

**AN  
8-WEEK  
JOURNEY**

# **THE WELLNESS REVELATION**

**LOSE WHAT WEIGHS YOU DOWN SO YOU CAN  
LOVE GOD, YOURSELF, AND OTHERS**



**FOUNDER OF REVELATION WELLNESS  
ALISA KEETON**

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*The Wellness Revelation: Lose What Weighs You Down So You Can Love God, Yourself, and Others*

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# CONTENTS

Note from the Author *ix*

Introduction *xi*

WEEK 1 Embrace God's Purpose, Desire, and Design *1*

WEEK 2 Be Free *23*

WEEK 3 Live Out His Purpose for You *55*

WEEK 4 Rest in His Strength and Sufficiency *91*

WEEK 5 Renew Your Mind *121*

WEEK 6 Attend to Matters of the Heart *155*

WEEK 7 Be Transformed *185*

WEEK 8 Press On *209*

Acknowledgments *235*

Moving Forward Journal *239*

Wellness Revelation Workout Calendar *240*

Notes *243*

About the Author *245*



## ***Note from the Author***

*The Wellness Revelation* is designed to start you on a journey toward health and wholeness, but it is not intended as a substitute for medical advice from your health care professionals. Revelation Wellness is neither a nutritional consultancy nor a medical provider. Before making significant changes to your diet and exercise routines, it's important that you consult with your own physician.



## INTRODUCTION

**A**s a fitness instructor for more than two decades, I've seen the same two clients over and over again. Initially, it was difficult to tell them apart.

The first one enthusiastically embraced all the cardio sweating, the muscle training, and the recommended “do and do not” food lists. Her face lit up as she described the half marathon she was training for. But then something changed: That enthusiasm turned into obsession, and she became less delighted and more driven as she sought to push her BMI just a little lower and the number of dumbbell curls just a little higher. She no longer exuded joy but instead an anxious intensity. At some point, I longed to tell this client, “I can't offer you any other ideas on how to obtain the perfect body if you keep moving the target on me.”

The second client also dove right into the workouts, and she sounded pleased when she told me about the weekend she spent purging her pantry of all products with refined flour and added sweeteners. She, too, was delighted to see her body responding to her efforts. But then something happened. Maybe her toddler came down with a nasty bug, or her work schedule changed. She began missing her early morning workouts and canceled her meetings with our nutritionist. Then one day I realized I hadn't seen her in a couple of weeks, so I called and left a message telling her that I missed seeing her. I was so happy when I

spotted her at the grocery store—but I stopped myself from saying hello after she turned red when she saw me and ducked down the bread aisle. The smell of shame filled the air. I wanted to tell her, “I still see and value you. You were never just a body to me.”

The names and personal details of these two clients may change, but their stories aren’t all that different. Both realize they can improve their lives by taking better care of themselves. The problem comes when they look solely to their bodies to give them the sustaining confidence or comfort they crave. Can you relate?

If so, welcome to *The Wellness Revelation*. It is awesome that you desire to improve your quality of life through better health and well-being. This book is designed to put you on that path, while helping you avoid the dead end that comes from missing this truth: Your Creator loves and values you as you are. As you seek to improve your physical fitness, He wants to free you from whatever is weighing you down. I’m not necessarily talking about pounds. I am talking about the “weight” that keeps you turning toward food (and neglecting your body) or turning away from food (and obsessing over your body). I am talking about the “weight” that comes from trying to keep life under your control. Are you stressed out and burned out? Then you have picked up this book at the right time.

Maybe you have struggled with your weight your entire life, riding a constant roller coaster of numbers that go up and down along with pant sizes. Or maybe you have recently begun to find yourself more stressed out and pressed upon by the world and all its demands. Perhaps you just don’t feel as well in your body as you do in your spirit. The Wellness Revelation is going to change the way you perceive yourself and lay out strategies to improve your health. *This time* the change will occur from the inside out.

True confession: You could say I am a fitness dinosaur. I’ve been around since the prehistoric age of spandex leotards and Reebok high-tops. I went from

participating in an early aerobics class in the mid-1980s to becoming a group fitness instructor in 1993. In 1996 I graduated from Arizona State University and went full-time into the fitness industry. I was in. All the way.

By 1998 I was the model of fitness with an award-winning physique. I had a successful personal training career and was newly married to a man who was going to take on the world. The money was rolling in, and on the outside, the package looked close to perfect. But on the inside, I was a sad, afraid, and miserable woman—desperate to be loved. I felt empty inside as I watched my marriage—not even a year old—nearly crumble under all the expectations I’d placed on it. Ironically, that void rested like a heavy weight inside me.

Enter Jesus: “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28).

Around this time I noticed that Shawn, a fellow personal trainer at the gym, was changing. She was less rambunctious and no longer came to work exhausted and rough around the edges after being out late the night before. She was mild-mannered and laughed a whole lot more.

One day Shawn dropped a gospel bomb by walking straight up to me and asking, “Alisa, do you know Jesus?”

After I caught my breath and wondered if the separation-of-church-and-work police were going to show up, I stammered, “Yes.”

“Great!” she said. “You should come to church with me!”

I quickly shot back that I couldn’t go because my husband was not willing to go with me.

“So? You go,” Shawn said.

Those three words hung over me like a physical fitness challenge, and I love a good competition. They haunted my sad heart for weeks. One Sunday I finally mustered up all the boldness I could and showed up alone and late to Shawn’s church. After slipping into the back, I heard the gospel for the first time—even though I had heard it before. Jesus was right when He said, “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:3). In the past

when I'd heard the Word of God, I hadn't felt like I needed Him. But now I did. I knew I was poor. I knew there was something going wrong within me, and the Good News could more easily seep into the cracks of my broken heart. That morning, it was as if the words Jesus spoke were just for me.

