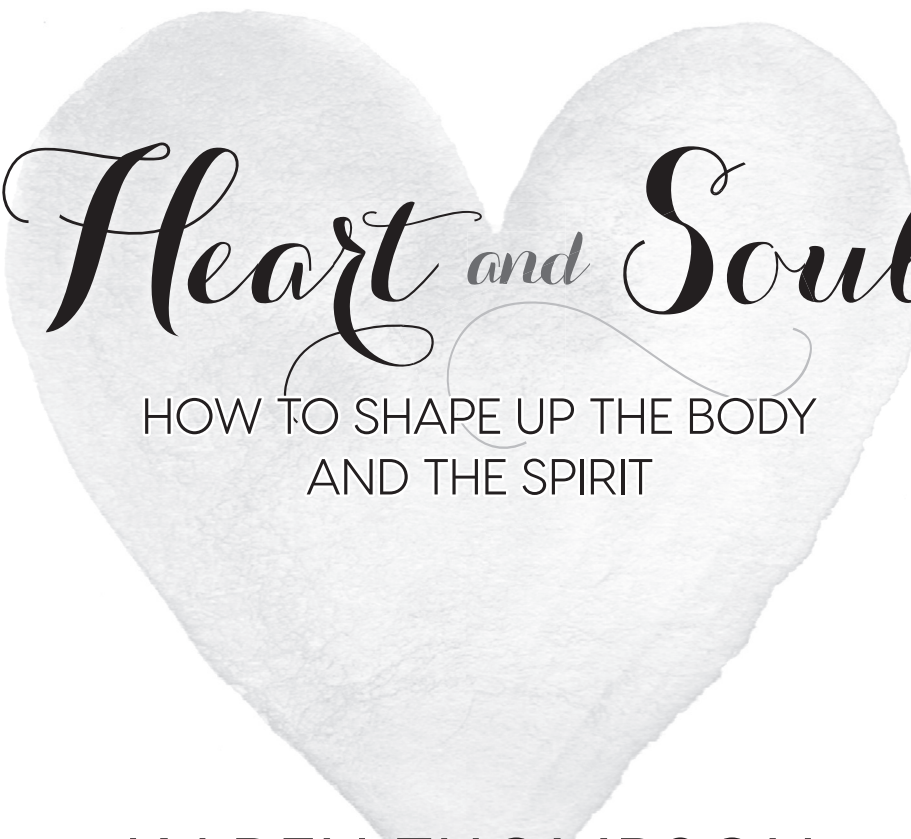




Heart and Soul

HOW TO SHAPE UP THE BODY
AND THE SPIRIT

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To my sweet grandchildren Skyler, Haley, Alana,
and Aiden. Mimi loves you. May you make healthy
choices and serve our Lord and Master always.



"Be not wise in your own eyes;
Fear the Lord and depart evil.
It will be health to your flesh,
And strength to your bones."
—Proverbs 3:7–8



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But most of all I must thank my dear husband Terry for his years of service and self-sacrifice to our Lord, serving as a humble elder, demonstrating unwavering love and support to me, during good times and bad. He is still my spiritual compass. Without him, I would be lost here and hereafter.

Finally, I’m grateful to my sweet family Chad, Jennifer, Danielle and Misha. May you also make healthy choices and remember to put Christ first in your life for all your decisions, no matter how big or small, and you will surely be blessed by Him.

Editors' Foreword

If you are getting ready to study this book, I'll tell you why you do not want to skip the introduction.

I first met Karen Hall Thompson in the early 1970s when I was 22 and had just started attending the Toledo Road Church of Christ in Lorain, Ohio. Karen was still in high school, so she was not really on my radar. However, I did get to know her parents, Billy Joe and Wanda Hall, who were part of a group of young married couples epitomizing the words “friendship evangelism.” Because of their efforts and others, I became a Christian in 1976.

Karen's parents loved to sing and so did I. A favorite memory is of a group that gathered in the auditorium toward the end of potluck dinners, singing hymns. How those voices blended! Not only were Karen and her parents there, but one of those singers (and a frequent song leader) was Terry Thompson, Karen's future husband.

Soon I decided to attend a Christian college. After graduation, I began work in Nashville and lost track of Terry and Karen. So you can imagine my surprise when one of my first projects at Publishing Designs was to edit a book written by Karen Hall Thompson from North Carolina. Could this be the Karen Hall I knew in Lorain? I soon discovered that she was indeed!

Now, why shouldn't you skip the introduction? Because it unveils Karen and her journey toward *Heart and Soul*. She opens her own heart and shares some of the personal heartbreaks and triumphs she experienced regarding her own physical and spiritual health.

