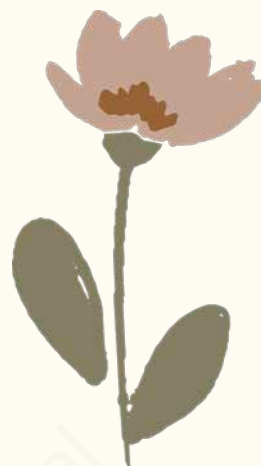


FOREWORD BY PASTOR ROBERT & DEBBIE MORRIS



# IMAGE RESTORED

TEAR DOWN SHAME AND INSECURITY TO  
EXPERIENCE A BODY IMAGE RENOVATION



---

AN INTERACTIVE  
BIBLE STUDY

---

Includes Six-Session  
Video Series

RACHAEL GILBERT

# IMAGE RESTORED



TEAR DOWN SHAME AND INSECURITY TO  
EXPERIENCE A BODY IMAGE RENOVATION

RACHAEL GILBERT



estherpress

Books for Courageous Women  
from David C Cook

# Contents

Foreword by Robert Morris	13
Introduction: An Inside-Out Approach to Body Image	15
<b>Unit 1: The Foundation</b>	
Chapter 1: Choose a Building Site	25
Chapter 2: Cracks in the Foundation	35
Chapter 3: The Original Design	45
Unit 1 Counselor’s Cornerstone	55
<b>Unit 2: The Floor Plan</b>	
Chapter 4: Structural Stories	61
Chapter 5: If Walls Could Talk	71
Chapter 6: Hidden Hurt in the Closet	81
Unit 2 Counselor’s Cornerstone	91
<b>Unit 3: The Framework</b>	
Chapter 7: Thoughts Are the Foreman	97
Chapter 8: The Creaky Floorboards	107
Chapter 9: When Building Is Delayed	117
Unit 3 Counselor’s Cornerstone	127
<b>Unit 4: The Interior</b>	
Chapter 10: Decorating with Idols	133
Chapter 11: The House Next Door	143
Chapter 12: Moldy Motives	155
Unit 4 Counselor’s Cornerstone	163

## Unit 5: The Exterior

Chapter 13: Curb Appeal and Being Real	169
Chapter 14: Break the Alarm Cycle	179
Chapter 15: The Only One on the Block	189
Unit 5 Counselor's Cornerstone	199

## Unit 6: The Covering

Chapter 16: God's Love and Jesus' Blood	205
Chapter 17: God's Grace and Jesus' Face	215
Chapter 18: Find Your Body Image Neighborhood	225
Unit 6 Counselor's Cornerstone	237

Afterword: The Final Walk-Through	241
Acknowledgments	247
Notes	251
Resources	253

## Chapter 1

# Choose a Building Site

The sweat dripped down my forehead as the lead instructor's face remained stoic. I'd taught group fitness for almost ten years, yet every new challenge had left me feeling vulnerable and unqualified. This particular training was structured as a weekend-long certification program followed by a video evaluation. My heart was racing while I waited for the examiner to announce whether I had passed the first part of the training. That day, about ten of us gathered in a small circle waiting for him to give feedback on the class I had just taught. Though we were standing in a large gymnasium, the room felt as though it were closing in around me.

"Rachael, you are one of the best instructors I have seen teach this format. You come alive when you get behind the microphone. But if you want to teach for our company, I need you to lose that mama pouch. Your son is almost three; what's your excuse for still having fat on your stomach?"

My heart still races when I think back to how that situation left me heartbroken. Essentially, I had the skills, but I couldn't play in his arena until I looked the part.

I went home from the training and cried, not just because the instructor had hurt my feelings but also because my mama pouch was one of my biggest insecurities. I had done everything I knew to eliminate it, yet it still clung stubbornly to my body. The lead instructor had voiced what I had been wrestling with in silence for years.

