



# GOSPEL *for* LIFE

## **The Body and the Christian Life with Charlene Dash** Season 3, Episode 9 Transcript

[00:00:09] - Announcer: Welcome to the Gospel for Life podcast. We help people grow by connecting truth to life. Here's your host, Darryl Dash.

Darryl Dash: We'll welcome back to the Gospel for Life podcast. Today we're wrapping up season three. Since starting this podcast, I have interviewed a couple of dozen great guests, but today's guest is by far my favorite so far.

I'm pleased to welcome Charlene Dash to the podcast. Char is a Gospel integrated nutrition coach, and she supports women experiencing setbacks in health and fitness as they gain competence, strength, freedom, and joy in their nutrition movement and living. Char is a Revelation Wellness group instructor and is also certified with Precision Nutrition, and she also happens to be my wife. Char, welcome to the podcast.

[00:00:59] - Charlene Dash: Thank you, Darryl.

[00:01:01] - Darryl Dash: I've been here interviewing you for a long time, so I really appreciate you doing this. Char, tell us a little bit about your story. How did you become interested in nutrition and health?

[00:01:12] - Charlene Dash: For a lot of years, I really cared for others: family and as a pastor's wife, people in our church community. I was active in various volunteer roles and positions, and I worked full time or almost full time for a lot of that time. And my care for others did not at all prioritize caring for myself.

And so over the years, I accumulated quite a number of behaviors and habits that were detrimental to my own health and wellness. So things like skipping meals and not moving, not exercising, not eating properly when I did eat. As a

result of that, I found myself in a place where I was experiencing a number of health issues that were starting to appear, and more importantly, I was getting to a point where I was starting to not not be able to enjoy or embrace life the way I wanted to be able to. And out of all of that came just a desire to experience greater health and wholeness in my body. And so that began the journey of learning what that looks like.

And the Lord and his grace brought a number of resources my way, so that was sort of the beginning.

[00:02:46] - Darryl Dash: So sometimes people talk about an inciting incident, kind of a turning point. Was there one for you?

[00:02:53] - Charlene Dash: Yeah, there was, actually. I mean, I think sometimes there's multiple things, but certainly one that really stood out to me was that I tried to knee board at one point, and I knew how to water ski from when I was a kid, and so my brain was sending all the signals to my body of what to do, but my body didn't have the strength to respond. And so I was literally being pulled around the lake on this knee board and that I was not kneeling on. And I think just realizing that things were really at a point where either I wasn't going to be able to be active with the kids as they moved into the teenage years or else I needed to make a change, like something really had to shift because this wasn't going to just change by itself. So that was my, I think, big insight moment that sort of prompted a change.

[00:03:57] - Darryl Dash: Well, I know a lot of Christians really have embraced the idea that the body doesn't matter. We're all going to die. It's our souls that matter. I recently heard a comedian say, "I don't know what my body is for other than taking my head from room to room," which is funny, but also really sad. How did we get this view of the body that it really doesn't matter? And why actually does the body matter for those who believe in Christ?

[00:04:24] - Charlene Dash: I'll answer the second question. First, is that I think the body does matter because Scripture tells us, when we read it with eyes that are open to it, Scripture tells us that the body matters, that the body is the temple in which the Holy Spirit resides. That's a huge statement. Just unpack it. That alone is significant.

The other thing that I think we miss from within our own cultural context is how literal and embodied the Old Testament culture would have been. The people that God was speaking to and the ways that they embraced things so literally and physically, they would never have thought of anything that the Lord was

saying apart from thinking of it within their physical context. I think that's something to keep in mind.

Scripture talks about — there's many references, Paul uses many references to the body, the actions of the body, whether it's running or walking. But often he talks about that. He uses the illustration of running a race. And so there's evidence of his awareness of the body.

I think we get this wrong view because at one point he makes the comment that if we exercise or train our bodies, that's only good for this life here on earth. But if we develop spiritual disciplines, we have those for eternity, and so they're of much greater value. And we misinterpret that and misapply that and say, well, that means that my body is not important. All that matters is my spirituality. And I think that that's a really poor understanding of what he's getting at there.

And I think there's been seasons through history where the body has had lesser value or been diminished in certain societies and cultures. And I think things are changing within our own cultural context at this point. But certainly leading up to this point, there's been definitely a sense that the body is less important than the mind and our soul before the Lord.

[00:06:53] - Darryl Dash: Yeah, I think a lot of Christians don't realize that we're going to be embodied creatures for eternity. That other than the intermediate state, we were made to be embodied. And that's a really unusual state. And I didn't even know years ago that Jesus I knew he had a body as a person for the 30 some years that he was on earth, but I really didn't understand that he's still embodied today. And that blows my mind that even Jesus right now and for eternity is embodied. So yeah, the body really matters and he dignifies the body by taking out himself.

