A stylized green figure is positioned behind the title. The figure has a central vertical element and two curved arms extending upwards and outwards, each ending in an orange circle. The figure appears to be in a dynamic, possibly dancing or stretching pose.

FIT **for** **LIFE**

IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO BE HEALTHY

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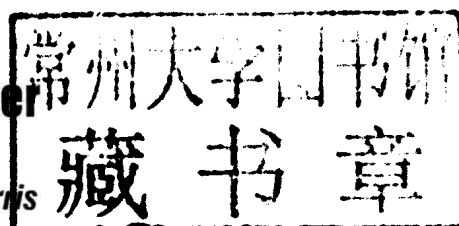
WYNDY C. BUCKNER

FIT for LIFE

It's Never Too Late to BE HEALTHY

Wyndy C. Buckner

Edited by Jeanette Morris




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Introduction

Every ridiculous diet one can imagine already seems to exist. Everywhere we look, somebody has found “the cure.” Store shelves are filling with diet pills, powders, and packaged meals. Specialists promote surgery, exercise programs, and therapies of all kinds. The list goes on and on. Nevertheless, the fact remains that a worldwide epidemic of unhealthy living has caused a dangerous and even deadly way of life for millions of people.

There is a concern in every field of expertise that something needs to be done to stop this epidemic. It’s time we Christians wake up and recognize this unhealthy lifestyle for what it is: *sin*! As believers, we need to embrace the total truth in God’s Word. He instructs us to care for our physical body as well as our spiritual body. This can be done.

Throughout this course, we will discuss and explore how God, in His awesome wisdom, designed our bodies to function in a physical sense. I am not a medical doctor, nor am I giving you, the student, *any* medical advice. I am, however, going to show you a different approach to the epidemic in which our culture is “trapped” today. My reference book will be God’s Word, the Holy Bible. Bear in mind that God is calling me to teach you how to care for your body physically; pastors are primarily called to nurture your spiritual life. Two different kinds of teachers, but both teaching from the same Book.

The lessons in *Fit for Life* come in four sections. Section one, “The Trap,” demonstrates the trap that captures us. Section two, “The Plague,” reveals Satan’s purpose behind stealing our physical health. Section three, “The Dwelling,” stresses biblical virtues and teachings necessary for unlocking the traps Satan sets to keep us unhealthy. Section four, “Freedom from Sin’s Grasp,” presents us with the charge that as believers, we are equipped by God and responsible to Him for making a difference. Changing our lifestyle is not only possible; it can eventually become easy and natural.

My purpose is to show you how to address, recognize, and win this battle. The Trap, The Plague, and The Dwelling offer a powerful revelation designed for you as a believer to expose Satan’s traps and deception in creating the largest epidemic known to our culture: an unhealthy lifestyle!

I am not suggesting that food is evil, but that being unhealthy is. Satan has set a trap, and we, as the Church, have fallen into it.

I tried to remove, replace, candy-coat, somehow not use the word “sin” in this book, but the reality is, that’s the word the Bible uses! We’ve been educated about, preached to about, prayed for about, and repented of this one word. We as Christians are usually okay with the word “sin,” but only if we don’t have to apply it to ourselves. I replaced it several times when writing this workbook, but God spoke to me, and firmly told me, “No! Keep it in.”

I highly recommend journaling your way through this course. As you probably know, journaling entails writing down your thoughts and feelings as you go through life. As you struggle with losing weight and getting your body into shape, it will help to write about each day’s journey. You will find some blank pages toward the back of this book that you can use for journaling. Or you may want to buy your own journaling book so you can write up a storm.

Are you ready to be Fit for Life?

Wyndy's Story

How God Changed My Life Forever

Have you ever tried to lose ten pounds? If you are one of the lucky ones who manage to achieve that goal, it's often only a matter of time before those pounds have glued themselves right back on. I have battled obesity most of my life. I had reached the point, and accepted as fact, that I was going to meet the Lord one day while I was still *fat*! I had tried every means of dieting in existence. I knew the steps so well I could have taught a class at the college of dieting. But I couldn't lose those unwanted pounds and keep them off. Why?

In the fall of 2006, my family relocated to Pennsylvania. The following spring, I was at my all-time low—spiritually, physically, emotionally, and socially—and everyday functions seemed to me like climbing Mt. Everest. The black hole into which I was sinking became my new reality. My body hurt all over. My level of depression was at an all-time high. And yes, suicide was an option for me. However, I knew God's Word well enough to know I couldn't follow that path, no matter how I felt.

At my husband's urging, I made an appointment to see a doctor. Next came all the usual tests. Blood work, X-ray of my aching thumb to make sure it was okay (probably just arthritis). My hips hurt too. Some days I could hardly walk, and just lying down was a challenge. I remember how hard it was to hold back my tears as I waited in the examination room. *What's wrong with me? Why do I feel like this?* It was one of the darkest moments of my life. My doctor ordered tests and reassured me that the blood work would show if any problems existed. Nevertheless, I felt completely alone and defeated.