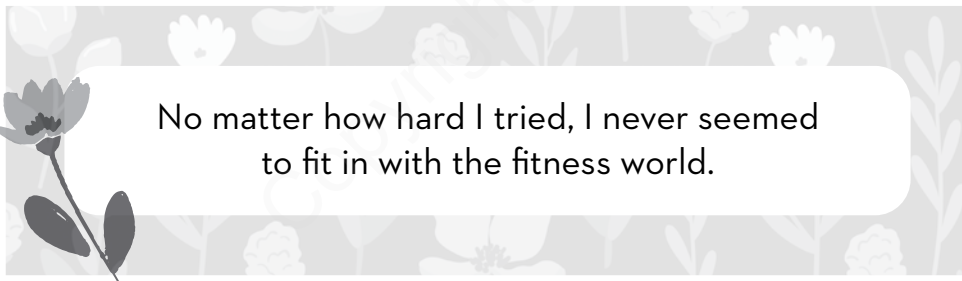
While what that man spoke into my life was hurtful, he was simply sharing what *he* knew to be true.

But it wasn't my truth.

The fitness-and-diet industry that shapes our culture does not have a biblical perspective. How could I hold a grudge against someone who was using a different guidebook than I was? We were simply speaking two different languages. While I can't be upset at the industry, I can be angry at the Enemy for wreaking havoc in this area of body image for far too long.

After that training, I told the Lord I could no longer teach group fitness. I was tired of all the striving and hustling. No matter how hard I tried, I never seemed to fit in with the fitness world.

A few weeks after I decided to quit teaching group fitness, I attended the Declare Conference for bloggers and speakers. At this conference, several vendors lined the halls. One particular booth caught my eye as I read the banner tagline, "Love God. Get Healthy. Be Whole. Love Others." I approached the booth to learn more, and the woman shared the vision behind the ministry, Revelation Wellness. Then she said, "Rachael, it's not about fitness. God loves you right where you are. Just show up." That woman's name was Alisa Keeton, and that day marks a moment on my body image timeline that God began the healing in my heart. I went on to become a Revelation Wellness instructor, and through that training, God started my restoration and rebuilding journey.



Did you notice the significant difference between these two encounters? One person told me I needed to lose my belly fat to participate, and the other told me to show up just as I am. Both shaped my core beliefs, but Alisa knew a secret the man did not yet know. She knew that God's perfect love casts out all fear (see 1 John 4:18).

Through Alisa and Revelation Wellness, God helped me lay a new, solid foundation on His truth, and I want that same freedom for you.

## Therapist Thoughts

Core beliefs are an individual's central ideas about herself, others, and the world. These beliefs act like a lens through which every situation is seen, and they shape how a person sees the world. Harmful core beliefs lead to negative thoughts, feelings, and behaviors, whereas rational core beliefs lead to positive reactions.

## Temple Truths

When the fitness “expert” told me what he believed to be true about my body, I believed his distorted view of truth. But now that I've healed, I compare his words to an old, out-of-date structure that needed to be demolished. To build a sound body image, we must first tear down the old beliefs that no longer apply. This idea is based on Psalm 127:1, which says, “Unless the LORD builds the house, those who build it labor in vain” (ESV). In other words, if we want a solid foundation on which to stand, we must uproot all the principles we've held about our bodies that are not given to us from God.

Jesus' words in Matthew 7:24–27 give us a beautiful picture of why it is crucial to build on a solid foundation:

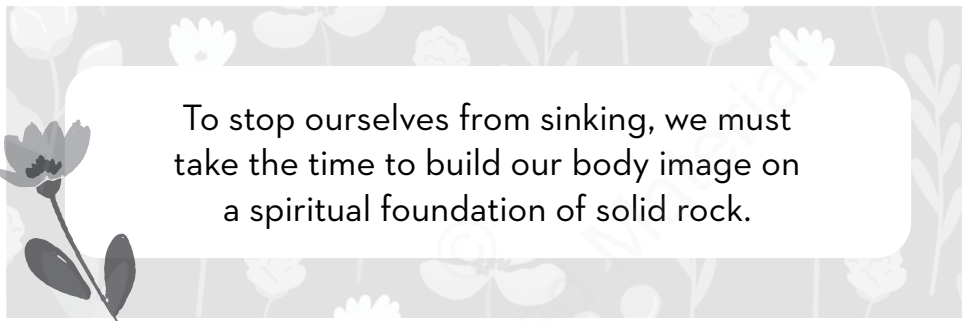
Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it. (ESV)

