

This is optional plan 2

“GBS: Permission-Based Eating”*

GBS: Permission-Based Eating –

What does that mean? You’ll laugh when you hear it, but here goes:

GBS=Growly Belly Syndrome

Permission-Based Eating=Eating only when our bodies gives us permission to do so (by growling at us).

There we have it, scientific-sounding, but really quite silly.

But let’s examine this concept for just a second, as I do think if you use it it will be quite helpful to you for actually losing weight.

The stomach growling is our built-in hunger-notification mechanism. God made us wonderfully, designing us to know when to eat (when our stomachs growl) and when to drink (when we are thirsty). The growling belly is really an indication that our bodies are burning fat. We can be fairly certain that when people who promote various diets say, “I ate whatever I wanted, lost 80 pounds, and was never hungry” they are most likely not being truthful (or they do not understand what “hunger” is). In order to lose weight, the body must enter into fat-burning mode, which may be physically experienced in the body as “stomach growls.”

Now, this becomes clearer when someone, who is not used to exercising, begins to exercise. Quite suddenly, they begin to experience real hunger, complete with stomach growls and all. The reason for this is obvious, they are beginning to expend more calories than they are taking in, so their bodies enter the fat-burning mode and they are signaled by their bodies that they are hungry.

So the first and most obvious way to achieve fat-burning mode (and be alerted to this phenomenon by “Growly Belly Syndrome”) is to increase our exercise. For instance, I always take the stairs instead of the elevator, trying to average 10,000 steps a day. I do weight training several days a week, cardiovascular training (my personal favorite is the elliptical machine) as often as I can. These things increase my energy expenditure. Maybe you can think of ways to increase your expenditure of calories, also. Usually there is quite a bit we can do to increase our expenditure if we just think on it some.

The next way to achieve fat-burning mode is to decrease the amount of food I eat. However, this is a bit tricky, because if I under eat (just as when I overeat) my metabolism slows down and, after a time, I cease experiencing GBS and therefore I know I am *not* in fat-burning mode (instead, I am in starvation mode, where my body conserves fat). So I have learned to experiment with portion size so as to always experience GBS before I eat my next meal. My personal requirement is to have 3 good “growls” before I eat the next meal (except for breakfast, of course), those “growls” being the permission I need in order to eat. If I eat before the growls, I am not eating because I am hungry, but for some other reason. It is also helpful to eat smaller meals, more frequently, as this helps to keep our metabolism up and our blood sugar stable. Four to six smaller meals eaten every 3-4 hours, helps the system to remain in

fat burning mode, providing more efficient burning of calories. Smaller meals, eaten throughout the course of the day, helps us to experience GBS more often than eating 2-3 large meals, spaced at longer intervals.

Now, with this understanding, everything becomes quite simplified, doesn't it. I now do not have to monitor how many calories I eat, keep track of fat grams (either "good" OR "bad" fat grams), nor do I have to care what particular kinds of food I am eating, or how I am combining them. All I care about (as far as losing weight is concerned) is whether or not my body is in fat-burning mode, which is indicated by GBS. If I happen to overeat one meal, I will know it by the time my next mealtime rolls around, for my body will not give me permission to eat at the normal time (by growling at me). The whole process becomes quite simplified, and is made easy to understand.

Now, when I hear from someone, "I just don't know whether I can continue, because I'm *hungry*," my first thought is to say, "Of *course* you are! There is no other way to lose weight than to experience the growling in your belly!" It should not be thought strange to be hungry. What is strange is that, for so many years, we have stuffed ourselves so much that we don't even know what hunger is anymore. Listen friends, it is a blessing to be hungry! It shows that we are eating correctly, that we are not overeating, that we are expending enough calories, and that the body is paging us that it is time to eat. I have come to love GBS, for I know exactly what is happening when I experience those growls; my body is burning fat. It is a good thing. It is to be desired.

Sue, on the The Lord's Table discussion group wrote, "I think we need to remember that there are very, very few of us who cannot make it to the next meal without starving. We will not die or pass out (but I used to think that I would!). Now I rejoice in that feeling of hunger because it means I'm being obedient, and that when I eat my next meal it will be because my body needs it, not my heart." Very good, Sue!

