

A woman with long brown hair, wearing a white, long-sleeved, lace-trimmed dress, is sitting in a field of tall grass. She is leaning against a wooden fence and looking upwards with her eyes closed. The background shows rolling green hills and mountains under a soft, hazy sky. The overall mood is peaceful and contemplative.

Jordan Lee Dooley

BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF OWN YOUR EVERYDAY

BE GOOD TO YOUR BODY

GETTING BACK TO GOD'S DESIGN IN A WORLD
OF WELLNESS TRENDS, QUICK FIXES, AND
CONFLICTING HEALTH ADVICE



FOREWORD BY ANNIKA ROBINSON,
FUNCTIONAL NUTRITIONAL THERAPY PRACTITIONER



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For my children, who have inspired me
to be good to my body even before you were born.



FOREWORD

Like many modern-day friendships, Jordan and I met through Instagram. We connected right away over the similarities of our health journeys. Reading her words in this book about her past health struggles made me feel as though I were reliving my own story. Maybe you have experienced—or are currently going through—something similar.

“Can you believe we used to suffer from these problems and then take such harmful and extreme actions to try to heal?” I texted Jordan as I was reading through the chapters. It made me sad to reminisce on how lost, scared, and broken we both felt before we discovered the truth about how God designed us to eat and live. Jordan’s past, like mine, was riddled with physical pain and emotional heartache due to endometriosis diagnoses, adult acne, body dysmorphia, and more.

Jordan and I didn’t just connect because of our pasts and the difficulties we had faced with our health; more important, we

deeply identified with each other on our beliefs as to how the body heals and thrives.

What Jordan has discovered through her own journey, and what she's shared with us in *Be Good to Your Body*, is what I've been shouting from the rooftops for years. You don't need to be a registered dietitian or holistic nutritionist or have some sort of certification or letters behind your name to figure this out. What you need is the desire to turn back to the wisdom the Lord has shared with us in the Bible, which Jordan communicates so perfectly in this book. This ancient wisdom, given to us by God Himself, supersedes any fifty-ingredient anti-aging serum or bio hack or restrictive diet that our social media feed tells us we absolutely need.

Jordan did the deep work while she was on her journey, which she shared so well in *Be Good to Your Body*. She opened her Bible and asked a very important question: *How am I really supposed to care for myself as a woman living in modern society and also following Jesus?* And the conclusions she came to are the exact ones that I have.

As a functional nutritional therapy practitioner, I've help thousands of women of all ages heal from a wide array of debilitating issues. You'd think I'd have made some breakthrough discovery on what all women are lacking—some pearl of wisdom or eureka moment of figuring out what particular supplement, nutrient, or vitamin every woman is missing. But in that time, I've made only one major discovery. It's that women—of all ages and walks of life—are *confused* when it comes to health, beauty, and femininity and simply need to be redirected to the truth. That's it.

By no fault of our own, we've come so incredibly far from understanding what true health, true beauty, and true femininity look like. Society and the enormous industries that spend billions of dollars marketing to us are all selling us the same idea: that wom-

en's bodies are inherently broken and need some magic solution or quick fix.

When you think about it, that is exactly what the Enemy wants. After all, he is the Father of Lies and would love nothing more than to make us feel isolated. He wants you to feel like you are the only woman lost, broken, and confused—alone on a path of “disease” and frustration with your body.

We're sick and exhausted as women not because we're not doing enough, not because we're not working out enough, and certainly not because we haven't eliminated enough foods or carbs from our diets. We're sick because we are being deceived, and it's time to end this pattern of deception once and for all.

Be Good to Your Body could not have addressed and cleared up this confusion and deception more perfectly. As a reader of this book, you will feel seen, heard, and known. And furthermore, you'll start to understand your body and your femininity for perhaps the very first time.