Two weeks later, I sat in the doctor's office again, not feeling any better, but knowing I had taken the right step. I figured my problem had to be physical, you know, middle age—and all of the hurdles that go along with it. The crying, mood swings, aching joints, the night sweats, lack of desire to do anything but stay in my room. I just knew she was going to say old age or mid-life crisis. But she didn't.

The results were back. My *good* cholesterol, HDL, was acceptable. My *bad* cholesterol, LDL, was acceptable as well. Blood pressure good, sugar good, thyroid good, but my C-reactive protein was very high. *My what?*

The doctor explained, “Your C-reactive protein measures levels of inflammation in blood vessels, a marker for many types of diseases. Arthritis could be a concern, especially rheumatoid arthritis. Is there a history of arthritis in your family?”

Yes, on both sides! She ordered additional blood work and had me schedule a follow-up appointment in two weeks.

“God, where are you?” I cried. “I know you can rescue me. I don’t understand what’s happening.” Psalm 91 is my personal Christian 9-1-1. I read and reread it. As I started praying, certain verses began to speak to my spirit. “Those who live in the shelter of the most High will find rest in the shadow of the Almighty. He alone is my refuge, my place of safety; He is my God, and I am trusting Him. For He will rescue you from every trap, and He will protect you from the fatal plague.” Verse 9 says, “If you make the Lord your refuge, if you make the Most High your shelter, no evil will conquer you; no plague will come near your dwelling.” I kept reading those two verses and wondering how God would rescue me from every trap, and what He meant that no plague would come near my dwelling. I began asking God, “What trap? What plague?” But these questions marked the beginning of my miraculous turning point.

My sister, who is twelve years older than I, has worked very hard at building a relationship between us. Today, that relationship is a bond “only sisters share.” So, it was not a surprise when a book on dieting arrived in the mail from her the next day.

“Have you heard about it?” she asked during our weekly phone call. “It’s different than all the other books we’ve read.”

I chuckled as I threw it aside. If there was one thing I didn’t feel like doing, it was reading another “fat” book. However, that book stared back at me every time I lounged on the couch. (I didn’t feel quite as guilty if I spent the day there vs. the bed in my bedroom.) Eventually I picked it up and flipped through it—casually, of course. But the words seemed to make sense. Much more than any other I’d read. And believe me, I had read many.

Two weeks later, I felt a little better. The book was Dr. Oz’s *You on a Diet*, and its advice seemed true to me. I brought it along to my next appointment to show my doctor and get her approval. She just smiled.

The blood results were back. She had good news and not-so-good news. I didn’t have rheumatoid arthritis, but I had all the symptoms of arterial inflammation. Even though my cholesterol was acceptable, I was at risk for heart disease and a heart attack! She didn’t

know if there was any blockage to worry about, but she was concerned enough to run a few more tests before we talked about medication. In the meantime, I needed to get serious about losing weight—very serious.

I felt like someone had slapped my face! The sting of her words pierced my inner being. At that moment, God spoke directly to my spirit. He said, “Greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world. Who set up camp in your dwelling, Wyndy? You say you love me, so why does someone else control you?” I sat there stunned! I had heard my doctor’s warning, but God’s warning spoke even louder to me.

At that moment, God lifted the blinders from my eyes, and the healing I had been asking for began to flow through me like a rushing river! Wisdom and understanding of the Trap, the Plague, and my Dwelling flooded every living cell of my body. Sitting alone in that exam room, I heard God calling me to change the food I ate and switch to a healthier lifestyle, one that was pleasing to *Him*.

My burden today is for Christians, and, specifically for Christian children and young people. Doctors claim that today in the United States there is an epidemic of obesity in kids and teens caused by a lethal combination of eating too much food, eating unhealthy food, and too much sitting around.

Rebecca Barlow Jordan wrote: “Life is precious. Each delicate feature is a miracle from God, bearing His mark of ownership, stamped with His approval, created in His image—a heavenly original.”

Genesis 1:26 says that we were made in Christ’s image! My blue eyes were chosen by God just for me. Every hair on my head is counted (see Luke 12:7). He knows everything there is to know about me and you, and He wants us to keep these bodies of ours working smoothly and efficiently for His glory!

—Wyndy C. Buckner

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Section 1
The Trap

Lesson 1

Satan's Snares and How to Recognize Them

This may be the most important course you ever take. Our nation has a scary epidemic, and it's called "unhealthiness." The symptoms of this epidemic are frequent sickness, obesity, heart attacks, and other physical problems. In addition, something new is happening; researchers are discovering that, by the millions, kids just like you are becoming more out of shape and overweight than they've ever been before.

If you already eat a balanced, healthy diet, exercise to stay in shape, and keep your weight down, then you probably don't need this class. But if you have a hard time in any of these areas, this course can help set you free from what I call "The Trap."

What is "The Trap," you might be asking. Let's first define the word. A trap is anything planned to deceive, or betray. Does this explanation sound like the vocation of anyone we Christians know? As Dana Carvey, in his best Church Lady voice, used to say, "Hmmmm, maybe Satan?"