For the first time, I realized that as good as physical fitness felt and looked, it would not give me the joy, purpose, and rest I was looking for. Only Jesus could do that, and I found new joy and meaning as I began to follow Him.

Initially, I resisted the idea of my new faith and my fitness career somehow working together. Yet once I opened myself up to God, I began to see that my clients were longing for the very same things I had craved. Not only that, but God seemed to be inviting me to delve into His Word so that He could reveal His blueprints for healthy and whole bodies.

Finally, in 2007, my church graciously gave me space to begin offering a fitness class, called Revelation Fitness, which was open to the community. It quickly became one of the highest-attended outreach ministries on campus. Three years later, I launched an instructor training program to prepare others to lead fitness and wellness programs that would promote health and wholeness in their own communities. Revelation Wellness is now an international nonprofit ministry that uses fitness as a tool to spread the gospel message.

Through this book, we're inviting you to be a part of this fitness revolution. For the next eight weeks, you will move, step-by-step to the pace of grace, toward something greater than the number on the scale or the size of your jeans. You will learn the living and practical truth of what it takes to be healthy and whole (heart, soul, strength, and mind) while loving others as yourself.

Why does it matter? When asked what the greatest commandment was, Jesus said it was to "love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind" (Luke 10:27). God asks us to love Him *completely*, just as He has loved us. Jesus then added that the second greatest commandment was to "love your neighbor as yourself." Loving others, however, is impossible if we are not fully connected to God, the source of pure

love. After all, how can we love if we feel broken and disconnected from our true selves? That is why *The Wellness Revelation* is designed to help you renew the whole person, from the inside out. We will tackle the issues that matter most as you make complete and lasting lifestyle changes.

But here's the deal. If you desire *lasting* change, it's going to require you to:

1. *Show up.* This book is waiting for you. You paid for it not because you wanted to add another book to your stack but because you are hoping that *this* time, *this* book might offer the help you need. I believe it does. But just as if you spent hundreds of dollars for three weekly one-hour sessions with a personal trainer, that investment will pay off only if you show up. Every time you pick up and read this book, your personal soul-training session begins.
2. *Do the work.* There's no way around the universal law of reaping what you sow. You will get out of these eight weeks what you put into them. In each session, your spiritual and physical training will build upon the foundation you laid in previous weeks. To get the most from each session, you will need to:
  - > Read: First, you will read the chapter for that week. This is a God-first book. Though it is packed with relevant information on diet and fitness, it wasn't created to tell you exactly what to eat and how to move. Instead, it was designed to enable you to develop fitness and nutrition plans that work for your life as you draw closer to the One who made you. As you seek God first, all the food- and fitness-related details will fall into place.
  - > Respond: Many weeks include assignments to help you move toward improved health and well-being. Each week you'll also be encouraged to follow the *Wellness Revelation Workout Calendar*, available on

page 240 or at [www.revelationwellness.org/book/workout](http://www.revelationwellness.org/book/workout). This eight-week calendar provides links to wellness coaching and fitness workout videos. Each Respond section opens with a brief explanation of what to expect from the activities on the calendar that week.

Throughout this eight-week journey, you'll be asked to move your body with a recreational state of mind. In other words, you will not move your body to pay off yesterday's calorie intake, or to pinch and prod your body into taking on someone else's idealized image for you. You are going to move your body as an act of recreation, believing that every time you move your body, the Spirit of the living God will meet you to shape and mold you into someone after His own heart. God recreates when we recreate with Him.

- > Renew: Every week you will also dig into God's Word, the only *true* source of renewal and transformation (see Romans 12:1-2). As you complete this section each week, you will allow the Word of God to train you and transform you into your whole and free self.
- > Relate: Each week includes a number of questions that will help you apply the lessons and activities to your own life. Although you can do these on your own, I highly encourage you to partner with a small group or a friend or family member. As you exchange ideas and encourage one another, you will receive added incentive to keep moving toward your goals. It's been proven in the fitness world that the more accountability you have, the more likely you are to achieve lasting change.
- > Reciprocate: Each week you'll read a true story meant to inspire you. As you begin to "weigh less," you, too, will be freed to help others carry their burdens—whether hunger resulting from the literal lack of food in a developing country or despair stemming from the lack of love,

peace, or meaning someone is experiencing closer to home. You'll read more about this below.

Be sure to access two additional resources throughout the coming eight weeks. The workout calendar, introduced above, will offer daily guidance as you begin developing healthy habits. The Moving Forward Journal, available for download at [www.revelationwellness.org/book/workout](http://www.revelationwellness.org/book/workout), is a place to track your physical nourishment and movement, as well as your spiritual intake, for each day. This record isn't about earning your stripes, giving yourself a gold star, or shaming yourself when things don't go as planned. Instead, it will enable you to follow your progress and notice reasons to celebrate and give God glory as well as help you pay attention to any unhealthy habits you uncover.

3. *Be real.* You have to show up, do the work, and be completely you. Don't try to fake it for anyone else's sake. Don't live as if you have to audition for others' approval. Don't try to cover up your imperfections by donning another pair of spiritual Spanx. Our good God sees it all, and He is not offended by our messes. Achieving wholeness is possible only when we bring all of our insecurities and mistakes to the table. And we cannot heal what we are not willing to reveal, so please do yourself a favor and just be real. You are safe in His presence.