So yeah, it's quite incredible. So what does it mean to integrate the gospel with the care of our bodies? I know that you talk about you're not just somebody who's talking about how to get fit. You do that. You're not talking about how to get healthy. You're also talking about integrating the gospel with our health. So what do you mean by that?

[00:07:48] - Charlene Dash: As I mentioned, I think Scripture speaks to the value of our body. So certainly those relevant passages, I will draw them out.

The other thing that I find is that when we get into dealing with what we're eating or how we're moving or not moving, oftentimes the barriers with those areas of our life have connections to our emotions and our desires. And our emotions and our desires have connections to our soul, the things that we desire, the

things that create strong emotion in us. There's often very deep rooted connection there with our spiritual life. And so it's not unusual to uncover places of woundedness, places, of brokenness places, of idolatry, places where we just are not aware of how we might be living out of value that's in conflict to Scripture or believing something that stands opposed to the truth of Scripture, about who we are, about our identity, about our goals, whatever it is.

And so as these things surface in the course of coaching, that's where the gospel is able to be spoken and the truth, when it's presented with love and grace, is able through the power of the Spirit to bring healing and wholeness and freedom in a way to adapt at a level that just can't be touched by keeping track of what you're eating and making sure that you're eating dense nutrients and that kind of thing.

We're talking about healing that comes through the Spirit in some of these moments. So there's a real aspect of just recognizing the holiness of those moments and holding them there and allowing people, the safety to step into those places and receive the Lord's healing and help.

[00:10:12] - Darryl Dash: So it sounds like you're not just prescribing eat whatever, you're actually dealing with spiritual and emotional issues that might be affecting our bodies as well. Is that right?

[00:10:23] - Charlene Dash: Absolutely, yeah.

[00:10:25] - Darryl Dash: Well, sure. I know that you have a particular interest in helping women who've experienced health setbacks. And I remember talking to you as you were working through your calling and I remember how strong that was in you, that you just felt a real passion for that. So why is that? Why do you feel called in particular to help that group of people?

[00:10:48] - Charlene Dash: I think in general, as people, we tend to have a sense of wanting to encourage and support others who have stories that may have parallels with our own. And I think beyond the human factor, the Lord, in working in us, the ways that he brings glory and honor to Himself are to use the very spaces that have been broken in our own lives and then transform them and use the overflow from that to bring health and healing and wholeness to others as well. And so he takes what was out of joint or wounded or in some way not lined up with what he wanted, and then he makes it into something that brings Him honor and glory.

And so I think that as I was sort of looking at that and wrestling with that and dealing with that, there's a transcendent power there that is just overwhelming,

really, in that moment when you sort of come face to face with the Lord and that he's before you and that he's calling you and you sort of end up flat on your face before Him.

[00:12:18] - Darryl Dash: Yeah, absolutely. That brings up kind of a little bit of the fear factor. I know that when you first joined Precision Nutrition Coaching years ago, I think we were both a little bit scared of what that would look like. And then later on when I joined the program, I felt a little bit of fear about that. And it's a very vulnerable area and it's scary to sign up for something because you don't know if it's going to be a good fit and you're a little bit scared of you've been talking about spiritual things and emotional things. It's a little bit scary to open that up. So if somebody comes to you, say a woman comes to you and wants to have you coach them, what does that look like? And is it as scary as it sounds?

[00:13:02] - Charlene Dash: I find that most people are more excited than scared, probably, although I think there's a little bit of fear in there too, right? Because it is a little bit unknown. But most people are usually excited, I think, especially if they've heard part of my story, because then they feel like, here's someone that can relate to my struggle and here's someone who understands a bit more about where I'm coming from and maybe they can help me in a way that other things haven't been able to help me.

And the other thing I would say, I guess, is that when I start with someone, it is really up to an individual to identify where they are. And we go through a whole intake process that helps to identify where they are and we ask some questions and walk through different things. And the thing to know about the coaching process that I use is that it's completely driven by the client. So the client has the freedom and they are empowered to say, this is where I want to start. At each step along the way, they identify the work that they are going to do that they want to do.

[00:14:28] - So they're the ones setting what it is that they're going to practice, what the daily action is going to be. We're always making sure that what challenges are going to come up, what supports do they need, always making sure that they're confident, like at least 90% confident that they can do this thing every day. Because I want them to succeed, I want them to flourish and I want them to start where they are. We're not going to work on things that are beyond what they can do. That doesn't make any sense. We want them to start where they are and then slowly grow habits and behaviors that move them towards their goal. So I think that helps to take away or diminish a bit of the fear.