That is why I believe *Be Good to Your Body* isn't just another good book for women of all ages. In fact, it is *critical* for all of us female believers to read and benefit from the wisdom inside its pages. As Jordan illustrates, it is actually quite simple to be good to our bodies. We don't need another product or diet; rather, we need to get back to the way God designed us to eat and live.

Jordan has made a very important discovery in this book, which is that God created us to thrive and gave us what we need to do so. He truly wants us to be good to and respect our bodies, which He fearfully and wonderfully made. That is the only way health is truly possible.

Jordan illustrates for us how the Bible repeatedly points us to the importance of caring for our bodies.

Why is that so important, and why is that theme prevalent

throughout Scripture? As you'll read, it's so we can fulfill our individual callings as women. Each of us has unique spiritual gifts (see Romans 12:6–8). We are called to serve the Lord by being His hands and feet and to spread the gospel through our unique talents. How can we do that when we are chronically ill and fatigued and just don't feel well?

Let's use Jordan's story—and this book itself—as an example of how that can look. She felt as though her body was failing her, and she couldn't think about much else beyond getting better by *fixing it*. Her femininity was wounded by the Enemy's lies she faced when she was suffering from acne, fertility issues, and pregnancy loss (the biggest fear of any woman who longs to be a mother). But God had bigger plans for Jordan—and for me *and for you*.

The very fact that *Be Good to Your Body* exists is a testament to the faithfulness of our Father and the healing that can happen when we live according to His will. Because of Jordan's healing and all that she learned in the process, and because she feels good enough to share her gifts with the world, we now have a book that can help the many thousands of women who will glean the wisdom from its pages.

God, we know that none of us will experience perfect health or a pain-free life outside of heaven. Please bless the readers of this book and help them take this wisdom to heart, implement the changes, and begin reclaiming their health so they can share their unique and beautiful gifts with the world. With the help from teachings in this book, please help us build lives that help us return to the way You designed us to eat and live, so we can expand Your kingdom. Amen.

In health and God's blessings,
Annika Robinson, FNTF, EMT, birth doula



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Chapter One

HOW DID WE GET HERE?

I wish you and I were sitting together, sipping adrenal mocktails by a cozy fire at a little bungalow in the mountains somewhere far away, because if you picked up this book, I think we'd have a lot to talk about. We'd probably find a thing or two (or twelve) in common.

But since we can't do that, we'll just have to discuss things through these pages. And as much as I'd love to hear about your own journey with health and wellness, for now I'll just share some of my story here, because I bet some of it will resonate with you. Before I dig in, let me cover why we're even here together.

It's time to have a conversation about how we're treating our bodies. The women of the modern world we live in have become experts in restricting, treating, and manipulating our bodies in pursuit of a cultural standard of health or beauty. Sometimes both. I don't know how old you are, but I'm in my thirties—which means I'm part of the generation who grew up wearing Bath & Body

Works body spray while consuming mostly low-fat and low-calorie everything. We saw the endless ads for Jenny Craig, Slim-Fast, and WeightWatchers, geared toward women everywhere. Even some of our eighty-something-year-old grandmas commented on how they'd put on weight. Apparently, body fixation doesn't even end at eighty!

Then . . . *whiplash!* . . . we were hit with the body-positivity movement, where we were told that no matter what size or shape our bodies are, we should just love them.

We live in a time when convenience food (hot dogs, anyone?) and food-like products (hello, margarine and Kraft Mac & Cheese) are seemingly more available and affordable than real, nutrient-dense food. Many of us wouldn't know how to source food or what to do if it weren't for the grocery store and DoorDash.

And the challenge goes beyond just the food we eat. For example, we were conditioned to believe that birth control was the solution to countless symptoms known to trouble the female body *and* the key to achieving our wildest dreams, all without being well educated on potential downsides or side effects.