My father is a retired general contractor, and I learned a lot about construction by going with him to different job sites. I remember one piece of lakefront property a customer wanted

to purchase. After Dad inspected the property along with other experts in the field, the property was deemed unsafe for constructing a house.

This was heartbreaking news because the property offered a beautiful lakefront view and appeared to be the perfect spot for this family. From the outside looking in, this piece of land had it all. But if this family had chosen to throw caution to the wind and build in that location, their home would not have withstood the test of time.

Likewise, when our body image is built on faulty foundational beliefs, we'll lack the spiritual stability needed to weather life's storms.



What do the storms of body image look like? Well, they come in many forms, including weight gain, weight loss, illness, expectations, comparison, and idle words, to name a few.

Notice how the passage we just read from Matthew tells us *when* the rain and the winds come, not *if* they come. I can't keep those storms from coming your way, but I can give you tools to help you feel prepared when they do arrive. To stop ourselves from sinking, we must take the time to build our body image on a spiritual foundation of solid rock.

Don't just take my word for it. The Bible makes it clear that we should build on the solid foundation of Christ:

- Mark 12:10 reminds us that Jesus was the stone that the builders rejected and that He is now our cornerstone.
- Ephesians 2:20–21 says that together we are His house, built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets. The passage emphasizes that



the cornerstone is Christ Jesus Himself and that we are carefully joined together in Him, becoming a holy temple for the Lord.

- According to 1 Corinthians 3:10, because of God’s grace, we can lay the foundation like expert builders with hopes that others will build on it.

As you begin this body image journey, know that you are building a solid foundation not only for you to stand on but for future generations to build on. This new way of viewing body image changes the trajectory of your family lineage, and I consider that to be a cause worth fighting for.

Building on the rock is as simple as letting Jesus, our cornerstone, into this body image journey. Let’s start by debunking common cultural messages about our bodies and by choosing instead to stand firmly on the Word of God.

As you review the following chart, consider the contrast between cultural lies and God’s truth.

Cultural Lie versus Truth from God’s Word	
<b>Lie:</b> My weight is my worth.	<b>Truth:</b> Jesus paid it all. My worth is in Him. (1 Cor. 6:20)
<b>Lie:</b> There’s something wrong with my body.	<b>Truth:</b> My body is God’s own temple, and it is sacred. (1 Cor. 3:17; 6:19)
<b>Lie:</b> I need to hustle to keep up with the world’s beauty standards so I can fulfill my call.	<b>Truth:</b> God has already laid the plans for my life. No need to hustle to make them come to pass. (Eph. 2:10)
<b>Lie:</b> Outward beauty is worth more than inner beauty.	<b>Truth:</b> God values my unfading beauty. (1 Pet. 3:3-4)

The list of lies could go on for pages. However, another problem we often encounter is that some of these lies are so deeply ingrained that we don’t even recognize them as false anymore. In the body image blueprint exercise, you will get a chance to fill in your own lies that need to be replaced with God’s truth. But first, let’s identify how to spot a deeply embedded cultural lie.

These tips will help you become aware of any areas of your body image not built on the solid foundation of God's Word:

- Is this belief or behavior life-giving? Or does it suck the life out of you? If something is draining you, then chances are it's founded on sinking sand.
- Have you spoken this belief out loud to someone else? When we bring things into the light, we expose anything that is not from the Lord.
- How is your self-talk? Culture has normalized talking poorly about our bodies. It's not okay, and it stops with us today.

This process of establishing a solid foundation will take time and practice. Start by standing on one verse at a time and letting Jesus plant your feet firmly on the truth He offers you.