I think when you and I through coaching, there wasn't quite the same opportunity for input and so the stakes were a little higher. You didn't know what was coming at you. And we still had control over how we practice different things, but less control than the coaching that I provide. So I think that maybe helps to reduce the fear factor a little bit.

[00:15:49] - Darryl Dash: Yeah, and it sounds like it's not an overwhelming thing that you kind of move at the speed of the people you coach and they're in the driver's seat and you're supporting them. So that's really helpful.

You just mentioned the rule of habits and I wanted to ask you about that. Why are habits so important? And I get the impression not just for physical health, but for more than that, why would you say habits are so important?

[00:16:12] - Charlene Dash: So this is an interesting question for me because you know that I am not someone who functions on habit in terms of being someone who does the same thing at the same time every day, day in, day out, that is not the way I roll.

[00:16:29] - Darryl Dash: No.

[00:16:33] - Charlene Dash: People could look at me and say, well, you're not really like a habit person. What's this about? But what we need to understand when we're talking about habits is that we all operate on habit. We all have routine ways of behaving and thinking and showing up when we talk about habits. Yes, we are looking to build things that we will do repetitively, but again, it's going to look different from one person to the next. So the way I would work with someone with your temperament would be different then, like in terms of not the way I work with them, but the outcomes. That where you would go in terms of building habits or selecting habits and deciding what actions you're going to do would look different for you than it will for me. But yet we can still be working towards the same outcome.

So habits, I know for some people, they don't like the word habits because there's sort of a reaction against it, but it's broader than sort of how we might normally define it because what we're really looking at is what are the things that you do oftentimes even without thinking how do you decide what you're going to eat?

[00:18:05] - What eating choices do you make? Right? What environment do you create in your kitchen, in your home for food? Because the environment we create often then becomes the food that we eat, right? And so we look at breaking those things down and getting really granular in terms of building

things that support you in moving towards your goals. And those things whether we think we're a habit person or not, we are all habit people. Our brain works that way because that's how it conserves energy and works efficiently is to just do things repetitively. So we're really looking at what are the repeat things that you do if you don't like the word habit?

[00:18:56] - Darryl Dash: I really encourage that people like you are talking about habits and helping people because I know I'm only able to help certain people who probably temperamentally are like me and you're able to help other people who might not be like me right, who think they're not habits people. So I remember somebody saying that most books are written by habit upholders and that's the reality is that's not the majority of the population, right? So I'm just so encouraged that you're talking about habits and helping people understand who might think that they're not very good at habits. So yeah, that's really good.

Char, what would you say to somebody who feels intimidated or discouraged about their health?

[00:19:38] - Charlene Dash: I know I had someone just recently asked me the question why is eating so hard? Why is eating the right thing so hard? And my answer to that was because in this world there are things that come up that are hard. We know from Genesis 3 that the world does not function the way God designed or intended it. And so some people might not struggle with eating but some people might struggle with eating. Some people might not struggle with moving but some people might struggle with moving. Things are hard because we have challenges in this world because it's not the way God designed it.

And so if you're experiencing challenge or setback in your nutrition or your movement or emotions that go along with that, you're not alone. A lot of people are there. And it's not about you, that you're deficient. It's about the fact that we live as human beings in a fallen world. And so to need help or support in that area is not a reason to be ashamed. There's no shame in that. But there is hope that with encouragement and with support something different is possible. Especially when we have that confidence of knowing that we have a Heavenly Father who loves us more than we can even fathom who has given us His Son who provides through his life and death the power of his resurrection available to us through his spirit that just there is so phenomenal.

[00:21:47] - The power of God is unlimited. And it's not to say that everything will be perfect. We know that we don't reach that state until Christ returns, but just that there is still hope and that God is working in us. He says, he promises that he is working in us to transform us and ultimately to perfect us. And so we know that it's part of his goodwill and to do that work in us, to transform us. And

that extends to our bodies. That's not just about our soul, that extends to our relationships with our self, with others, with food, with movement. It's part of every aspect of our life.

[00:22:39] - Darryl Dash: What would you say to pastors who want to help their people get a biblical understanding of the body? And just as I ask you that question as a pastor, I think there's been huge periods of my ministry where I haven't really been thinking about that. So what advice would you give to people like me or others who want to do a better job of helping people honor their bodies and see the importance of their bodies?

