



This is the *Health Matters* podcast.

What Does it Mean to be Thin Within with Heidi Bylsma

I'm your host Kimberley Payne and this is the show for women who want to improve their spiritual and physical health.

In this episode, we'll be talking about how God created our bodies fearfully and wonderfully. Thin Within encourages people to break free for life from dieting and allow God's wonderful signals of hunger and satisfaction to direct our eating as we prayerfully submit to Him, aware that our hearts can be deceptive if we aren't circumspect. There are a million reasons to love this approach to lasting weight loss!



This week we're going to be talking with Heidi Bylsma. Heidi has been a part of the Thin Within ministry since 1999, but it wasn't until 2006 that she began to really live out the principles. She collaborated on the Thin Within book and workbook series, but struggled with overeating behaviors that God wanted to heal. In 2006 to 2007, Heidi released 100 extra pounds by eating when she was hungry any food that she desired and stopping when she was no longer hungry. She went to God to help her with all the other reasons she had a tendency to eat. Since 2007, Heidi has maintained a healthy size, but she has broken free from the bathroom scale. Welcome Heidi.

Heidi

Thank you very much. It's great to be here.

Kimberley

It's wonderful to have you. Let's start with what's the premise of the Thin Within approach is, including how it matches with the values of Health Matters of Prayer, Bible Study, Exercise and Healthy Eating?

Heidi

Great. The Thin Within approach takes into account the fact that our Creator, our wonderful God, has made us fearfully and wonderfully. And He has given us signals for all kinds of things in our bodies—thirst, sickness and pain, tiredness. And He’s also given us signals for hunger and satisfaction. So if we follow those signals, just like we do when we’re tired we sleep, when we need to go to the restroom we go. If we eat when we’re hungry and stop when we’re no longer hungry we’re going to experience freedom in this area that perhaps we haven’t until now. To do so it helps if we’re very prayerful because we can deceive ourselves, “Sure I’m hungry.” Sometimes we’re not when we think we are. We’re hungry in our hearts for something. And through Bible study we discover that there are a lot of truths that God wants to speak over us that would replace some of the lies that have caused me to believe things that cause me to overeat when I don’t need to, when I shouldn’t, when I have no need for physical food. And then through exercise I can rejoice in my God by moving the body that He’s made and given to me as a steward of, a temple of His Spirit. The signals of hunger and satisfaction are absolutely the most wonderful way of eating healthfully.

Kimberley

Love it. How does Thin Within connect the participant with a personal relationship with Jesus Christ?

Heidi

I appreciate so much that you asked that so soon in the interview, Kimberley, because people come to Thin Within because they want breakthrough from dieting and passivity that they may be struggling with in the dieting/overeating pendulum swing. And what they discover is they are drawn closer to Jesus because they need Him so desperately to break free from that compulsivity that they struggle with. And so, what we say from Thin Within, and what we’ve experienced in our participants is this extreme pendulum swing of overeating because I’ve given up, I can’t maintain dieting rules and regulations and swinging back over and buckling down and I’m going to follow those regulations again and exercise really hard. The cross of Christ can stabilize that extreme swing. There at the cross of Christ I find grace instead of legalism, I find freedom instead of bondage. I become a victor instead of a victim of my own craziness. So it causes me to turn to Jesus for all those reasons that I would otherwise run to food. I’m mad, I run to food. I’m happy, I run to food. I’m celebrating, I run to food. I’m nervous, I run to food. No more. Instead we learn to run to Him and let Him fill our souls which are so hungry for Him.

Kimberley

Amen. So what sort of people does this ministry touch? Is it just overweight people? Underweight? Bulimic? Anorexic? Who does it touch?