## Strong Foundation Verses

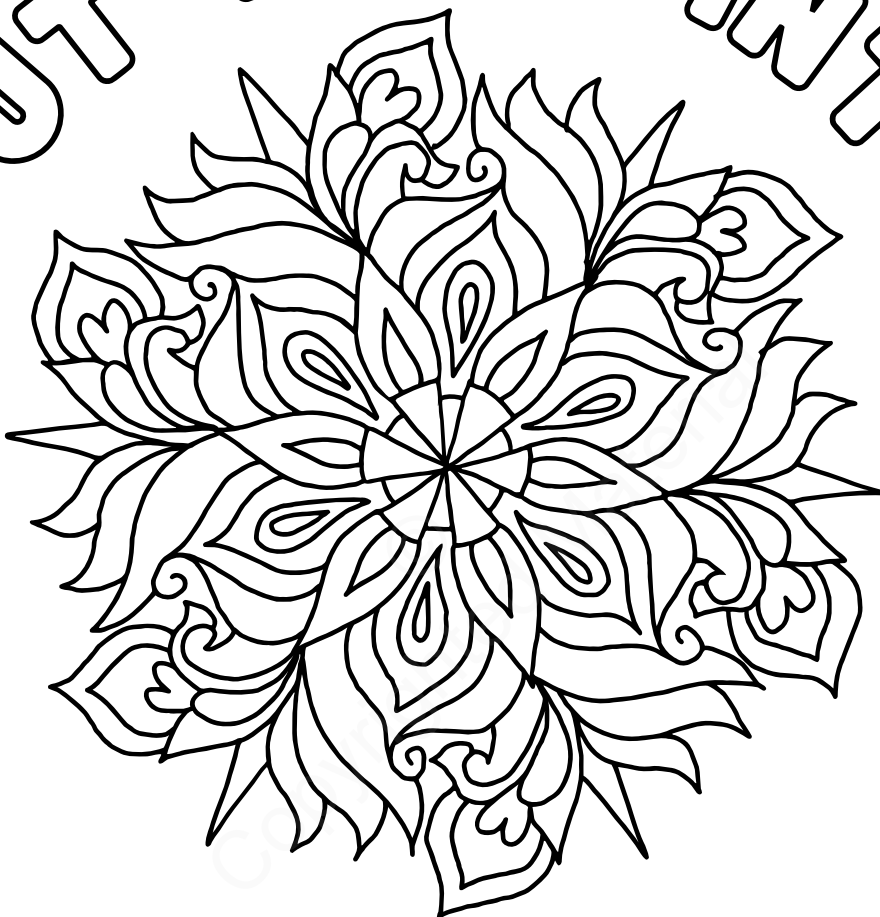
Use the following scriptural truths to strengthen your foundation. Consider saying them aloud, taking a picture of them to reference, or writing one that stands out on a sticky note and putting it where you will see it daily.

- Jesus is the foundation. (1 Cor. 3:10–11)
- Anyone who hears God’s words and puts them into action is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. (Matt. 7:24–27)
- The people gave a shout of praise because the foundation of the Lord was laid. (Ezra 3:11)
- In the beginning, God laid the foundations of the earth. (Ps. 102:25)
- “He will be the sure foundation for your times.” (Isa. 33:6)
- “God’s solid foundation stands firm.” (2 Tim. 2:19)

## Let’s Rest in God’s Word

Coloring is a therapeutic tool used by many counselors, yet many of us don’t give ourselves space for this simple but powerful activity.<sup>1</sup> How cool that our Creator gave us many creative outlets to process our thoughts and emotions! Throughout the book, meditate on the key verse as you color, and thank God for your body—exactly as it is today.

PUT THEM INTO



PRACTICE

THEREFORE EVERYONE WHO HEARS THESE WORDS OF MINE  
AND PUTS THEM INTO PRACTICE IS LIKE A WISE MAN  
WHO BUILT HIS HOUSE ON THE ROCK.

MATTHEW 7:24