yourself to be different simply on the basis of willpower.

In The Daniel Plan you will learn the power of prayer, the power of faith, the power of letting God’s Spirit refocus your thoughts, the power of fellowship and community in a supportive small group, and most of all, the power of God’s Spirit inside you, helping you to make the changes God wants you to make and you want to make.

## HABITS ARE THE KEY TO YOUR SUCCESS

Making big and lasting changes in our lives is never easy — whether it’s changes in the way we relate to others, the way we manage our time, the way we use our money, the way we do our work, or the way we treat our bodies. Whenever we want to improve or change something, we

## 22 The Daniel Plan

usually start out with great enthusiasm and hopeful expectations, but over time, those feelings fade, and so does our resolve. That is why the key to long-lasting success is to develop *habits* — new, positive habits that replace our self-defeating behaviors. The Bible speaks of “*putting off our old self and putting on a new self*,” which includes our habits (see Ephesians 4:22, 24).

Our habits control our lives. We shape our habits; then our habits shape us. If I asked you to make a list of all your bad habits, you would quickly identify them. You already know what they are, and you know that they aren’t helpful. In fact, many are harmful. So why haven’t you replaced them? What makes breaking bad habits and creating new ones so difficult? Here are four of the most common reasons:

- **You’ve had your unhealthy habits for a long time, so you’re comfortable with them.** Regardless of whether you are overweight or anorexic, whether you overeat or have any kind of eating disorder, whether you are out of shape or don’t have enough energy, you didn’t get that way overnight. It was likely a long, slow decline in your health. Many of your adult habits were developed in your childhood. Some of your unhealthy habits may have been survival tactics for unmet emotional and spiritual needs that you experienced early in life. Other habits you developed out of fear. Some habits are developed to soothe the negative emotions such as loneliness, anxiety, depression, or feeling unloved.
- **You identify with your unhealthy habits.** Anytime you hear someone say, “I’m always late” or “I’m a worrier” or “I can never resist a dessert,” that person is identifying himself or herself with a bad habit. We often confuse our identity with our habits, but the truth is, habits can be changed! Habits are things you *do*. They are not *who you are*! You *have* weaknesses, but you are not your weaknesses. You are a unique creation of God, flawed by your nature and choices, yet deeply loved by God. No man or woman will ever love you as much as God does. His love for you is not dependent on your habits.

- **Your unhealthy habits have a payoff.** In the long run they cause pain, but in the short term they seem easier and more rewarding. And whatever gets rewarded gets repeated. The addicting taste of junk food, the short-term high from carbohydrates, or the pleasure of loafing around instead of exercising gives immediate gratification. We want to feel good *now*, not later.

God warns of this when he said, “There is pleasure in sin for a short time” (see Hebrews 11:25). Most of the social problems we see in our culture today are the direct result of our unwillingness to delay gratification. To overcome this, you must see the greater payoff and rewards of making healthy choices.

- **You have an enemy who wants to discourage you.** Not only do you have to fight against your natural inclinations, but Satan — whom the Bible calls *the Deceiver* and *the Accuser* — is actively working against you every moment of your day. Since Satan cannot hurt God directly, he tries to hurt God’s children. Satan does not want you living a healthy life because that honors God. So he is constantly suggesting negative thoughts to keep you stuck. He loves to plant seeds of doubt in your mind: “Who do you think you are? You’re never going to change! You have never been able to change in the past. What makes you think this will be any different? It’s hopeless, and you’re hopeless. So don’t even try!” (In the chapter on Focus, we will have more to say about replacing negative thoughts.)

With these four elements working against us, it is no wonder that most attempts by people to develop healthy habits end in failure. Again, you need more than just good intentions and willpower to change. You need God’s plan for change.

## FIVE ELEMENTS FOR LASTING CHANGE

The Daniel Plan is based on five elements for lasting change that are found in John 8, Ephesians 4, and many other Bible passages:

### 1. Lasting change requires building your life on the truth.

One of the most famous statements by Jesus is in John 8:31 – 32: “If you continue to obey my teaching, you are truly my followers. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free” (NCV). Jesus promises that the truth will make you free. But first, the truth is likely to make you miserable! We don’t like to face the truth about ourselves, our weaknesses, our bad habits, and especially our motivations. But until you face the truth about *why* you do what you do and get to the root of your habits, change is likely to be shallow and short-lived.