Heart and Soul will mean so much more to you if you take the time to read the introduction.

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Editors sometimes get bogged down in all the minutia of grammar and style. I am guilty. But it was impossible to miss the star that came shining through in Karen's writings: *God needs healthy workers to do His work.*

May we all take to heart Karen's lessons on improving ourselves physically and spiritually.

Debra G. Wright, co-editor

So often we grab a book that looks appealing and then discover that we cannot relate to the lessons. Why? Could it be that we feel the author is preaching rather than sharing? A sales mentor once instructed, "We don't sell, we show and tell."

You are holding paper with words about the body and soul. But it's much more. You are holding the expertise of a health professional and an elder's wife who is sharing her story. Publishing Designs gladly presents *Heart and Soul* to you, in hopes that your heart and soul will be strengthened, and that you will show and tell others.

Peggy Coulter, co-editor

Introduction

Food for Thought

It is important to be proactive rather than reactive when it comes to your health. My goal in writing this book is twofold. I want to help sisters and their families whom I love so dearly to take control of their lives and improve themselves both physically and spiritually through prevention. Your mother was right. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

Do you know that statistically the United States spends more per person for health care than any other country in the world?¹ Because of that wouldn't you expect our nation to be the healthiest? The World Health Organization measures health by lifespan, birth weight, and infant death rate statistics. In those matters, the United States is not ranked the best. Based on life expectancy it ranks thirty-fourth out of 191 countries.²

It may surprise you to find out the number one health threat to our country is of our own doing—our lifestyle choices. We are bombarded with worldly marketing strategies that lead us to believe “life is good; live it up.” But facts reveal that high blood pressure, high cholesterol, smoking, diabetes, poor diet, lack of physical activity, and obesity are the leading risk factors of the American lifestyle.³

Lack of exercise can lead to obesity.⁴ Obesity can lead to high blood pressure and diabetes. Uncontrolled high blood pressure and diabetes can lead to chronic expensive diseases such as heart disease, stroke, and kidney failure requiring dialysis. High stress, on the job and in the home, acts as a catalyst and aggravates all of the above.⁵

Breast cancer and ovarian cancer may make the headlines these days but heart disease is still the number one cause of death in women.

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There is so much misinformation out there that the First Friday in February has been designated “National Wear Red Day” by the American Heart Association and the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute since 2003. Maybe you have noticed the “little red dress lapel pin”? That pin is meant to raise awareness to the fact that heart disease is not just a man’s disease.

Heart disease is the number one cause of death in women in the United States.⁶ And I am convinced that “heart disease” is the biggest threat to the church as well. Our selfish pursuits, egged on by society, often bog us down so much that we become inactive in the church. Our fascination and pursuit of material things—entertainment, dining out, improving our appearance—consume our time and paychecks and lead us away from our God-given roles in service as grandmothers, mothers, wives, daughters, and sisters.

If you do not believe me, open your checkbook and follow the money trail. You may be surprised where your paycheck is really going. Compare this to what you are giving to God and to others. Your heart tells on you. “As in water face reflects face, so a man’s heart reveals the man” (Proverbs 27:19).

Spiritual Starvation

We are spiritually malnourished and starved as well. Worse, we are starving our families. We look for worldly rather than godly ways to solve our problems and ease our pain, especially in the form of alcohol, prescription drugs, and illegal substances. This road leads to spiritual disability and death.

The great news is we have control over all these risk factors for heart disease both physically and spiritually. God will help us. “But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God

must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him” (Hebrews 11:6). What will we choose?

1. A physical life limited and shortened by fatigue, shortness of breath, and pain from being obese and inactive?
2. A spiritually overweight life burdened down with worldly concerns about our appearance, home decor, and the stress of keeping up with the Joneses?
3. A life of peace?

Surprise!

My family threw me a surprise birthday party in 2010. It was great being with family and friends. But after looking at the pictures taken that day, I had to face the fact that I was fat. I was a health-care provider and knew better. How did this happen?

The weight gain sneaked up on me over an eight- to 10-year period, and I tried to deny it.

- Five pounds for Christmas and Thanksgiving.
- Five to 10 pounds during the time my grandmother suffered and died from cancer.
- Five to 10 pounds with the grief and loss of good friends because of relocations.
- Five to 10 pounds during a series of personal disappointments on the job and with close family and friends.

I allowed grief, loss, disappointment, and relationship difficulties to drive me to try to fill the hole in my heart with food. I then became more socially isolated and inactive, allowing work-related activities to consume my time. Next thing I knew I was up 70 pounds and had

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developed high blood pressure and high blood sugar readings in the 300s—three times the normal.