We've lived a good part of our adult lives being bombarded by conflicting health advice about diet culture (many of us restricting or meticulously counting calories in our teen and young adult years), body positivity (love your body at any size), intuitive eating (stop thinking about different foods as "good" or "bad"), bio-hacking (wearable fitness gadgets, apps, cold plunging, and more), and popular healing diets advertised all over Instagram (follow Whole30 or Paleo). Many of those ideas hold some good, but in our information age, it can be not only overwhelming but also difficult to discern where to start or what to focus on.

And that's why we're here: to unlearn all the ways we've complicated healthy living and reclaim what it really means to be good

to our bodies, *biblically* and *holistically*, because many of us were once sold this big lie:

cutting calories + waking up at 5:00 A.M. to work out
HEALTH = + masking symptoms + taking a thousand vitamins +
being extremely lean

And then we began to realize that perhaps that was not at all good for our hormones, fertility, or bodies. So the world sold us the idea that *self-love* and *body positivity* were the solution to all that we'd been conditioned to believe.

But is that actually a solution? Or is it just daring us to swing to the opposite extreme, where “loving yourself” can lead to carelessness, lack of moderation, and even neglect of essential aspects to a healthy body, such as intentional exercise, fresh air, adequate rest, hydration, and quality nutrition?

What if the real solution to these extremes of diet culture and body positivity has been there all along, nestled in the pages of the Bible—the Word of the One who created our bodies to begin with and the only book that reveals how we were designed and what our bodies have truly needed to thrive since the beginning of time? What if we trusted that God is smarter than we are? Smarter than our cool slogans and graphics and movements and diets and fancy studies? What if He's given us the guidelines for what it means to be healthy, care for our natural beauty, and be good to our bodies?

What if we've been so wrapped up with the latest health hacks that we've missed what it means to actually be healthy? We've been flooded with new information and studies and gurus and diets and wellness gadgets and trends for so long. No wonder we're confused and tired. Trying to keep up with the world's ever-changing idea of healthy living is exhausting.

But maybe it's not as complicated as we've made it. In fact, maybe it's really simple.

YOUR BODY IS A GOD-GIVEN GIFT,
NOT A PROJECT TO FIX

I don't know about you, but there have been several times in my life when I viewed fitness or wellness as a way to "fix" my body. Can you relate?

At one point, my pursuit of health and wellness was driven by a desire to *look* a certain way. In college, I embarked on a fitness journey, striving to achieve six-pack abs and a slimmer waist. I was obsessed with the scale and got into a vicious cycle of overexercising and undereating, all in the pursuit of what I thought would make me more attractive. And admittedly, I was seeking *control* during a time when much felt new and unfamiliar. Counting calories, completing workouts, and logging miles felt like something I could control.

Now in my thirties, I wish I could go back to myself at nineteen or twenty and tell her to cool it on overexercising, obsessive calorie counting, and relying on copious amounts of caffeine for energy. I wish I could tell her to instead support her body with gentle movement, adequate rest, and real nourishment. I would tell her to replenish her body with the good things God created rather than trying to restrict the "bad things" the fitness world deems unhealthy (like carbs and calories), because all those habits were going to destroy her hormonal health and thyroid before she knew it.

Sigh. My mom tried to tell me, but I didn't want to listen.

Anyway, a handful of years later, I had toned it down a bit on the excessive exercise and calorie counting but *still* thought I was the picture of health because I drank green juice, worked out al-

most daily, and managed to stay fairly lean. That's what the world around me said was healthy, anyway. But if I was so healthy, why did I have such heavy periods and horrible PMS? Why was my skin being taken over by cystic acne when I was well over a decade removed from puberty? And why was my "young and healthy" body unable to carry a baby to term, resulting in recurring miscarriages?

I wanted answers. I needed solutions. I was young and *healthy* . . . right? Why was this happening to me?

I started digging, determined to find root causes. I looked for anything I could find that might help improve my situation and heal the symptoms I was experiencing. I found lots of supplements and naturopaths and Whole30 and chiropractic care and Paleo and a million and one other things. I joined a dozen healthy-living Facebook groups and researched like a madwoman everything I could find on hormones and fertility and gut health.

