

CHARACTER MAKEOVER:

10 Sessions to Create the Best You



Lesson Five: The Biggest Loser

Chat About It...



Dig down for some major self-control, because you're about to compete on *The Biggest Loser*. This weight-loss show is all about resisting temptation and exercising self-discipline, and at the final weigh-in, the person who has done the best at transforming their body with a new healthy lifestyle is the winner.

Let's talk about different temptations – which of these would be hardest for you to resist? Why?

- (1) A refrigerator full of your favorite foods when you're trying to diet.*
- (2) Incoming e-mail or text messages when you're supposed to be focused on something else.*
- (3) A group of friends gossiping about a person you have a story about.*
- (4) Buying something you love even though you have other things like it.*

What do you need to lose?

Our version of *The Biggest Loser* goes beyond losing weight. On *our* show, being the Biggest Loser means successfully losing your biggest area of temptation by exercising self-control:

- **LOSE THE MOUTH:** If you are easily provoked or unkind, you need self-control over your speech and your emotions.
- **LOSE THE APPETITE:** If you are driven by your compulsions and over-indulge yourself to the point of compromise, you need to exercise self-control over your appetites and addictions.
- **LOSE THE STRESS:** If your busy schedule is overtaking your peace of mind and keeping you from enjoying life, you need to exercise self-control over your stress.



Discover what you need to lose by doing The Biggest Loser Weigh-In now.



The Biggest Loser Weigh-In

What is the biggest thing you need to lose? Exercising self-control is the way to become the Biggest Loser, whether that means losing your uncontrolled words, or losing self-indulgence, or losing your stress. Weigh yourself on three scales, giving each statement 0 to 4 pounds, in order to see where you need to become the Biggest Loser.

0 pounds = I **rarely** have this issue

1 pounds = I **hardly ever** have this issue

2 pounds = I **sometimes** deal with this issue

3 pounds = I **frequently** struggle with this issue

4 pounds = I **usually** have a real problem with this issue

Scale #1: LOSE THE MOUTH (Uncontrolled words and emotions)

- ___ I tend to say hurtful things to people without even realizing it
- ___ If I am having a bad day, I take it out on my family or friends
- ___ I enjoy a good gossip session with the girls
- ___ I snap at people and get irritated easily
- ___ I interrupt people and finish their sentences
- ___ I get critical if I don't agree with what someone's doing
- ___ I exaggerate when I tell stories
- ___ I speak before I think, which gets me into trouble
- ___ I can be judgmental, where I regularly jump to conclusions and voice a negative opinion
- ___ I tend to overreact. My emotional levels go from one extreme to the other.

Scale #2: LOSE THE APPETITE (Self-indulgence)

- ___ I have a hard time resisting temptation
- ___ I consume too much caffeine, or diet pills, or energy drinks, or alcohol
- ___ I have trouble disciplining myself to work or to do something I don't feel like doing
- ___ I am obsessed with exercise, or dieting, or my looks
- ___ I engage in more relaxation than I need (television, reading, sleeping)
- ___ I overspend, regularly buying more than I should
- ___ I do not have a balanced diet, and I eat to comfort myself
- ___ I don't have a good work ethic – I do personal things on the job, or I'm lazy
- ___ I have a habit (shopping, gambling, chat rooms, partying, etc.) that I can't control
- ___ I "treat myself" too much (restaurant meals, Starbucks, buying clothes, getting manicures, etc.)

Scale #3: LOSE THE STRESS (Poor time management)

- ___ I am overcommitted – I have more things on my schedule than I realistically have time to do
- ___ I demand too much of myself
- ___ I am habitually late
- ___ I am a workaholic
- ___ I procrastinate, putting off getting certain things done
- ___ I tend to overcontrol how other people do tasks I have delegated to them
- ___ I feel disorganized much of the time
- ___ I ignore my family or friends because of all I have to do
- ___ I have an overinflated sense of how indispensable I am
- ___ I hang onto commitments even after it's a losing cause (i.e. I keep going in to volunteer even though they can't find much for me to do; I keep my daughter in piano lessons even though she still can't find Middle C after 3 years)

WEIGH-IN

Add your pounds on each scale to see where you need to become the Biggest Loser

Scale #1: 'Lose the Mouth' Total Pounds: _____

Scale #2: 'Lose the Appetite' Total Pounds: _____

Scale #3: 'Lose the Stress' Total Pounds: _____

When you “weighed in,” what was one of the areas where you have the most “pounds” to lose? Can you think of anything that happened recently where you could have exercised more self-control?

Before and After Pictures

On the reality show, *The Biggest Loser*, the most captivating part of the show is when you get to see side-by-side comparisons of photos of the person at the beginning of the show and at the end, 15 weeks later. On our *Biggest Loser* show, the ‘Before’ picture would show a person who “lets it all hang out.” Such a person may say things like, “I’m just saying what I think,” or “What you see is what you get,” or “I can’t help the way I am.” They think they don’t have the willpower to be any other way. But once they put their self under God’s control, the Bible shows us what their ‘After’ picture looks like. Let’s check out some of the Bible’s ‘Before’ and ‘After’ pictures of the different types of losers.