Let me give you an example: I ate a normal breakfast today, around 8:00 a.m. - Strawberry Frosted Mini Wheats. Have you had those? I just really enjoy them. I'm thinking we should start a "Strawberry Frosted Mini Wheat diet". What do you think? (That is a joke.) I had a normal portion, just one bowl is all. Then I went to our public rec center and did exactly one hour on the elliptical machine, followed by 20 minutes of weight training. I drove home, showered, did some errands, picked up my family and, since we were given a special "honorarium" for speaking at a recent conference, we took our kids to Chuck E. Cheese. We left our house about noon, but I noticed that I did not have the usual GBS at that time. I don't know exactly why that was, because normally the growls come right about noon. But on the drive up to Chuck E. Cheese (it is about an hour drive) I caught three good growls, about five minutes apart, starting right around 12:50, which made me glad. I then ate a normal-sized lunch and, experienced good growls shortly before dinner, and once again shortly before bed time. This is good, right and normal. It is to be desired, not resisted. So, all in all, it was a very good day of eating disciplined and exercising normally. I had GBS before each meal which gave me permission to eat.

I hope you are catching the vision of the simplicity of this system. Utilizing this method, you simply learn to listen to your body. You listen to the indicators God wonderfully gave you. You can literally throw out all counting, all monitoring of calories, fats, carbs, etc. etc. and instead simply ask your body's permission to eat and listen for its response. For weight loss, you simply wait until your body signals

you are hungry (by giving you several good growls) then you eat only enough to extinguish the growling and then wait to eat again until your body growls at you. This way, you will have several good growls throughout the day, indicating your body is in fat-burning mode, and you are actually losing weight. Simple.

This method also could replace (or be used in addition to) the “half days, liquid days, etc.” which we have included with The Lord’s Table, Phase I. Again, that plan is merely a “starting plan,” or “training wheels” until we learn to eat disciplined and exercise normally. This system, if followed, also keeps us from starving ourselves for, when we starve ourselves, we move out of fat-burning mode and into starvation mode, and we no longer experience GBS. Isn’t it amazing that God designed our bodies to signal hunger only when we eat and exercise normally?

One word just now about monitoring. I have noticed on the TLT discussion group lately that people are talking about recording everything we eat; some say this would be bad in that it would focus us on food, others say it is another form of accountability and can be beneficial to do. I tend to agree with the latter viewpoint, especially for a season. In other words, recording what we eat can be good for a time, until we discover what and how much we are really eating. It can be a form of “walking in the light” so that we can see clearly how much food we are really ingesting. But I don’t believe it has to be a permanent thing. It really should only be temporary, just until we move to “GBS: Permission Based Eating.” That is, it can help us for a time, but ultimately we want to move to where we simply listen to our bodies as to when we are hungry and when we are thirsty.

One final word, and I will close. There are spiritual forces acting against us when we decide we have to live with hunger pangs. So, while weight loss is quite simple physically, we must remember that we are in a spiritual battle. Our flesh hates to be uncomfortable, the devil loves to dangle food before our eyes just as he did with Eve, and the world makes the most scrumptious-tasting food (Bam! Take it up a notch!) available. So we are used to pandering to our flesh and we whine and complain if we experience any discomfort. The Christian *must* learn to resist this serving of the flesh.

There are many spiritual benefits to fasting, and we highly recommend doing so on a weekly basis. One way to implement fasting into this plan is to begin after dinner the evening before your fast, and drink only liquids for 24 hours, ending your fast with a light supper on the evening of your fast day.

When contemplating the cross of Jesus Christ even for a moment, the Christian ought not to complain about hunger pangs. The crown of thorns, the nails, the whips and the beating of the cross should silence our mouths when GBS hits us. This striving against our own flesh (learning to enjoy GBS) is where it become so essential to remain in Jesus (abide in the Vine—John 15), to put on the full armor of God (Ephesians 6), to watch and pray that we do not fall into temptation (Matthew 26:41). So, while this article mainly deals with the physical aspects of losing weight, let us be assured that these are really spiritual issues which require us to focus on Jesus Christ (Hebrews 12:2), to ask Him for grace to endure (and begin to enjoy) the hunger pangs, and to “contemplate the Lord’s glory” so that we might be “transformed into His likeness.” (2 Corinthians 3:17-18)

GBS: Permission Based Eating can really transform your physical body, and, if experienced every day, can do so quite quickly. Give it a try for a few days or a week, and see if it might not just become a very good habit in your life.

***This plan should not be used by pregnant or nursing moms, diabetics, anyone who is underweight, or with any other medical contra-indication for doing so. In addition, we realize that not everyone will experience a growling belly. If you are one of these people, simply substitute "RHS" (your body's specific "real hunger signal") for "GBS."**

Romans 8:4

in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, *who do not live according to the flesh* but according to the Spirit. (*emphasis mine*)

grace and truth,

Mike Cleveland

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