The life breath of *The Wellness Revelation* is the “exercise” of our faith. Weight loss and health gains can often feel like selfish endeavors, and sometimes they are entirely self-focused and self-driven. When we successfully reach our goals, we are tempted to take all the glory; when we fail to get what we want, we assume all the shame. That is one reason *The Wellness Revelation* contains one component that is missing from many fitness programs. As you “cast your cares on the LORD” (Psalm 55:22) and transform into a new being in Christ, your heart will be freed to help others in need. At Revelation Wellness, this is what we call “calories in”

and “calories out”—receiving the fulfilling love of God (calories in) so you can give away His love to someone else (calories out). This is how the gospel message spreads! When you live in this way, you are running lean in the Spirit of God, relying on His love and power to bring hope, not only to yourself but to a hungry and thirsty world. The world is waiting for us to be “fit” for love!

During your eight-week journey, keep your eyes open for ways God may be calling you to serve others. Here are some ideas of how you might love others right where you are:

1. If you are completing *The Wellness Revelation* with a church body, what a blessing. There is power in agreement! Your group may decide to fund-raise and ask people to pledge toward your specific health goals. I highly encourage you not to make it about a number of pounds lost but to set more health-focused goals such as lowering your blood pressure, raising your whole-food intake, or lowering your processed-food intake. Perhaps your group could host a walk-a-thon while working through the book. Proceeds raised could go to a missions team or a family in need in your community. Or you might choose to complete a community service project as you go through the program together.
2. If you plan to work through this book on your own, I ask you to stop and go no further until you tell somebody what you are doing. Find accountability first; then, decide how you are going to love others. Look around and listen. Surely there is someone in need close by. Pray about it, and I am certain God will show you someone you can help as your own weights get lighter.
3. If you are taking this journey with a trained Revelation Wellness instructor, you are in very good hands. Each instructor is a God-first-and-foremost person and will be a great asset to you as you train according

to the Spirit and not the flesh. Your instructor can also advise you as you consider how God is calling you to love others. You are invited to go to [www.revelationwellness.org/find-classes](http://www.revelationwellness.org/find-classes) to locate a licensed instructor near you.

I know you may be thinking that you don't need one more Christian thing to do. You can be sure that I am not interested in adding to your load. But I do know that you are burdened, and some of that has to do with how someone has or has not loved you. You carry that weight in your body. If this describes you, your way of loving others might look like asking for forgiveness from someone you have hurt or giving forgiveness to someone who has hurt you. Perhaps for you, loving others will be less of an external service and more of an internal resolve to become increasingly patient and kind with God's help—a 1 Corinthians 13 kind of love. A love like Jesus.

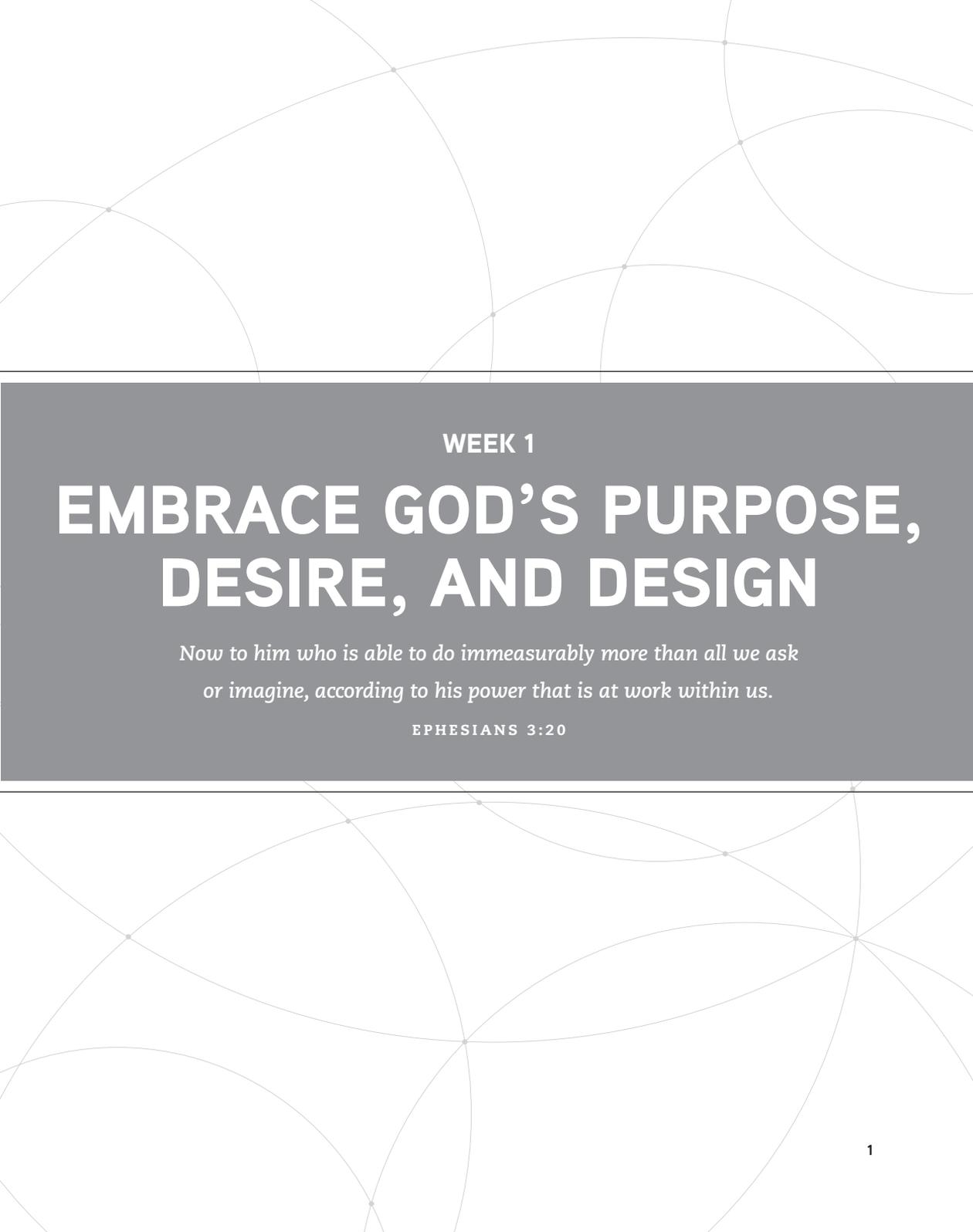
Ralph Waldo Emerson is quoted as saying, "It is one of the most beautiful compensations of this life that you cannot sincerely try to help another without helping yourself." I couldn't agree more. That is the way of the gospel. You cannot outgive God's love. Giving helps you and me to be less self-absorbed; the more we spend ourselves on others, the more we receive so we can once again give it away. Even Jesus Himself said He didn't come to be served but to serve (see Matthew 20:28). Let's model our hearts after Christ's, opening them to continually receive and give away His love.