Heidi

We have been experiencing an influx of all varieties of people. Most people think it’s primarily for those who want to release extra weight and that’s what we put out there, “Be free from your extra weight”. But it’s really being at peace with food, with your body, and with your God. Our God is all about reconciliation. He would love for us to be reconciled with Him, with others, and with our own bodies and what they need. And what we found and especially have had a great deal of success with people who

are struggling with being underweight, not eating enough. With bulimic and anorexic behaviours. We encourage them of course, if necessary, to get counselling. But we also support them in their journey to be at peace with their bodies. God didn't ever intend for food to torment us. He's given us our bodies to be a wonderful opportunity to display His glory here on earth. So that's what we want to encourage people to do and give the tools and support necessary for that.

Kimberley

I like that God never intended for food to torment us. That is so true. What's your personal experience with Thin Within?

Heidi

Oh my goodness. I am sort of a rebel. My history is as a rebel. In 1999 I became familiar with eating according to these principles and I had the wonderful privilege in 2000-01 of working with Judy and Arthur Halliday on the Thin Within book. So I was communicating with Judy Halliday, the founder of Thin Within in 1975, all about the Thin Within principles almost every day. We would talk on the phone so I could take what she wanted to be put into that book into a manuscript form and yet I wasn't living according to it. She was just grace personified. It was awesome that even though I was carrying extra weight, not being obedient and submissive to the principles I believe in and was writing about, she hung in there with me and kept letting me work with her. It wasn't until 2006 when I actually began to string together enough consistency to see some physical results. My heart had been changed all along the way and I think God was laying a foundation that needed to be laid between 1999 and 2006 and that was when things clicked. God brought together some things that made me aware I was kind of holding myself captive because of unforgiveness and things like that. As those began to fall off I was freed up to hear from the Lord, "Yes, child. Do this. This is my will for you. Walk in it." So between 2006 and 2007 I released 100 pounds. I hate to admit this but I'm not a vegetable lover. I eat my vegetables in salsa primarily. I'm learning more and more to broaden my likes and so forth but at that time I was still very much, I ate what I wanted during that time, but I ate smaller portions. Just what I needed to satisfy my physical hunger. And I released that weight, even with McDonald's French fries and pizza. I hate to admit that on the one hand but it's a wonderful thing on the other. It wasn't about the food. It was my enslavement to the food was what it was about. It was my heart. My heart had to change. And as it changed I was able to release that weight and begin to walk in freedom, come to terms with my body, with food and learn a whole lot about God, myself and my place on this earth. And the ministry is for me. And I've been ministering alongside with Thin Within for all those years as well. I've been a healthy size ever since 2007 using the same techniques. That's one of the wonderful things about Thin Within is there's no new maintenance plan to learn, you just keep hanging in there eating according to hunger and satisfaction. You will stay the size God intends for you. It's awesome.

Kimberley

It sounds like a wonderful program. Now how can someone get involved if they're interested?

Heidi

The best place to start is to hop on over to our website which is at ThinWithin.org. The dot org is important because dot com is owned by an entirely different unChristian group. Please join us at ThinWithin.org and there you will find a blog that has content updated every week, we have links to all

of our materials and also classes that are going. We use secret Facebook groups in order for people to dialogue with one another and with experienced online leaders who have experienced victory on this journey and can answer all kinds of questions. We try to keep that page updated. We're getting ready for some new updates here soon. But if you jump onto that website ThinWithin.org you'll find a number of ways you can dive in. And that would be awesome to see some of your listeners there.

Kimberley

Okay, so that's ThinWithin.org. Now, we're going to move on to the BEEP round. Heidi will give quick tips on the four disciplines of Bible study, eating healthy, exercise, and prayer or BEEP. So what do you have for us for a quick tip for Bible study?

Heidi

Bible study—Romans 12:2 says, “We are transformed by the renewing of our mind.” So we can become aware of the lies that have driven the challenges we have with food by submitting to time in God's Word. He will minister to us and give us the truth that we need to replace those lies that have driven us to eat outside hunger and satisfaction. This will change us permanently.

Kimberley

I love it. And your quick tip for eating healthy?