I am happy to report that with some serious self-evaluation and physical and spiritual goal setting, I was able to lose 70 pounds and come off blood pressure and diabetic medication. This required prayer, exercise, strict calorie counting, food monitoring, and medical supervision for more than a year. My husband and I went on this journey together. I highly recommend the “buddy approach.”

Heart and Soul Fit for Service

When traveling to Costa Rica, the Spanish words, *pura vida*, greeted us everywhere. In the simplest form these words mean “pure life” in English. The “Ticos,” Costa Ricans, have adopted the idea that a pure and simple life can be peaceful and joyful in this motto, *pura vida*. True peace and joy can only be found in service to our Lord.

Healthy Hearts

In an average cardiac rehab program, a heart patient will spend about 12 weeks exercising and attending classes to learn to recognize and manage risk factors and then set attainable goals before discharge. My prayer for you is that over the next few weeks, you will learn to recognize and manage your own risk factors and set attainable goals by spending time studying God’s words, not mine. You will learn to exercise your physical and your spiritual heart to get healthy.

A lean muscular heart, body, and soul will be strong and full of energy for the Lord. I personally know the consequences of sin. Too many times I have tried to stand on my own two feet, but now I realize that I am the strongest when I am on my knees. A close friend once quoted this passage to me: “Therefore humble yourselves under the

mighty hand of God, that He might exalt you in due time, casting all your cares upon Him, for He cares for you” (1 Peter 5:6–7).

It is always good to teach what you know. I know about the burden of obesity and the trap of worldly pursuits. Hopefully we will get stronger together.

As a wellness nurse and program director of a local cardiac rehab program, I work with patients who deal with a multitude of heart-related problems and surgeries: stable angina, heart attacks, stents, bypass surgeries, valve replacements, heart failures, and heart transplants. My job is to help them adopt heart-healthy habits.

The importance of taking early preventive steps to control risk factors that might damage the heart has become clear to me. However, heart-healthy habits are even more critical for our spiritual heart health.

A plethora of information regarding your physical health and heart is available. Be careful of your sources. Remember, “The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God” (1 Corinthians 3:19).

However, we are going to spend time looking at what God’s Word says about the spiritual heart, your mind, and your body. Paul says, “Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth” (Colossians 3:2). The Lord told Jeremiah, “I, the Lord, search the heart, I test the mind, even to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings” (Jeremiah 17:10). I wonder, does God search the heart and test the mind of a man today or did that occur only during the Old Testament times?

In the following chapters, we will review risk factors for physical and spiritual heart disease. Begin today to stretch your spiritual muscles by studying Solomon’s step-by-step guide for soul improvement found in Proverbs 3.

Solomon had been blessed by God for his humble attitude and request for wisdom rather than riches. He was rewarded with both riches

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and wisdom more than anyone who has ever or will ever live. In Proverbs 3 Solomon taught his children to trust in God's wisdom and commandments rather than their own. He told them if they obeyed, not only would they be blessed with peace, long life, and prosperity but also health to their flesh and bones. Only they could make that choice.

The choices you make in life about what you eat, what you do, how you spend your time and money, and who your friends are, have physical and ultimately eternal, spiritual consequences. Those choices affect your heart and soul. From the perspective of a cardiac rehab and wellness specialist, my goal is to help you identify your risk factors and set realistic goals to successfully overcome risks. Ultimately, we will study what the Great Physician, our Lord Jesus Christ, has prescribed, and we will learn to take our medicine.

Karen Thompson
January 8, 2018



Realize That Less Is More

"Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's delicacies, nor with the wine which he drank" (Daniel 1:8).

Supersized Meals

*T*oo many indulgences in carbs and sweets can lead to obesity. Obesity kills people of both genders and all ages and races. That includes workers in the Lord's church. As mentioned in the introduction, our own lifestyle is our biggest health threat—in particular, our nutrition and our activity level.⁷ Both are believed to be related to poor nutrition from junk foods, convenience processed foods, and supersized meals loaded with high saturated fats, salt, and sugar, all of which can lead to obesity. We are accustomed to rushing to our cars after work, picking up the kids, and driving to a fast-food restaurant for dinner. How bad can it be when it tastes so good? Right? Why not supersize it

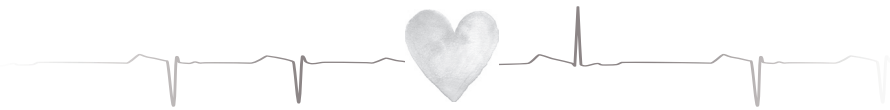
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for a dollar? If there are leftovers, we can just heat those up tomorrow. Unfortunately, this pattern becomes a habit and then a lifestyle.