Please pause and consider that this eight-week process is going to take a commitment and a conviction to settle for nothing less than living the full and rich life that God intends for you. After all, you were created by God and for God because He loves you. He has a plan for your life, and He wants to free you up to live that life! I can promise you it will be better than anything you have ever imagined or dreamed, but it will come at a price.

There will be many moments of self-sacrifice and diligent work on your part. There will be times when you are tempted to turn back to your former

comfortable ways. Hang on! Keep returning to hope. The payoff will be worth it.

In eight weeks, you will be gaining distance from your old self as you move closer toward your true self—a person who embodies God’s love. Though the obstacles you and I face may differ, we are all on the same quest—to exchange old lies for truth and be set free. As you make this journey, you will be transformed and renewed, becoming more of the person you were truly meant to be.



WEEK 1

# EMBRACE GOD'S PURPOSE, DESIRE, AND DESIGN

*Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask  
or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us.*

EPHESIANS 3:20

Early in my fitness career, Karen, a more seasoned female trainer, told me that my body had great symmetry. She had quite the following among our clients, so I respected her opinion. Karen suggested that, with a little bit of effort and training, I could be a strong competitor in fitness shows. I was so hungry for meaning, validation, and approval that her words “You could be a real contender” were enough to make me look into what it would take to bring home a trophy from a competition.

For the next four months, I lost myself in the gym and spent hours in grocery stores looking for food to support my new goal of becoming a fitness champion. I read all the bodybuilding magazines and watched numerous fitness competition videos. I even enrolled in a beginners’ gymnastics class filled with eight-year-olds so I could learn to do a back handspring—a necessary skill in the routine of any top-placing contestant. (Confession: I never learned how to do one. There’s something about flipping backward that my twenty-one-year-old mind could not fearlessly approach. I even prayed that God would help me learn so I could place higher in all my shows, and then, of course, I would give Him some credit. God knew better.)

The final week before my first fitness show was sheer torture. I had to cut out carbs (the primary fuel for all the body’s systems), eliminate salt, and continue trying to “cut” (or define) my muscles without destroying them. I felt as if I had the flu and wanted to punch everybody who crossed my path. I was miserable, hangry (hungry + angry), and irritable. It turns out that your body gets cranky when you aren’t kind to it.

The night of the show, I couldn’t have been more ready! With my skin painted the color of mahogany, oiled up to show the highs and lows of all my “cuts,” clothed in my five-hundred-dollar purple competition bikini and Lucite heels, and with the number 15 on my hip, I walked onstage. I flexed. I did my quarter turns. Then I performed my three-minute, high-energy fitness routine (sans back handspring). A little later I came back onstage to hear the results. I was awarded third place. Although I had placed the first time I’d competed in

a high-caliber fitness show, I didn't swoon and celebrate my accomplishment. I was focused on one thing: *Get me food!* As I walked offstage, I saw a disturbing vision that is *forever* burned into my brain. A fellow competitor who didn't place had walked off the stage before me. With a light sweat still glowing on her skin, she was kneeling in her blue bikini and heels before an Igloo cooler, shoving food into her mouth with animalistic fervor.

In that one quick moment, I was scared. It was as if I saw a neon warning sign over her head, flashing, shouting into my soul, "*Caution!* Danger ahead!" I wasn't walking with Jesus then, but I am confident He was walking with me. God was saving me—directing me from something that could have become self-destructive, not to mention obsessively time-consuming.

For me, fitness competing was playing with fire. God seemed to be telling me that if I made this my life purpose, I would not become the woman I was searching to be. Though I thought I could find purpose and validation by increasing my physical power and sculpting my physique, God, in His sweet wisdom and kindness, wanted to keep my heart from bondage and destruction. Even before I was faithful to Him, He was faithful to me.

### **GOD'S PURPOSE—HIS STRENGTH!**

Though Karen's words had made me think I could find purpose by honing and showing off my own physical power, God had a better plan. In Exodus 9:16, He says, "I have raised you up for this very purpose, that I might show you my power and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth."

God desires to show us His power and ability. We are to do *all* things in His power and in His way, not in our own. This includes weight loss and health gains.