See, this time around, I wasn't so concerned with *form* as I was with *function*. I didn't mind so much if I wasn't my thinnest or fittest; I just wanted my body to work how it was supposed to. I wanted my skin to be like that of an adult and not a teenage girl. I wanted to wake up with natural energy. And more than anything, I wanted my body to do what it was designed to do: bring forth life.

I was on a mission to fix my body.

Inherently, seeking answers and root causes rather than just slapping a Band-Aid on symptoms is a good thing. But somewhere along the way, I stopped viewing my body as a God-given gift and instead began to see it as a project to fix.

I started with good intentions—I wanted to take better care of my health, steward my body, and support my fertility naturally—but even the best of intentions can begin to spiral into obsession.

And for me, that looked like restrictive “healing” diets, a thousand supplements, and trying to remove every last toxin from my life in an effort to fix whatever was wrong with me.

I made some progress and saw improvement in some ways, but as I researched more and more, I also began to feel confused by all the health advice and insight I was hearing. So much of the information I consumed was conflicting, from different schools of thought on things like dairy to the absence of a real definition of what makes a product “clean.”

Eventually, I began to get burned-out trying to get healthy all on my own and taking advice from the world. I stepped back for a bit and realized I had been listening to so many voices but had failed to consider the voice of the One who created my body in the first place. I had read a slew of studies and books on health and naturally healing the body, but I never really thought to consider how the Bible—the book that details how our bodies were designed and what was initially made for them to thrive from the beginning of time—might have some of the answers I was looking for.

I had unintentionally shut God out of my health journey—or at least I didn’t invite Him in. I didn’t partner with Him as I sought to understand and support my body.

Don’t get me wrong. I had a spiritual life. I went to church and read the Bible, listened to worship music, and was plugged into a great community. But somewhere in my brain, I had separated the spiritual from the physical. I kind of forgot that although scientists, doctors, and studies have tons of helpful information on health and healing, the One who came up with the idea of humanity in the first place *miiiiight* know a thing or two about supporting a healthy body.

I hope you’re picking up on my sarcasm here, because the God of all creation definitely knows more than any human being, and

perhaps it'd do us some good to partner with Him in our pursuit of health and healing.

As I realized those things, I asked myself a few questions:

- *Have I turned a good thing (my body) into a god thing?*
- *Has wellness become an idol? Has a good intention spiraled into an obsession?*
- *What does the Bible say? And what did God create for my body to thrive?*
- *How can I focus on living in alignment with God's design rather than getting tangled up in all the world's trends and health advice?*

Those questions helped me examine my heart and course correct a bit. And by “course correct,” I don't mean swinging to the opposite extreme and abandoning my health journey altogether. Rather, I began making sure my pursuit of healing and well-being was from a place of obedience and freedom and not of obsession and fear.

I loosened my tight grip. I focused on areas I could prioritize. I ignored most of the random advice I was seeing online and went back to the basic principles of health that God laid out in Genesis when He created us.

And guess what happened?

In time, my skin began to clear, my energy improved, and I even had a baby. When I stopped attempting to do it all on my own, when I stopped trying so hard to fix my body and instead focused on *being good to my body*—on considering my biological needs, giving my body the good things God designed for it to thrive, and seeking out help in the areas in which I needed additional support—it actually began to be good to me.

Huh. Imagine that. We've complicated healthy living so much in our society of quick fixes, convenience, fads, and endless information (and opinions) that it's no wonder we're confused and exhausted. But it's actually pretty simple.

So what I want to explore together is this: How can we be good to our bodies—biblically *and* practically—in a world of trends, confusing advice online, and extremes (like diet culture and self-love)? After all, it's far too easy to begin to live at one end of the spectrum or the other when it comes to how we care for our bod-

We often see examples of *idolatry* (being obsessed with health and healthy living) or *idleness* (loving our bodies as they are with little regard for what is actually good for them).

ies. We often see examples of *idolatry* (being obsessed with health and healthy living) or *idleness* (loving our bodies as they are, with little regard for what is actually good for them).