Heidi

Getting acquainted with your body's signals for hunger and satisfaction is going to be super helpful. Fuel your body when you're physically hungry and then stop fueling it when you're physically satisfied. It's amazing how efficient God has made our bodies. It doesn't take much food. We are made fearfully and wonderfully.

Kimberley

And your quick tip for exercise?

Heidi

Rather than use exercise to make up for the food that I hope to get away with eating I consider exercise, and I encourage your listeners, to consider exercise to be another way to worship God. To express to Him their joy and their delight in the body that He's given them to steward here on earth. First Corinthians 10:31 says that whatever we do can be done to His glory. So rejoice in Him. Choose an exercise that you love and do it to glorify God, praise Him.

Kimberley

Like dancing around to some praise and worship music.

Heidi

Yeah, exactly. And to be honest, Kimberley, I also would encourage people that if your body needs exercise, just like if it needs food, then move it. And do so joyfully. And if it no longer needs exercise because you've done enough, stop. And that's just great. We can move our bodies, we can eat all to the glory of God. It's awesome that He even lets us do that.

Kimberley

And your quick tip for prayer?

Heidi

This is vital. Learn to praise God. Some people might say, "What does that have to do with anything?" I like to make a list of the attributes of God and how He deals with people and then I use my list—I call that my God list—and then I use my list to then say back to Him His attributes. As I learn to praise my God I find that my heart is filled up. He says He inhabits the praises of His people, Psalm 22:3 in the King James version. And I really believe that since He placed eternity in my heart, from Ecclesiastes 3:11, that by praising Him I'm filled up in a way that I might not have been before and that might have been one reason that I was going to physical food. To fill this heart that actually needs Him to fill it with Himself. So praising God puts Him in His place and me in my place. It's His will, His way, His eating for me. We want to live for Him. It's about Him instead of my way, my body, my my my. I hope that helps.

Kimberley

Yeah. His will, His way. I like that. Now I understand that you have a gift for our listeners. Can you tell us about that?

Heidi

Sure I'll talk about that. Our YouTube channel, which you can find by searching YouTube for Original Thin Within has all kinds—over 100 different videos. Some of them are professional, some of them are a little more homegrown by several different leaders including myself in the program. And you can get a lot of ideas just there. They're totally free and you'll be encouraged in your journey or to consider this as a journey beginning for you. <https://www.youtube.com/user/OriginalThinWithin/>

Another resource that people have enjoyed is the sound cloud website. You can do a search on Google for the sound cloud Thin Within and it'll take you to our channel. <https://soundcloud.com/heidi-bylsma>

And then a final freebie is our app. If you search the iTunes store for Thin Within you will find a free app that actually has the videos and audios all streaming into it, and our our website is accessible through it. That's a great resource. It's free.

Kimberley

That's wonderful. I'll also include those links right in the show notes as well. Thanks again to Heidi Bylsma for her expert advice and thank you for joining us today.

This interview has been brought to you by [Fit for Faith—a 7 week program to improve spiritual & physical health](#). This workbook unites physical health and spiritual health through a 7-week program to lose weight and develop a deeper relationship with God. You can discover more about this book and other health programs at www.kimberleypayne.com.

If you liked this episode please help spread the word by leaving a rating and review on iTunes.

This has been the Health Matters Podcast, believing that prayer & Bible study are to the spirit what exercise and healthy eating are to the body.

Blessings on your journey to health.

About Kimberley Payne

Kimberley Payne is the host of the *Health Matters – Healthy Spirit Healthy Body* podcast. She is author of *Fit for Faith – a 7-week program to improve spiritual and physical health* and is a motivational speaker offering workshops and online courses based on her book. She hopes to inspire women to live happier, healthier lives that glorify God. She is happily married and lives with her husband in a village east of Toronto, Canada where she hikes and bikes. Visit her website at www.kimberleypayne.com