When I began seeking God for understanding of "The Trap," I was blown away with the craftiness Satan uses in placing these traps for us to fall into.⁽¹⁾

Look up the following verses. In the space provided, list the various devices Satan uses to entrap us:

2 Timothy 2:24-26 _____

Psalms 69:22 _____

Ecclesiastes 7:26 _____

When we read the Bible, or attend Sunday worship or Bible studies, we typically apply His Word to our spirit or our spiritual life. But what does God’s Word say about our physical life or body?

Look up 2 Corinthians 7:1. Write out the verse here:

The word “defile” appears in this verse. What do you think “defile” means?

What is the dictionary definition of “defile”?

When I recognized “The Trap,” my whole thought process began to change. I began seeing food and diet in a totally new way. I was so excited! God began giving me a spiritual understanding regarding how our bodies are to function according to His divine design.

Scripture took on a deeper meaning. “The Trap” came alive for me in Scripture. God began showing me the way He wants us to care for our bodies in the physical sense. It didn’t surprise me, then, when He took me to the very beginning—the Garden of Eden—where the first bite of sin took place. At that moment of temptation in the Garden of Eden, Satan set the Trap for the fall of humankind, not only spiritually but also physically. Sin was born!

Unhealthiness is SIN, rebellion is SIN, pride is SIN, disobedience is SIN, neglect of your physical body is SIN. I can just see the doubt reflected on your face. But you are going to hear this word throughout the entire book—the word sin—and I make no apologies.

Scripture tells us we are to die daily to what? Sin. What kinds of sin? _____

Look up James 4:7. This verse tells us if we know what we ought to be doing, and are not doing it, we’re doing what? _____

So, if we know being unhealthy is not good for us, and we're not putting forth any sort of effort to keep our body organs, lungs, joints, muscles, skin, etc.) healthy. We are doing what? _____

If you are pigging out and abusing your body, isn't that a form of rebellion against God? You bet it is! Is disobedience a sin? You bet it is! Just because your body completes the minimum tasks called for in a typical day does not mean you are healthy.

Read John 3: 3, 7: Jesus said that unless you are born again you will not enter the Kingdom of God. What do you think being born again has to do with being healthy or unhealthy? _____

Let's see what the Bible actually says. What are the steps to being born again? Scripture is very clear.

Step 1. (Romans 3:23) _____
_____ (Recognize you are a sinner)

Step 2. (Romans 10:9) _____
_____ (Confess and repent of your sins)

Step 3. (Romans 5:1) _____
_____ (Ask Christ for forgiveness)

What was the purpose of Jesus Christ's coming? He was sacrificed for our sins, that is, for our redemption from sin that we may have life and life more abundantly.

The root of the problem of unhealthiness is SIN. The sin is not in the facts we don't eat right, exercise, or do the things we should. Those things are simply the snares, the "Traps." The sin is abusing our bodies, the temple in which God now lives by His Holy Spirit. The solution to the problem is repentance!

Read John 8:3-11, the story of the woman caught in adultery.

Scripture tells us to go and do what? _____

Well, Wyndy, does that mean I will never sin again? Of course not! It means you will repent more and press toward the mark of completion in Christ. That's why Scripture tells us to die to sin—ONE DAY AT A TIME!

(1) Let me clarify—I know Satan is not omnipresent. Only God is everywhere at once, and Satan can only be in one place at any given time. So when, in this course, I say that Satan is saying or doing something in your life, I am referring to him and his myriads of demon spirits that are scattered throughout our planet.

Lesson 2

Satan's Avenues: The World and the Flesh

Satan traps us by using the World and the Flesh. The World is our society—the system that surrounds us every day. It is, in a sense, ruled by Satan, the “Prince of this World,” the “Prince of the Power of the Air.”

The Flesh is this old sinful body of ours that constantly pushes us to stick out our chin and abuse the good things God has given us. For example, sleep is a good thing, but we abuse it by sloth and laziness. Money is a good thing, but we abuse it with envy and greed. Sex is a great gift, but we abuse it by immoral behavior. Food is a delicious thing, but we abuse it by gorging ourselves or eating junk foods.

Proverbs 23:21 reads, “The drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty, and drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags.” I don’t know why the drunkard and glutton are included together in this verse, but it seems like gluttony is considered a pretty serious problem.

Look up “gluttony” in the dictionary and write the definition here:

Gluttony is one of Satan’s “Traps.” He sets us up to get caught in its snare so that we will fail in our efforts to be healthy.

Changing from an unhealthy lifestyle to a healthy one takes time. Satan has been very clever at creating and developing today’s unhealthy lifestyle. He wants you to feel hopelessly unable to change. If you neglect to properly care for your physical body in the way God intended for it to function, you become a victim caught in a sort of spider’s web. Unless you can somehow free yourself from that web, you will be destroyed. That old Spider will eat you alive! Satan knows that if he can control your body, he can also