It's like either we're all in (meticulously counting calories, overexercising, and obsessing over avoiding every possible toxin) or we're just being somewhat passive about it all, running the risk of not making any effort to be better stewards under the guise of *self-love* or *body positivity* or whatever other label we slap on it.

But we have to talk about this because the biblical view of the body directly affects how we care for it. Unfortunately, even Christians tend to separate the physical and the spiritual, as if they can be separated. But is that what the Bible teaches?

Romans 12:1 says that our *bodies* were meant to be living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God, for this is our *spiritual* act of worship.

The two cannot be separated.

I love how Nancy Pearcey puts it in her book *Love Thy Body*: “Christianity holds that body and soul together form an integrated

unity—that the human being is an embodied soul.”¹ She goes on to say, “If the body has no intrinsic purpose, built in by God, then all that matters are human purposes. . . . It is raw material to be manipulated and controlled to serve the human agenda, like any other natural resource.”²

First, that means that neglecting the body is considered neglect of the entire being. It also means that obsessing over perfecting the body (in terms of either form, function, or both) that lives in a broken world can quickly turn into trying to manipulate or control the body for our own purposes.

Another wise woman, Elisabeth Elliot, says, “[It is a failure not] to recognize this living body as having anything to do with worship or holy sacrifice. This body is, quite simply, the starting place. Failure here is failure everywhere else.”³

It all starts with the body. If we want to be well holistically (meaning spiritually, emotionally, and mentally), we start with the body—with being good to the body and giving it the good things God made—without making the body a god.

THE REMEDY TO IDOLATRY AND APATHY

Wait, what do I mean by “making the body a god”?

When wellness or the body becomes an idol (the object of our worship), it’s nearly impossible to be holistically well, because both obsession and striving for perfection lead to stress. And stress takes a toll not only on the physical body but also on emotional, mental, and spiritual well-being. As I mentioned, the world has suggested that practicing self-love and body positivity is the secret to being good to our bodies. But is it? Are we healthier *holistically*?

The answer is no, we are not. For proof, let’s look at some data.

First, a 2023 Gallup survey revealed that 17.8 percent of adults in the United States have a diagnosis of depression, which is an all-time high.⁴ And according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the prevalence of chronic diseases has been increasing steadily over the past two decades.⁵ An estimated 133 million people in the United States have at least one major chronic disease, such as heart disease, cancer, diabetes, obesity, and hypertension. This number is 15 million higher than it was a decade ago and is expected to reach 170 million by 2030.⁶

What's more, according to *The Washington Post*, American life expectancy is dropping due to chronic health conditions, despite our country having some of the most advanced medical care in the world.⁷

We have more self-love than ever and simultaneously have more mental health and chronic health issues than ever. I'm not claiming that self-love is to blame, but my question is, If it were really helping, wouldn't we see an improvement in the way our collective mental or physical health is trending?

Plus, our natural human default position is to focus on the self—to view ourselves as the main character in our own stories. We already think about ourselves constantly. Virtually everything we do revolves around making ourselves look better and being more comfortable.

I would argue that our natural focus is *already* on ourselves—meeting our own needs, desires, and passions—and it is for that very reason why things like motherhood and marriage can be so beautifully challenging. Those roles force us to repeatedly set aside our self-centered inclinations for the sake of others. Yet as we learn to lay down our lives as the Bible teaches us, many find serving others—whether spouses, children, or someone else—to be the most fulfilling thing they've ever done.

In the Bible, 2 Timothy 3:1–2 warns that one of the characteristics of the “last days” will be people who are “lovers of self.” And Scripture never instructs us to practice self-love. Self-love as the world defines it will always come up short because the answers and peace we seek cannot be found in the self. The purpose and peace that we desire can be found only outside ourselves: in the One who formed us and breathed life into us.