[00:23:02] - Charlene Dash: I would encourage them, first of all, to just evaluate or assess where they're at personally. Like you say, just being honest with yourself. I think sometimes when we're in leadership, we can't pass on to others, we can't help others grow in areas where we haven't grown ourselves. And so, you know, maybe start with just looking at your own life and just being honest about what's going on there. If you are someone who is naturally, physically active and healthy, maybe you haven't had a lot of struggles or challenges in these areas. And I would encourage then pastors in that situation to spend time with people who had those struggles and just ask them questions, ask them to share some of their struggles and to just gain better understanding of what people might be dealing with and look for supportive resources for them.

The Lord will give different challenges to different people. And so we don't have all of the challenges. But maybe looking for or connecting with people who have worked through some of those things and offer some of those can provide some of those insights, making connections. So whether they connect with you or whether they connect with others who offer supports or services, just having resources available for people, I think is so important because we want to be able to help our people.

[00:24:51] - That's why we're there. And so maybe this is just a place where there's an opportunity to add on some more resources or even to work through some of those resources or so.

[00:25:05] - Darryl Dash: And sometimes sharing our own struggle can be part of that. I mean, not just our struggle, but maybe our progress as we're learning ourselves. It's not an area that we have it all together, but we're learning too, and trying to take others with us as we learn and grow in that area.



I want to ask you a couple of personal questions. I ask these to everybody I interview so far. What are you learning lately? What has God been teaching you lately?

[00:25:35] - Charlene Dash: That's such a good question. I've been reading from my quiet time lately. I've been reading the book *Rich Wounds*. And it's so interesting because you mentioned at the beginning about how really only becoming aware in more recent years, like sort of the physical nature of Christ's bodily presence in heaven right. And the world to come. And he's just been talking about that in the part of the book that I'm in and how Jesus was not just triumphant in terms of living as a man and dying and then returning to life, but that ascended human body then is elevated to the highest place in heaven and now is above the angels. Because man is initially made lower than the angels. Right. And because of what Christ has done and that he is ascended as fully man while also fully God, he is now above the angels. And not only that, but his power and majesty are so great that he then takes those who believe and follow Him, those of us who are believers, and we also take that place and above the angels. Again, this is all very much rooted in the fact that there's a human body, but this presence of God within a human body.

[00:27:27] - We've known this and talked about it, but I just love the way it's been opened up in this book even more and just giving even more value to the fact that our human body is not just something left over or to be discarded once we die. No, it is will be raised and raised in this power and might and to the glory of God. Right? Yeah. I would say it's very much in line with what my passion is already. But it's just amazing to have it sort of drawn out in a new and fresh way from Hebrews. Right.

[00:28:10] - Darryl Dash: That's great. What is encouraging you lately?

[00:28:15] - Charlene Dash: I think seeing God do the work that I can't do. One of the hardest parts about moving forward with my calling was the getting started. And I just really struggled with that, as you know, for quite a period of time. And the Lord in his grace and mercy just came along and opened up a couple different opportunities for me and just seeing God take those things and then use them and move me forward when I couldn't move myself forward. And I think that truth applies as much to my own work getting started with coaching others as it applies to those who want to engage in pursuing better health, that we don't do it alone, we don't walk alone, that our Heavenly Father is providing the resources that we will need. And when we don't have the resources and we are seemingly stuck. It's not that he's abandoned us. He will come in his time and he will bring those resources. And so, yeah, just that knowledge that he will continue to do his good work.

[00:29:55] - Darryl Dash: Wow, that's so good. I have lots more I can ask, but I want to ask you, how can people find more about you?

[00:30:04] - Charlene Dash: Yeah, for sure the best thing to do is you can check out [liveholehearted.com](http://liveholehearted.com) and from there there's a link to just contact me, to reach out and contact me, or you can email me directly. [char@livewholehearted.com](mailto:char@livewholehearted.com) and I'm happy to connect with people.

I really find that the most effective way of assessing sort of where someone's at and if coaching is a good fit at this point in time in their life, if this is the right opportunity, is just to spend a few minutes together online. It's not at all a sales call. It's more just an opportunity to share a bit of their story and for me to ask some questions and then for them to decide and ask me questions if they have questions and just to explore, just to engage with one another, maybe about 15 or 20 minutes together. And then from there, it's often quite clear in terms of whether this is something that would work for them at this point in time and whether it's something that they feel is right for them.

[00:31:23] - Darryl Dash: It's really exciting to see God using you. I get a front row to the action watching you get joy out of the work that you're doing. I'm grateful for you and grateful for the work you're doing and really appreciate you being on today.

[00:31:38] - Charlene Dash: Thanks Darryl. Great to be here.

[00:31:40] - Announcer: Hey, thanks for listening to the Gospel for Life podcast. If you're interested in growing and helping others grow, please check out our monthly newsletter. Go to [gospelforlife.com](http://gospelforlife.com) newsletter. And please don't forget to leave a review of this podcast on your favorite podcast platform.