Lose the Mouth

‘Before’ Picture

A person who needs to “lose the mouth” does not have a very pretty “Before” picture in this passage.

But now is the time to get rid of anger, rage, malicious behavior, slander, and dirty language. Col 3:8 NLT

When are you most likely to have trouble controlling your speech? (Think about how you speak when you’re stressed, angry, hurt, tired, embarrassed, or frustrated.)

‘After’ Picture

As the “After” picture is being read, circle the action words that show how speech is transformed.

¹⁶ Let the words of Christ, in all their richness, live in your hearts and make you wise. Use his words to teach and counsel each other. Sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to God with thankful hearts.

¹⁷ And whatever you do or say, let it be as a representative of the Lord Jesus. Colossians 3:16-17 NLT

According to this passage, there are four things you can do to get control of your speech. What are they, and how can each one actually help you control your speech?

Lose the Appetite

‘Before’ Picture

Here’s a tough thing to lose – your self-indulgent appetites. When your appetites have power over you, read what needs to happen:

⁵ So put to death the sinful, earthly things lurking within you. Have nothing to do with sexual sin, impurity, lust, and shameful desires. Don’t be greedy for the good things of this life, for that is idolatry.

⁶ God’s terrible anger will come upon those who do such things. Colossians 3:5-6

There are some strong words used in this passage to describe what you have to do to lose your appetites – what are they? Why is it necessary to be so harsh with habits of self-indulgence?

‘After’ Picture

If you lose your self-indulgent appetite, the Bible says you get a new wardrobe. Look at the ‘clothes’ in the ‘After’ picture:

^{9b} ...for you have stripped off your old evil nature and all its wicked deeds. ¹⁰ In its place you have clothed yourselves with a brand-new nature that is continually being renewed as you learn more and more about Christ, who created this new nature within you. Colossians 3:9b-10

Tell the story of when you became clothed in your new nature (in other words, tell how you became a Christian). How has the presence of Christ in your life helped you “lose the appetite”?

Lose the Stress

‘Before’ Picture

Read this key quote from the book that describes the ‘Before’ picture of a stressed out person.

Key Quote: *Stress is basically a problem of too much: too much to do, too many people to take care of, too many conflicting priorities, too many problems to solve. [page 153]*

'After' Picture

Now, from the discussion of Mark 6 starting on page 153, let's look at some of the strategies for losing stress, and what the 'After' picture of a de-stressed person looks like!

Eliminate

Jesus did not try to do any miracles in his hometown of Nazareth. (Mark 6:5)

Key Quote: *Think about how much of your own stress is self-inflicted when you continue to do things you should be eliminating. If you are expending a lot of effort on a losing cause, or if you are trapped in a project that's sapping all your energy, maybe it's time to put yourself out of your misery and release it to God. [page 154]*

Have you overcommitted to something that will take more effort than it's worth? Or, are you demanding too much of yourself by trying to do more than one person's work? Describe how this creates stress.

Delegate

Jesus didn't try to do everything himself – he delegated his preaching and healing ministry to his disciples. (Mark 6:7)

Key Quote: *In order to delegate effectively, you must give up your need to have things done exactly the way you would do them. [page 154]*

Are you hanging onto any unnecessary stress from having a hard time letting things be done by someone else? What character flaws (perfectionism, overcontrolling, etc.) cause you to have this tendency?

Rejuvenate

After their exhausting ministry journey, and news of John the Baptist's death, Jesus urged the disciples: "Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest." Mark 6:31

At what times in your life do you most need to rejuvenate? What are some keys to rejuvenating that Jesus suggests in Mark 6:31? How can you implement these ideas?

Evaluate and Coordinate

When the disciples were stressing out because they catastrophized their food situation (Mark 6:37), Jesus gave them something to do that taught a couple of important stress-reducing strategies:

Key Quote: *He basically told them to **evaluate** their situation. "How many loaves do you have? Go and see." (Mark 6:38) When you have a daunting problem, evaluate it and break it down into smaller tasks. [page 156]*

Key Quote: *Another way Jesus dealt with the stress was to **get organized**. "Then Jesus directed them to have all the people sit down in groups" (Mark 6:39). He coordinated his team and got everyone involved in sorting out the situation. [page 157]*

*What advice can you give each other about their stresses that will help them **evaluate** the problem and **coordinate** getting it solved?*

Looking back over Days 1-4 [pages 135-167], what idea struck you that you would like to share?



Check in With Your Character Makeover Team

Split up into your Character Makeover Teams, and tell your partners about your personal experience with this week's lesson on Self-Control:

1. From the Biggest Loser Weigh-In, in what scale do you need to lose the most?
2. If you have not had the most extreme makeover of all, which is to invite Jesus Christ into your life to take over and transform you into a new person, now is your chance! Pray together for anyone on your team who wishes to take that step today.
3. From Day 5, which major Action Step did you choose for your Master Action Plan, and why?
4. Pray for each other about deepening this quality of Self-Control.
5. Arrange a time and a way to connect with each other this week, where you can ask each other about how your experiment with a Self-Control Action Step is going, and encourage each other in your reading of the Patience chapter.