His power strengthens us. What a relief! This means we are not on our own. Since His purpose is to show us His power and strengthen us through that power, we do not navigate our own course. To those who don't know God, this sounds like foolish talk. After all, we have a hard time relinquishing

control. We grew up thinking that our goal in life was to become self-sufficient, productive members of society. We were taught that everything in our lives was based on our own accomplishments and life choices. We may have earned good grades, gone to college, graduated at the top of our classes, found good jobs, and lived morally upright lives, but still we wonder if it's enough.

As we embark on a journey to better health, it's tempting to tell ourselves that we just need to suck it up and be more disciplined, that weight loss and healthy habits are things we just need to "do." Before we begin beating ourselves up, though, let's ask, Is it possible that our choices, good or bad, could be a small part of a bigger plan that God can use for our ultimate good? Maybe these weight-loss, health, and body concerns are issues God can use to get our attention and gain our affection.

Desperation and disgust are powerful motivators for change, but they do not lead to lasting results and increasing joy. We ask for six-pack abs instead of a beer belly, when what we really long for is love. We ask for less jiggle when we walk, when what we really want is belonging without the fear of rejection. We agree to work harder, whether at our jobs or at the gym, when what we really hope is that our lives will have more meaning.

We were made for more.

For *The Wellness Revelation* to really transform our lives, we must soften our hearts. We need to remember our stories: where we come from and what God has already done for us. He has guided us every step of the way, planting and growing in us *His* purpose, *His* power, and *His* strength. God wants to remove the burden we carry when we think that everything hinges on our might and that the "win, lose, or tie" is all within our control. It is just not true. God desires to *be* our strength in *all* things.

God's power is made perfect in our weakness (see 2 Corinthians 12:9). For His strength to change us as we work through this program, we must surrender all of ourselves to Him. We *must* lay it all down with a humble heart.

## HIS DESIRE—HOLY AND WHOLE

Once we've surrendered ourselves to God's strength and power, we organically develop a thirst to maintain unbroken fellowship with Him. Because outside forces will try to pull us away from His ways, we will always be in need of His sovereign and loving hand to guide our desires. Until people wanting to lose weight or live healthier lives understand this, they will continue to keep the weight-loss craze in business. Another book, infomercial, or unused treadmill (that will undoubtedly be used as a clothesline) will find its way into their homes and onto their credit cards.

How do we know whether we are desiring what God wants for us? Through His Word, He tells us what He created us to be.

First, God desires us to be holy (see 1 Peter 1:16). The Hebrew word for "holy" is *qadosh*, meaning "set apart." The Greek word for "holy" is *hágios*, meaning "set apart from common use and dedicated to God." Sounds kind of snobby, huh? But being holy does *not* mean assuming that we are better than everyone else and should put on plastic bodysuits to keep ourselves from being soiled by others who just don't get it. What it *does* mean is that we "set ourselves apart" from what the world says is right and acceptable in order to follow God's will. He asks us to be holy (which involves doing things differently from others) for our own well-being, protection, and health so that we might protect, care for, and love others, glorifying God in all of it. Once we are called by God, we move from belonging to this world to belonging to the Kingdom where things are done very differently.

The Bible gives us all the direction we need to know how to act and live according to God's will, whether we are facing opposition, confusion, adversity, or celebration.

Scripture calls the process of moving toward holiness "sanctification." The pain that we go through, sometimes repeatedly, enables God to show us a doorway through our suffering. God meets us where we are, taking us by the hand and leading us through the fire. His purpose is always that we come out on the

other side knowing the depth of His power and love. When we give ourselves to God, we will be sanctified (or set apart) from the ways of the world. Holiness (going a different way) is a by-product of our sanctification (letting God take us the better way). We begin to reflect a life like the one Christ lived—a holy and whole life. Christ in mind. Christ in heart. Christ in soul. Christ in strength. When we are holy, then we are whole.

God also desires wholeness for us. The dictionary defines *whole* as “containing all the elements properly belonging; complete . . . not broken, damaged, or impaired; intact . . . uninjured or unharmed.”<sup>1</sup> Is that even possible? We all come broken, not whole, into this pursuit of better health. Our minds don’t often reflect our desire to love God with all our hearts, minds, souls, and strength. In fact, this brokenness is what drives health and fitness trends. Humanity is seduced into desiring the perfect body (which, by the way, does not exist) so that we may reflect the image of perfection. Yet the one true image of perfection is found only in God. We were made in His image, and He is perfection. He lacks nothing. He contains all the parts and is not broken, damaged, or impaired. Through Him, our wholeness can be restored.

For the next eight weeks, we will be learning about and coming back to God’s desire for us to be holy and whole. They exist together. The more we commit to God’s way (holiness), the more whole we will become. This program is an opportunity to be put back together again by the One who made us and who knows where all the pieces go. He is the best psychologist, friend, personal trainer, life coach, and nutritionist we could ever have. God desires to come intimately near to us so He can reconstruct us to look more like Him. After all, this was His original plan: “Then God said, ‘Let us make human beings in our image, to be like us’” (Genesis 1:26, NLT).

## **HIS DESIGN**

If you question your value, remember this: You are God’s design. In Jeremiah 1:5 He says, “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were

born I set you apart.” He personally formed you—every follicle of hair on your head, every cell of skin, and every unique quality that makes you *you*.

After preparing a world just for us, He “breathed” us into existence on the sixth day of creation. We are etched with the fingerprints of an awesome God! We are composed of intricate details that science has yet to figure out.

