

# Connie Welch

This program teaches how to live life in a new way.

My story is how God takes tragedy and turns it into triumph. I was diagnosed in 1994 with Chronic Active Hepatitis C. In 1992 I had surgery at an outpatient surgical center where a drug user was working as a scrub tech. While the scrub tech was alone with the patient, he would take the patient's syringe of medicine and shoot up. He then refilled it with normal saline from the patients IV bag. The contaminated syringe was used on the patient in surgery. After the surgery, I began to have symptoms associated with liver disease. Later it was discovered the source of the infection. Through liver biopsies I found that the disease was not only chronic but also active. I took Chemo-Interferon therapy twice. Neither time was successful. I knew that the Lord had a plan for me. I prayed for His direction. God led me to study about the liver and the immune system. I learned how I could help my body build a strong defense.

I consulted a registered dietitian, and learned how healthy eating has positive effects on the body. Through changing my diet, I began to feel stronger and my energy increased. She told me by losing weight and staying in a healthy weight range my immune system would be stronger. She gave me suggestions on nutrition. But there were areas, like pieces to a puzzle, that were not coming together for me to achieve the total health and wellness I knew God desired. I accepted Christ as my Savior when I was 12 years old. I thought that meant he had all of me, which is true, but I didn't realize what giving Him first place in every area looked like. I never thought about Him caring about what I ate.

I was introduced to First Place when my church hosted a Women's Ministry Banquet. I never thought about involving God in losing weight. I had tried numerous other weight loss

programs with only temporary success. I had a longing for something deeper. I learned in First Place the Lord desires to be Lord over all our being; spiritual, mental, emotional, and physical. It was truly a "light bulb" moment. One after another began to light up inside of me. The Lord transformed me from the inside out. This program teaches how to live life in a new way. God's power of transforming our minds, putting His word into action, changes our lifestyle. God uses balanced nutrition to bring health to our bodies, which is His temple. In this process I physically lost 41 pounds, but gained tremendous growth in the Lord. The combination of a health and wellness program with Biblical integrity was the pieces of the puzzle that had come together in my life.

The Lord has led me on an awesome journey. The desire of my heart is to allow the Lord to use me to make a difference in the quality of others lives. I cannot think of a greater joy than walking with the Lord, and living out what He has created you to do.

I praise the Lord that it has been 18 years, and I am in remission and in excellent health. The doctors have commented to me, "I don't know what you are doing, but keep doing it." I give the Lord all the credit. I praise Him, for my prognosis is very bright! The Lord is Lord over all my life. Wherever He leads I will follow.