

# Fighting Food Addiction Through Faith

Faced with a difficult childhood, I found myself fighting disordered eating problems. After finding healing through my faith, I am reaching out to others through Truly Fed Ministries.

*Written by Gari Meacham*

Colorado is known for its crisp summer nights and perfect velvet skies with stars dangling like jewels. But on a dark July night, nothing was crisp or perfect in my life. This was the night of my father's car accident. After his car rolled five or six times off the highway, it landed in a twisted mash of metal. A milkman found my father strewn over the front and back seat of the car at 5 a.m., paralyzed from the neck down.

## Growing up Too Fast

Strapped to a difficult marriage to begin with, my mother's life now reeled from the turmoil of wheelchairs, catheters, bed sores, and insurance nightmares. Vodka seemed to make the pain temporarily go away.

At the age of 9, I knew it was my job to raise my younger brother and sister, so I mustered up all the strength I could to get through the turbulent years that defined my childhood. College seemed like my ticket to freedom, so I grabbed my suitcase and headed to San Diego State University. But with more internal baggage than an international airport, I reached for something tangible that whispered comfort - I reached for food.

## Struggling with Disordered Eating

One night at a sorority party, I found myself tethered to the food table, unable to stop my compulsive binges, which were

dictating my moods and self-image. Once an athletic shape, I was now overweight, and the numbers on the scale seemed to scream my failure loudly throughout the day. Always the rally girl, I eventually was so sick of feeling fat that I vowed to do something about it. Countless diets and food plans landed in the trash can as I continued to beat myself up over my lack of self-control.

Frustrated and filled with self-contempt, I decided it was time to radically get the weight off me, no matter what it took. This began my years of starvation. Tiny food allotments and constant calorie-counting helped me shed the weight I hated, but I couldn't stop at that. I continued to shrivel into a boney skeleton of a woman. I was beginning to sense an overwhelming cloud of depression as I toyed with the lie that taunted, "There's no way out of this... you need to take your life."

## Finding Freedom in Her Faith

On the morning I plotted to die, I felt strangely drawn into one of my roommate's rooms. Both of them were away for the weekend, and I was alone in the apartment. I went into her room and sat on the bed, staring at a picture of Jesus hanging on her wall.

His fresh smile seemed to slice through the pores of my hatred and confusion. I never understood how to pray, but I found myself uttering a prayer that would forever change the landscape of my life. "Jesus," I cried, "If you're really real, show yourself to me. You're the last thing I'll try."



Gari Meacham and her husband Bobby Meacham, who is on the coaching staff for the Houston Astros

Weights seemed to lift off my shoulders as I instinctively searched for an old Bible I had brought with me, but had never opened. At last, my struggle with food had a foe, and that foe was Jesus. I guzzled freedom like a parched man guzzles water, and soon found that God had not only freed me from disordered eating, but had placed in me a heart to help others get free, too. I created material for a class, which eventually became my first book, *Truly Fed: Finding Freedom from Disordered Eating* and which led to Truly Fed Ministries.

## Determined to Help Others

I married my college sweetheart, a first-round draft pick baseball star who was named Bobby Meacham. Tucked in my heart was the desire to be in full-time ministry, writing books and speaking to people about the goodness of God. The time wasn't right, though, as we traipsed across the country moving over 47 times in our first 10 years of marriage. Oh, the glamorous life of pro baseball!

After teaching elementary school for over 15 years and serving as a national consultant for the Public Education Business Coalition, I finally sensed that it was God's timing to write another book. This time, I realized my dream of writing about issues relevant to all kinds of people. My second book, *Spirit Hunger*, was born from a desire to grapple with how we long to connect to God, but sometimes aren't sure how. With a book deal that includes a feature-length book, workbook, and DVD teaching series, I am overwhelmed by God's grace to take a lifelong hope and turn it into reality.

## Thankful for Her Blessings

Two years ago, Bobby and I were thrilled for him to join the coaching staff of the Houston Astros. We sold our home in Colorado and excitedly moved to Katy. We love to spend time with our three grown children Brooke, Ally, and Colton and our grandbaby Reese. When I think back to the scared, lonely child that I was, I'm reminded that His grace truly is sufficient. God has dreams for our lives far beyond what we can hope or pray for. **KM**

*GARI MEACHAM is an author and beloved speaker, who enjoys life in Katy with her family.*

*EDITOR'S NOTE: We would like to thank Gari Meacham for sharing her story of hope, faith, and encouragement. If you have an inspirational story you would like to share, email [editor@katymagazine.com](mailto:editor@katymagazine.com).*

After turning to her Christian faith for healing, Meacham now focuses on helping others overcome disordered eating problems and find ways to connect with God in their everyday lives



Meacham enjoys visiting with children in Africa during a recent mission trip

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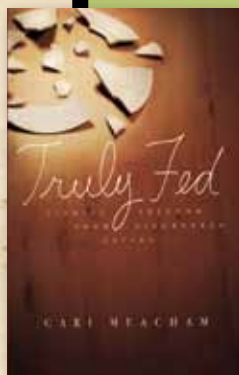
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### About Spirit Hunger

Everyone has a desperate need for God - not just for following Him or being committed to Him, but being intimately connected to Him. The answer to one's spirit hunger is to engage God like never before. In her new book, *Spirit Hunger*, Gari Meacham shares how to turn worry into belief, problems and heartaches into a life of fresh prayer, and sighs for intimacy into a love with abandon for God. *Spirit Hunger* is available Oct. 7 in all major bookstores, at Wal-Mart, and on amazon.com and barnesandnoble.com. It can also be enjoyed on Kindle and audio CDs.

Meacham will be teaching from *Spirit Hunger* on Monday nights at Second Baptist Church in Katy, starting Oct. 15. To learn more, contact dross@second.org.



### About Truly Fed

In *Truly Fed*, Meacham tackles the issues of disordered eating and self-loathing behaviors. With solid biblical wisdom, she challenges women to leave behind the slavery of food plans, diets, and emotional pain. *Truly Fed* sets women free to understand nourishment the way God intended it. Find *Truly Fed* on amazon.com or by request at any major bookstore.

**Connect with Gari Meacham**  
To learn more about Meacham, visit garimeacham.com and connect with her on Facebook, Twitter, or her blog.

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