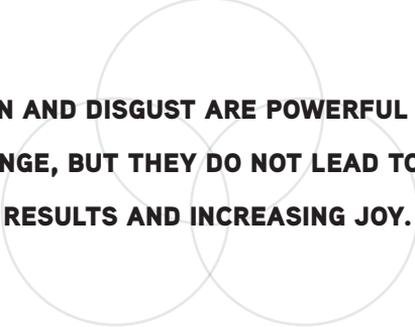
When I was in college, I loved taking art history classes. I was inspired by eye-pleasing art and was fascinated to learn the what, when, why, and how of each artist and his or her creation. I also discovered that understanding the artists themselves and knowing their experiences at the time they created a masterpiece led to a deeper appreciation for the designers and their work.

On a more personal level, you may have children in your life who’ve given you lopsided bowls from ceramics class, paper-cup ornaments for the Christmas tree, and macaroni bracelets and necklaces. When a child presents you with these creations, you wouldn’t dare take them and throw them in the trash. They are beautiful in your eyes, and even more so in your kids’ eyes, as they are the creators.

God is the ultimate Creator, and since He is never changing, we can discover in His Word more of what He might have been thinking as He designed us and breathed life into us. Have you ever heard the saying “How you care for the creation is a reflection of how you feel about the Creator”? Think about that. *You* matter to God. The *whole* you. That is why the way you take care of yourself—His creation—matters.

Currently, we face a growing epidemic in the United States (as well as globally). As of 2014, 70 percent of Americans were overweight,<sup>2</sup> and this number keeps growing. At the other end of the spectrum, some people engage in extreme bodybuilding (as I did) or have been trapped by eating disorders. Either way, too many of us are putting a lot of stress and strain on His design. From inside out and top to bottom, we alter ourselves physically, which in turn affects us mentally, emotionally, spiritually, and socially. We are no longer true reflections of His creation. We are not free to live and love as God originally designed

us to. Let's get back to who we were created to be. You are His one-of-a-kind masterpiece. No other *you* has ever existed or will ever exist again. It's time to care for His creation—His design.



**DESPERATION AND DISGUST ARE POWERFUL MOTIVATORS  
FOR CHANGE, BUT THEY DO NOT LEAD TO LASTING  
RESULTS AND INCREASING JOY.**

# RESPOND

*With All Your Heart*

**Be sure to access the Wellness Revelation Workout Calendar on page 240. This week you and I are going to meet via video, and together we will figure out where you are physically, in terms of muscle strength, endurance, flexibility, and cardiovascular ability. In a spirit of courage and kindness, we will find a starting point for your journey ahead. Don't worry or run away in fear! Tape measures and scales are not necessary. This will be fun—I promise!**

## **MAKE A COVENANT**

When you purchase a car, you sign a contract that solidifies your commitment to uphold your end of the deal by paying for the car. When you become a home owner, you sign a document in which you pledge to make your monthly payments. And when you commit yourself to another person in marriage, you sign a certificate that legally binds you to each other. Anytime two parties come into agreement concerning something of great worth, a formal contract or covenant is involved.

Covenant = “a mutual consent or agreement of two or more persons, to do or to forbear some act or thing; a contract; stipulation”<sup>3</sup>

Covenant (with theological implications) = “an agreement which brings about a relationship of commitment between God and his people”<sup>4</sup>

We were created by God for God, and each one of us belongs to Him. God purchased us back from the powers of sin and darkness through the blood of Jesus

on the cross. As believers in Christ, we are now in a covenant, a love contract for life, with God Himself. Since we also desire to improve our well-being, something of great worth, let's get bold and make an agreement with God. Let's agree to let Him be God, and we will be His people.

On page 13, you will read and sign your covenant. I would ask that you find some quiet time to reflect, pray, and make this a moment when you put a stake in the ground. Place a spiritual marker in your life so you can look back and say, "That was when God did \_\_\_\_." Please sign the covenant and refer to it daily. May it remind you how faithful God is in carrying out His promises to you when you give Him your best yes.

### **YOUR ACTION PLAN**

Most likely you have done some fitness goal planning in the past. This time I want you to make your plan by answering the following questions thoughtfully and intentionally. Be specific. (One-liners won't do.)

Please list your motivation(s) for choosing to complete *The Wellness Revelation* and the reasons you want to make a positive change in and for your health.

On a scale of 1 to 10, how motivated and willing are you to change? \_\_\_\_\_

What obstacles have kept you from making positive health changes in the past?

What are you willing to do in order to remove these obstacles?

List your top three physical health goals.

Example: *Reduce blood pressure so my doctor discontinues medication*

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

List your top three spiritual health goals.

Example: *Grow in kindness toward myself and others*

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

What are you hoping to learn from this experience?

## THE MOVING FORWARD JOURNAL

You will begin keeping a food log this week (starting Monday), which is a key part of the Moving Forward Journal. You can photocopy the template on page 239 or download a copy of the journal at [www.revelationwellness.org/book/workout](http://www.revelationwellness.org/book/workout).

I was inspired to name this journal Moving Forward by Exodus 14:15. After finally letting the enslaved Israelites go, the Egyptians had second thoughts and began chasing them down. As they approached the Red Sea, the Israelites feared for their lives. They cried out to Moses and to God. Moses replied, “Do not be afraid. Stand firm” (Exodus 14:13).

God told Moses in verse 15, “Why are you crying out to me? Tell the Israelites to move on.” I love this. First, Moses directed the people toward God. The command was to not fear, but to stand firm in what they knew and trust that God would prevail. Then God directed them to *act!* It was as if He were saying, “What! Are you crazy? They are coming for you! Get moving. Put some feet to

your faith.” And as they moved toward the Red Sea, God parted it so they could walk across on dry ground.