Obesity is on the rise in my state. Obesity is on the rise in our entire nation as well, costing millions of dollars in health-care costs. Obesity is generally defined as a simple waist circumference measurement over the hips and around the belly button of greater than 35 inches in a non-pregnant woman.

There are two other ways to determine if your weight and body fat are a problem.

1. A simple BMI (Body Mass Index) is your weight (in kilograms) divided by your height (in meters) squared. When used as a screening tool, it will provide you with a “jumping off place” to identify a recommended weight range. To use the free National Institute of Health BMI graph or application, all you need is your height in inches and weight in pounds. For adults, a BMI of 18.5–24.9 is considered healthy. A BMI of 30 or higher is considered obese. Please note if you are extremely muscular, BMI may not be a good indicator of fat or health risks.
2. A skilled person painlessly “pinches” the skin with calipers. Fat percentages and lean muscle percentages can then be calculated and compared to age recommended determinations.



“You grew fat, you grew thick, you are obese! Then he forsook God who made him, and scornfully esteemed the Rock of his salvation” (Deuteronomy 32:15).



Burdened Hearts

Complications of obesity include high blood pressure and type 2 diabetes and can lead to stroke, coronary artery disease, and poor quality of life. Weight-related limitation in movement is a serious issue that can result in low self-esteem, depression, immobility, and potential dependence on others for self-care. Although this is not a lesson on weight loss, the Lord's church needs strong healthy women.

Heart disease is the number one killer of women in the United States right there along with men. We just develop it 10 years after men do.⁸ Extra weight is a burden to both our physical and spiritual hearts, because it can slow us down. Weight management is a lifelong battle, so if you find yourself over the weight limit, nip it in the bud.

As previously mentioned, being overweight can raise your blood pressure. Normal textbook and American Heart Association guidelines recommend keeping blood pressure at 120/80 millimeters of mercury or lower. You will get a diagnosis of "hypertension," meaning too much pressure exerted on your inner artery walls, if your blood pressure is 140/90 or higher.⁹ The top number, or systolic number, represents the pressure inside the arteries when the heart squeezes, and the bottom number represents the pressure inside the arteries when the heart is at rest (between beats).

Sometimes people under a doctor's care can come off their medicines, at least some of them, just by controlling their weight. As a practitioner in cardiac rehab, I have seen this over and over. As little as 5–10 percent of total body weight loss can make the difference. For example, if a 200-pound man loses 20 pounds,¹⁰ it can make the difference in whether he needs his blood pressure medicines or diabetes medicines. This is great news and a wonderful benefit of weight loss. I have personally experienced this. About five years ago, I was obese and on the road to diabetes, high blood pressure, and ultimately heart disease.

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"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it? I, the Lord, search the heart, I test the mind, even to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings" (Jeremiah 17:9–10).



Preventive Eating

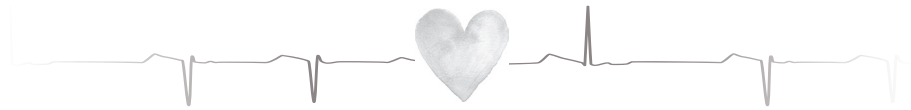
The DASH Diet (Dietary Approach to Stopping Hypertension) is a good way to reduce blood pressure.¹¹ Basically, this type of eating encourages fresh fruits and vegetables, rich in important electrolytes such as potassium, calcium, and magnesium. The diet promotes

- More fruits and vegetables
- Whole grain breads
- Lean meats (less processed)
- More fish and nuts
- Low-fat dairy
- Lower salt, meaning 1,500–2,400 milligrams per day (By the way, one level teaspoon of salt is about 1,500 milligrams.)
- Less saturated fats (fats that are solid at room temperature)

Many other diet plans incorporate these same basic heart healthy guidelines.

Daniel Refused Delicacies

Even in captivity, Daniel, “purposed in his heart” not to eat from the king’s table. He chose instead to eat vegetables and drink water, long before the DASH Diet. King Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the temple at Jerusalem in 586 BC. A few years earlier, he captured some of the city’s most intelligent young men and took them to Babylon to be trained in the language and literature of the Chaldeans. Four of these young men were Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. The king instructed his servant Ashpenaz to provide all these young men with the king’s delicacies, the wine that he drank, and likely the meat that was sacrificed to idols.



“Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s” (1 Corinthians 6:19–20).