Too often, popular diet fads offer fast formulas, easy pills, and secret cures that supposedly will melt the fat away. By contrast, The Daniel Plan helps you to face the truth about yourself and your relationship to God, to food, to your purpose in life, and to other people. If you are looking for a quick fix, you can set this book down now. But if you want to build an authentically healthy life based on the truth of God, and you’re willing to be honest with God, yourself, and a few trusted friends, keep reading.

Nothing will change permanently until you dig down to the bed-rock of truth about your life and God’s purpose for it. This book is an introduction to get you started on the right pathway, but the journey will take the rest of your life.

### 2. Lasting change requires making wise choices.

Everyone *wants* to be healthy, but very few people *choose* to be healthy. It takes more than desire or a dream to get healthy . . . it takes a *decision*. You won’t change until you *choose* to change. You don’t get healthy by accident. It’s intentional. It’s a choice. Actually, it’s a lifetime of choices, but it begins with a decision.

As a pastor I have met many people who were praying for God to heal illnesses and sicknesses that could easily be reversed if they simply made healthier choices. Why should God heal you of an obesity-related illness if you have no intention of changing the choices that led to it? God is waiting for you to start making healthy choices. So if you have been waiting for a sign, this is it!

As you make more and more healthy choices, you will begin to

change: “Get rid of your old self, which made you live as you used to — the old self that was being destroyed by its deceitful desires. Your hearts and minds must be made completely new, and you must put on the new self, which is created in God’s likeness” (Ephesians 4:22 – 24 GNT).

### Whose Slave Are You?

Years ago, Bob Dylan sang, “You’re gonna have to serve somebody. It may be the Devil or it may be the Lord.” In today’s culture that encourages irresponsibility, I counsel many people who have become slaves to their own desires. Every time you make a bad choice, it becomes harder to make a good one. Romans 6:16 says, “Don’t you realize that you become the slave of whatever you choose to obey? You can be a slave to sin, which leads to death, or you can choose to obey God, which leads to righteous living” (NLT).

Fortunately, God offers you his power to make healthy choices. “For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him” (Philippians 2:13 NLT). As you begin to follow The Daniel Plan, you will see how God has a part and you have a part in your physical health and your spiritual maturity.

You do what you can do, and God does what only he can do.

### 3. Lasting change requires new ways of thinking.

The way you think determines the way you feel, and the way you feel determines the way you act. If you want to change how you act, you must begin by changing the way you think. Your thoughts are the autopilot of your life.

Romans 12:2 says, “Don’t copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God’s will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect” (NLT). The biblical word

for changing your mind is “repentance.” To repent is to make a mental U-turn. I choose to focus my thoughts in a completely different direction. This new mind-set creates new emotions, which give me motivation to change.

Let me ask you a personal question: What old ways of thinking do you need to change? Where do you need to *repent*? Have you held on to some self-destructive ideas about food, about your body, about sex, or about work that have harmed your health? To get healthy, you’ll need to *repent* of unhealthy choices. You’ll need to think differently about your body — and every other area of your life too. Philippians 2:5 says, “Have the same mind-set as Christ Jesus.” The way you do this is by filling your mind with the Bible, God’s truth.

In The Daniel Plan, you will learn some new thinking skills, such as learning to replace negative thoughts rather than resisting them. Whatever you resist, persists. The more you fight a feeling, the more it controls you. The secret of victory over any temptation is simply to change the channel of your mind. Refocus your attention on something else, and the temptation immediately loses its power over you.

### 4. Lasting change requires God’s Spirit in your life.

I have already mentioned that you need God’s power, not just will-power, to change.

God’s Holy Spirit helps us break free from bad habits, compulsions, and addictions. Since he offers to help, it would be foolish to not take advantage of it. Galatians 5:18 asks, “Why don’t you choose to be led by the Spirit and so escape the erratic compulsions of a law-dominated existence?” (MSG).