That is what the Moving Forward Journal is all about. It will solidify your action plan to answer the call to live your whole life for God and others. This journal is designed to keep you aware of your thoughts and attitudes and to give you a place to record all your hard work, choices, thoughts, and feelings that are going into rebuilding your body, God’s temple.

Your objective this week is simply to write down everything you eat and drink so that you can begin keeping track and being aware of the nutrients and hydration you’re putting into your body. (If you have obsessed over food tracking in the past and have been afraid to be without your diet log or food apps so you can count every morsel of food and assign points, I invite you to break away from this habit. It could be mastering you and stealing your freedom. Feel free to use this journal for reasons other than tracking your food.)

Studies show that people who use some form of tracking tool to account for what they eat are more likely to lose weight and keep it off for as long as they continue to record. Don’t worry: You will not be chained to a notebook for the rest of your life. I hope you will find strength, not in writing down your food intake, but in becoming more aware of what you are using to nourish your whole self.

You may begin making obvious changes to your nutrition, but you are *forbidden* (yes, I said it—*forbidden*) to swing in a radical direction to the point where you don’t eat enough. Making extreme changes to your diet is a pride issue, which we will talk about next week. It has negative effects on your entire being.

The Moving Forward Journal also includes a space to record how much water you drink each day. Our bodies are about 60 percent water. Think of water as the oil that makes your engine run smoothly and cleanly. It is important that you get an adequate amount daily. A good rule of thumb is to try to drink at least half of your current body weight in ounces each day.

## THE COVENANT

I, \_\_\_\_\_, choose to put God's desire and design for my life first. I know that the Lord desires that I be holy and whole but that, when separated from God, I break apart. I realize that I have neglected good health in my life and the responsibility that I have in Christ to value such a gift. This covenant proclaims that I henceforth am turning from my old ways toward the new way. I acknowledge that hard work and sacrifice are to be expected, and I will allow God to be my strength as I press on toward the goal. I understand that this is a contract—an agreement—between God and me, solely based on love, and I promise to make my health and wholeness in God a priority for His glory and my joy.

I promise myself that I will take the following actions as I give my whole life—body, soul, and spirit—to Christ. Through the power of His grace, I commit myself to:

- > showing up, doing the work, and being real;
- > staying accountable, first to God and then to my community of two or more;
- > partnering with faith and not with fear;
- > surrendering when I want to take back control;
- > resting in God's truth and His love for me;
- > seeking God first so that all other things may be added to me (see Matthew 6:33);
- > knowing that God has made me on purpose for a great purpose;
- > letting God make and mold me, from my soul to my skin, into His workmanship;
- > refusing to give in to shame or condemnation when things don't appear to be going my way;
- > remembering—when I want to give up—that God's love never gives up on me.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Perhaps your only change this week will be that you begin to write down what you eat and drink. That is enough. Don't worry about filling out the hunger scale or other elements in the journal now. They will be introduced next week.

In week 3 we will talk about reestablishing healthy and whole motives and purposes for physical activity. I know that might feel counterintuitive to some of you. Keep in mind we are doing things differently this time. In the next three weeks, through the use of your workout calendar, we will be intentional about getting you ready for healthy movement. (See the Wellness Revelation Workout Calendar on page 240.) While waiting to get to week 4, if you feel you would like to move your body as a joy-filled act, please do so. Just don't let your flesh into the driver's seat. Refuse to partner with a pinching or prodding spirit that is accusing and shaming you to "Move it to lose it!" That is not the voice of God. Shame is not part of God's training plan. Love is His eternal motivator. Move if you want, but only because love made you do it.

# RENEW

*With All Your Soul*

The following questions are not meant to be a draining activity but rather an opportunity to set aside some disciplined and focused time to read, study, pray, and apply God's Word to your life.

## *His Purpose*

1. Read Ephesians 3:20. What is God able to do? Describe a time in your life when you allowed God to be your power and strength. What was the outcome? How did that compare to a time when you didn't allow God to be your strength?
2. Read 2 Corinthians 12:9-10. What attitude should we have toward weakness? Why do you think God needs us to be weak in order for Him to make us strong?
3. How can we apply this concept of weakness when it comes to improving our physical health, which should make us stronger?

*His Desire—Holy and Whole*

4. Read Leviticus 11:44. What types of things keep you from living a holy life? What keeps you from living a whole life?
  
5. Now read Proverbs 14:12. Where do you see yourself following a way that “appears to be right” in your life? How might that be a stumbling block toward improving your holiness and wholeness?

*His Design*

6. Read Genesis 1:27. Since you were created in the image of God, what does your image say about Him?
  
7. Read Ephesians 4:22-24. What hope does this passage give you about how your life can be transformed in all areas, including your physical and spiritual health?
  
8. What deceitful desires corrupt your mind? (Keep in mind that *deceit* refers to something that misrepresents the real thing.) According to Ephesians 4:23, how do we rid ourselves of the desires that damage God’s design?

*Love Others*

Prayerfully discern how God is calling you to love others during your Wellness Revelation journey into wholeness. Don't limit your thinking. Loving others doesn't always mean serving in a soup kitchen, knitting blankets, or volunteering at church. Sometimes, and dare I say usually, it means making that phone call and asking for forgiveness, or committing to risk loving someone who is not the easiest to love. To truly learn to love others, our weapons and walls must come down. Ask the Father what He is calling you to do. He knows, and He loves to tell you what is on His mind.

9. Please read Psalm 41:1-3. How do you see your commitment to love others impacting someone else's life? How might it impact your own?

