

# The Lowedown

A monthly update from the life and ministry of Dave & Jennifer Lowe

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## Keeping a New Year's Resolution

Last summer I was looking at a collage of photos of Jen and myself that hangs on the wall at Jen's parents. There's a picture in that frame of Jen and myself from 15 years ago and I was amazed at how thin I looked compared to pictures of me that are more recent.

A good friend of mine likes to say "reality is our friend." The reality is that I weigh 30 pounds more than when I joined Crusade's staff 16 years ago. I had a hard time seeing the bathroom scale as "my friend."

Of course, I've known for a while that I was slowly gaining weight. Certain clothes no longer fit. A few years ago, I remember having to suck my gut in like Mr. Incredible (in that funny movie trailer) just to wear my suit pants at our annual Fellowship Dinner. Last year, I finally gave up the gut-sucking and I bought a new suit.

A few summers ago, I got into running. I ran practically every day, and I took the boys with me, pushing them for 2 miles in their jogging stroller. While I built up my stamina, I didn't notice any difference in my weight. I was disappointed of course. I thought for sure I would lose 5-10 pounds with that 50 pound "workout".

Finally, after seeing that picture and facing reality, I started to think the unthinkable. I started to think about going on a **DIET**.

When I was in high school, I was on the wrestling team, so I was familiar with the concept of dieting. Thinking about dieting was not exciting to me because in high school, it meant starving yourself until you made your weight.

There were many times in the past when I had weighed the options of starving myself vs. looking 30 pounds overweight, and you know what? Looking overweight won out every time because I'd rather look overweight than starve myself.

But I finally got to the point where

I thought to myself, "if I continue on this trajectory, where I gain a few pounds every year, by the time I'm 80 (Lord willing), I'll weigh something like 280 pounds." When I pictured me 130 pounds overweight, somehow, the idea of dieting started to look better.

Last summer, while I was on my sabbatical, I spent a lot of time in Barnes and Noble reading and studying my Bible. Occasionally, I would have to get up to go to the bathroom, where I would walk right by the diet book section.

A few times, I stopped and glanced through some of the books

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and tried to figure out what that particular "fad" was all about. I saw the Atkins diet, the Pedometer diet (eat whatever you want and just walk off the equivalent number of calories) and some others.

I decided that I didn't want to do a fad diet but wanted to do something that was more nutritionally sound. I long suspected that my eating habits were at the core of my weight issue.

I knew a few friends who had done the South Beach Diet and had recommended it. When I got home, I decided to order the book.

The book sat on my shelf until I finally picked it up over the Christmas break and started reading it. The book made a lot of sense. What I liked about the book is the fact that the author recognized that many Americans are overweight and are at risk for heart problems. As a cardiologist this concerned him. He noticed that the low-fat diet of the

American Heart Association was not fixing the problem. Even though there was some weight loss, his patients still had poor blood chemistry and were still at risk for heart problems.

He decided to develop an eating plan (a diet, if you will) that addressed the blood chemistry first. This is the most important thing. Who cares if you look good on the outside but inside you are unhealthy and at risk for serious heart problems?

The resultant diet is the South Beach Diet. The diet does exactly what it was supposed to do—it helps people correct their bad blood chemistry so that they get healthy internally. However, the diet also has an interesting side effect—the people who stick to it lose weight.

I thought to myself how similar this is to our spiritual lives. Often we want to look good on the outside but we don't address the internal problems in our lives. This was the problem with the Pharisees and it leads to an unintegrated life of hypocrisy.

The Christian life is not so much about changing our external behavior, but instead, allowing Jesus to transform us internally. The neat side effect, though, is that our exterior life will end up looking different.

On January 2nd, I decided to change the way I eat (I prefer to think of it as a lifestyle change rather than a diet). I used the principles in the book to help me get started and to educate myself regarding sound nutrition.

As I write this to you now, it's been 9 weeks. I've lost 20 pounds and I feel great. I'm fitting into clothes I haven't worn in a long time and you know what? I'm not starving myself!

Only 10 more pounds to lose to "transform" myself back to 1990!