The more I allow God’s Spirit to guide and empower me, the more he grows positive character qualities in my life to replace my bad habits. The Bible calls these qualities the *Fruit of the Spirit*. Galatians 5:22 – 23 gives a list of them: “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.” Note that last quality: self-control. You already know how important that one is and the damage that happens when you



don't have it. But what most people don't know is that the secret of self-control is to allow ourselves to be Spirit-controlled.

This is the exact opposite of what most people think. Ask someone on the street, "What do you think of when I use the phrase 'Spirit-filled' or 'Spirit-controlled'?" and typically people will describe someone acting out of control. But the Bible says that the more I allow God's Spirit to direct and guide me, the more self-controlled I become! As the apostle Paul said, "For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength" (Philippians 4:13 NLT). Only a Bible-based program like The Daniel Plan can offer this promise.

### **5. Lasting change requires honest community.**

Here's the reality: Some of your habits and patterns and behaviors are so deeply ingrained that you will never be able to uproot and replace them on your own. You have probably tried to change many times and have failed to maintain the changes. If you could change these tough areas by yourself, you would have already done so. But some habits are so strong, we must team-tackle them together.

Actually, this is a good thing, because it forces us to recognize our need for each other. It's part of God's plan. We were created to live in community. We are designed by God for relationships. The very first thing God said to mankind was "It is not good for the man to be alone" (Genesis 2:18). God hates loneliness. So he made us to need each other.

The deepest changes in your life will only happen as you open up to a few trusted friends who will support you and check up on you. You don't need a legalistic schoolmaster, but you do need some friends who will meet with you regularly as a small group. At Saddleback Church we have more than 32,000 people meeting weekly in more than 7,000 small groups, so I speak with confidence in telling you that if you are serious about making lasting changes in your life, the best and most effective way to do it is with the support of others. At Saddleback Church, when 12,000 people lost more than 250,000 pounds, we discovered that those connected to a small group lost twice as much as those who tried to do the program on their own.

## 28 The Daniel Plan

In another chapter you learn some specific ways that a small group can assist you in your journey to health by encouraging you, praying for you, supporting you, and giving you feedback.

The Bible is filled with verses on the importance of community. Hebrews 10:25 says, “Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another” (NIV 1984). Galatians 6:2 says, “By helping each other with your troubles, you truly obey the law of Christ” (NCV).

And Solomon said, “Two people are better off than one, for they can help each other succeed. If one person falls, the other can reach out and help. But someone who falls alone is in real trouble. . . . A person standing alone can be attacked and defeated, but two can stand back-to-back and conquer. Three are even better, for a triple-braided cord is not easily broken” (Ecclesiastes 4:9 – 12 NLT).

You don’t need a lot of people to form your Daniel Plan small group. You can begin with just two or three people. Jesus said, “For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them” (Matthew 18:20). This is part of “the faith factor” of The Daniel Plan. Jesus will be with you.

As you read through these chapters, you will realize that The Daniel Plan is not complicated, but rather simple and straightforward: You assess your current health and then dedicate your body to God. You ask for God’s help. You gather a few friends and form a weekly support group. You begin to make healthy choices that will become habits as you reinforce them. Finally, you expect God to empower you to be consistent, claiming the promise of Philippians 1:6: “Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.”

I am proud of you for wanting to be healthier, and I hope you will join thousands of us who have used The Daniel Plan as a tool to change what we feared could never change. This is your moment! There is no telling what God might want to do through you as you

gain more energy, think more clearly, feel more confident, and grow physically stronger and more flexible.

I will be praying for you, specifically the words of 3 John 2: “Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well.”

As you begin The Daniel Plan, I would love to hear from you about what happens in your life, in your small group, and in your church. You can connect with me on Twitter (@RickWarren), Facebook (Pastor RickWarren), or LinkedIn (PastorRickWarren). And please register at The Daniel Plan ([danielplan.com](http://danielplan.com)) so you will receive other helpful resources.

### Reflect and Take a Step ...

Are you ready to start your journey to a healthier life? Is it time to make some changes? Go ahead; make the commitment to yourself and God. We have lots of support in the coming chapters that will give you the foundation you need to succeed.

You can connect with me on Twitter @RickWarren, Facebook (PastorRickWarren), or LinkedIn (Pastor Rick Warren). And please register at The Daniel Plan ([danielplan.com](http://danielplan.com)) so you will receive other helpful resources.