10. In verse 3, the psalmist talked about restoring health. Where do you need restoration?

Dear God,

*Through my weakness, Your power is made perfect. I invite You into my whole being and ask that I may know and feel Your strength. I ask that I might find power and purpose that I've never known before, which I can find only through Your loving grace. I desire to obediently respond to Your command that I be holy. I ask that You reveal Your path for holiness to me each and every day. Be my strength in the moments when I am confronted by any and all opposition to Your Word and ways. My entire body desires to be holy and whole. Heal me. Restore me. Please open my eyes to what You are doing, not just in me alone but in all of creation. I also pray for those who may be suffering, that I may rise up and be stirred to action. Help me see and do my part so that others may be healed and restored along with me.*

✝ Amen.

# RELATE

*With All Your Mind and Strength*

The following questions are designed to help you apply all you've learned this week to your fitness journey. Get with your accountability partner or small group and work honestly through these questions. Consider journaling your answers with God before sharing with your partner or group.

1. What does it mean to you to be *holy*? How would you describe it to someone who might not understand what the term means?
2. How is being holy connected to being whole?
3. Think about the most important relationships in your life. As you conform your life to holiness and wholeness, what might those relationships look like in the best of times and in the worst of times?
4. In the beginning, God created everything to work in perfect harmony. "God saw all that he had made, and it was very good" (Genesis 1:31). He made man and woman to live in perfect relationship with Him in a rich environment. Yet Satan, who'd once tried to take God's place, set out to

destroy humans' relationship with God by encouraging them to disobey the one command God had given them. Satan asked Eve, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden?'" (Genesis 3:1). After simply planting that seed of doubt, Satan watched as the first man and woman ate the fruit God had forbidden them to eat.

5. After they'd disobeyed the Lord, Adam and Eve felt shame over their nakedness. God asked them, "Who told you that you were naked?" (Genesis 3:11). The question wasn't meant to shame them but to invite them back into relationship with Him. Knowing that God wants to restore you to wholeness, too, apply this question to your own state of brokenness. Answer the question for yourself: "Who told you [insert a statement that caused you shame]?"
  
6. Adam and Eve sinned after they fell for Satan's lie and began wondering whether God was holding out on them. Take some time to write down the various lies that you have been living as truth—ways that you've believed God has been holding out on you.

# RECIPROCATE

*And Her Hair Grew Back*

by **Nadia Porter,**  
**Revelation Wellness Ambassador\***

I met Kate, at that time an addict and prostitute, while visiting a rough neighborhood with a team affiliated with the nonprofit Dream Center in a major city. Our team passes out roses and offers prayer to women like Kate who are struggling with prostitution and addiction.

When we first talked with Kate, we told her about the Dream Center and its three-phase program for women, which enables them to live at our facility, free of charge, for up to eighteen months so they can work on bettering themselves and preparing for a different occupation. In this seed-planting ministry, we typically do not see immediate results from our outreach. Occasionally, women choose to leave the streets and begin their journey with us; however, most of the time we only have the opportunity to pray over them.

Kate was an exception. In September 2015, she chose to surrender her life of addiction and prostitution and enter the Dream Center's program. Because I teach weekly fitness classes to women in the program, I was able to stay connected with Kate. During her first couple of weeks in my class, I watched her pale, tattooed body fidget with discomfort as I poured Scripture over her. Eventually, though, she came to know her identity in Christ and what it means to be a daughter of the Most High King.

As the weeks passed, her cold eyes became warmer and her shaved head began to grow beautiful brown hair. As she shared more of her story with me, it became clear that she was no longer the same woman—abused, shattered,

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\*Ambassadors have completed the extensive Revelation Wellness instructor training program and feel called to serve in low-income and marginalized communities to spread the gospel and move people toward healing and wholeness.

and hopeless—that she'd been when I met her. She was becoming whole and walking in more freedom than she'd known was possible.

I prayed constantly for Kate. Because the rules and class requirements of the program are incredibly strict, women often choose to leave the program before finishing it. However, all of those working with Kate were proclaiming a different destiny over her life.

In July 2016, I had a front-row seat to witness Kate's graduation from the second phase of the program. Through tears, I watched this beautiful woman with kind and compassionate eyes, long brown hair, and a smile that lit up the room tell her story from the stage to all in attendance, showcasing the glory, grace, and goodness of our heavenly Father. Kate had made it. By the grace of God, she had made it!

Kate is now finishing the third phase of the program and has integrated back into normal life. She has a job and an apartment of her own. I still see Kate every week, as she freely chooses to attend my fitness classes. She loves the way moving her body in worship makes her feel because it brings about a tangible change she can see and feel happening. She told me she is able to see how the Holy Spirit works in her through these movement classes.

One day, a woman named Marie began attending my class. She was shy and still felt quite sick, as her body was detoxing from drugs remaining in her system. She told me she was Kate's good friend from the days when they both worked on the streets. Marie explained that Kate had reached out to her and told of her experience in the Dream Center's program. Then she asked if Marie would like to surrender and begin a new life as well. Marie couldn't deny the change in Kate—she said she didn't even recognize her! Marie was not sure whether she was strong enough to make it through the detox process and the three phases of the program, but she agreed with me that the heavenly Father will give her the strength she needs. Marie is taking it one day at a time.

I stand amazed at the transforming work of Christ in Kate. She is no longer the woman she was, and not only that, she has now partnered with

us by inviting women from her past to the program to change the darkest corners of this city for God's glory! Ephesians 3:20 says, "God can do anything, you know—far more than you could ever imagine or guess or request in your wildest dreams!" (MSG). What are your wildest dreams? Go on—dream bigger. Our God is a good Father who will fulfill the desires He placed in your heart. He will get His glory. Ask Him to do it; then simply stand back and be amazed.