Daniel and his friends refused to drink the king’s wine and eat of his delicacies, requesting to be fed vegetables and water instead. Ashpenaz fearfully but reluctantly agreed. After 10 days Daniel’s group demonstrated better appearance, thinking, and health. They were found to be 10 times better. They stood up for their beliefs, and with God’s help, they excelled in everything. Even under the stress of captivity, Daniel and his friends had a positive influence on their own nation as well as the Chaldeans during their captivity (Daniel 1:3–21).

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Jesus said, “And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell” (Matthew 10:28). It took a lot of guts for Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego to stand up to King Nebuchadnezzar. God rewarded them for their courage.



“And at the end of ten days their features appeared better and fatter in flesh than all the young men who ate the portion of the king’s delicacies. Thus the steward took away their portion of delicacies and the wine that they were to drink, and gave them vegetables” (Daniel 1:15–16).



“Hyper” Tension

Hypertension or high blood pressure is considered a silent killer because it damages the inside of the arterial walls, making people more susceptible to clogging, clots, and cardiovascular disease.¹² If I took a high-pressure water hose and sprayed it onto a painted surface, what would happen to that painted surface after a short while? It would become pitted and marked. Similarly, the arterial walls of one with high blood pressure become vulnerable to clogging.

Most of the time people are not aware that their blood pressure is elevated, because they do not feel any symptoms. Medication might be necessary to bring down their blood pressure. Unfortunately, many people stop taking their medication because they do not feel any good effects from it. When I discover that a five-dollar medication could

have saved someone's kidneys and the need for dialysis, I am greatly saddened.

We can let the little incidents with people at work, at home, or in the church burden us down and drive our blood pressure up. I have heard of ladies who argue and squabble about who will make the cookies for Vacation Bible School. This behavior describes the words *hyper* and *tension*! Left unchecked, it will split the church.

Worries and Troubles

Martha was consumed with the little things of life. She wanted Jesus to make her sister Mary help her prepare for guests, but Mary wanted to sit at Jesus' feet and listen to Him. Jesus said, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part" (Luke 10:41–42). Mary understood what was important. She did not sweat the small things. She filled her life with Jesus.

The late sister Jane McWhorter held many ladies day events for our congregation. I heard her state, "Before my first car accident—in 1970 when I was 35—I worked myself crazy every time I tried to entertain or prepare for a fellowship meal. I cooked and cleaned and scrubbed, preparing to the point I could not enjoy my guests or participate in the discussion or fun." That terrible disfiguring car accident taught her what was important in life. Jane would say, "I learned to give myself a KISS when entertaining: Keep it simple, stupid." What wonderful advice! Let's learn to enjoy each other's company, help each other get to heaven, and not get so caught up in the trivialities of decorations or food preparation.

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"Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth" (Colossians 3:2).



Uncontrolled blood pressure can weaken your heart and put you at risk for heart failure. A heart in failure does not snap back to fill or squeeze and do the work it did before. I am convinced that discouraged Christian women can allow unhealthy communications and relationships with family members, co-workers, or close friends weaken her physical and spiritual heart. She is carrying too much weight and living under too much pressure. And often she does not snap back.

Recovery is slow and painful after a heart attack or stroke. Christians are affected daily. Take charge of your life. Manage your risk factors. God needs healthy workers. Remember, heart disease is the number one killer of men *and* women. Getting these numbers in control will go a long way to getting you back on the road to physical health so you can do the Lord's work.



Invite a health-care worker to class to take blood pressures and get weights and waist circumferences, or bring a scale and cloth tape measure to class and privately determine your own waist circumference and height. Determine what your ideal weight range would be based on the BMI (Body Mass Index) range. Use a BMI calculator app or use a BMI chart by NIH (National Institute of Health).



Soul Stretches

- Take a personal inventory of your spiritual burdens. How might you be enabling weakness in others by carrying too much weight yourself?
- Research scripture about bearing burdens—your own and those of others. Look for examples from characters such as Hezekiah (2 Kings 19–20) and David (Psalm 142:1–2).



Workout

- ❶ What is the biggest health risk facing the United States?

- ❷ Is being overweight or obese the church's problem? Is uncontrolled high blood pressure the church's problem?

- ❸ Read Daniel 1 and discuss how Daniel's food choices were a precursor to the DASH Diet.

- ❹ Define *dialysis*. How can ignoring high blood pressure contribute to the need for dialysis?

- ❺ When a discouraged Christian allows her spiritual weights to weaken her soul, she might not snap back. Who have you known in

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that situation? What steps might prevent this heavy burden? How can you help?