So, what’s the solution we’re really looking for? Is it simpler than we’ve made it out to be? Quite possibly.

Biblically (and practically) speaking, stewardship is the key to being truly good to our bodies. *Stewardship* is a word I have heard most of my life but for a long time either overlooked or just poorly understood. Maybe you can relate? So in the pages that follow, let’s explore what it *does* mean.

WHAT IS STEWARDSHIP?

Last summer, I was at a backyard graduation party, catching up with a friend. She was finally pregnant after years of infertility and a miscarriage. I could relate since my own journey to motherhood had been challenging, and I knew how hard it can be to embrace and celebrate a pregnancy after loss and infertility. It just feels like you’re constantly waiting for the other shoe to drop.

We chatted about this a bit, and then she said, “It’s really the ultimate test of stewardship.”

Wait, what? I thought. *Stewardship?* I expected her to say *surrender, trust, or faith*. But *stewardship?* What did she mean by that?

I cocked my head, as if to ask her to explain.

“I mean, yeah,” she continued as she turned her open palms up to the sky. “It’s like, everything I have is Yours, Lord. Even my body. And my people.”

Yes! That is what stewardship is.

It was truly the simplest yet most accurate description of stewardship I'd ever heard. Stewardship is about not just what you *do* but ultimately what you *believe*, because what you believe—about God, your body, and any other blessing—directly influences how you do anything.

<p>Think about it this way: If a friend gave me her car to use, I would take the very best care of it. I wouldn't obsess over the car's condition</p>	<p>or fixate on any flaw, such as a ding or scratch it may have when she loaned it to me. But I would care for it well. Wouldn't you? Wouldn't you drive with both hands on the wheel, keep your eyes on the road, pay close attention to where you parked, make sure to give it the right kind of fuel, and keep it clean instead of letting junk pile up in the passenger seat?</p>
<p>What you believe—about God, your body, and any other blessing—directly influences how you do anything.</p>	

It may help to think of our bodies like that car. In today's world, it can be so easy to forget that biblically even our bodies (and our babies) are not our own to do with whatever we please.

I know that may step on some toes, but it's kind of freeing when you think about it.

Our bodies are kind of like that borrowed car: beautiful gifts from God, given to us as vehicles to carry out our callings during our short time on earth.

For that reason alone, we should take utmost care of our bodies. Not obsess over them. Not critique them or pick them apart or treat them as projects to fix. But we should care for them because they are sacred gifts. Stewardship is a palms-up, surrendered-heart posture that says, "Everything I have is Yours," and we should approach it accordingly.

When we view everything we have as our creator's, we care for it differently.

Let's go back to the car example for a minute. I'm much more likely to let my own car get messy, drive it with a nearly empty tank, or put off that oil change it needs. Not because I don't care or am trying to be irresponsible, but because life is busy and when something is my own, there's little to no accountability. But when it's my friend's car? I treat that car with the utmost respect, care, and concern. Not because I love the car, but because *I love my friend* and want to honor and respect the gift she's giving me.

On the other hand, when I care for my friend's car, is it because I *hate* the car? Because I think it's ugly and needs to be fixed? No, I care for it because *I love my friend* and appreciate what she has given me.

The point is that the gift is good, but it is not what is ultimately important to me. My relationship with the one who gave it to me is. And part of how I honor the giver of that good gift is by stewarding the gift well.

I don't want to get carried away with the metaphor, but I'm sure you get where I'm going. When we view our bodies rightly and biblically as good gifts from God, given to us to fulfill our callings on this side of heaven, and understand that everything we have (including our bodies) is His, we are much more likely to care for our bodies appropriately, eschewing the extremes of idolatry and apathy. Not because we love or worship our bodies, but because we love and worship the One who gave them to us—the One who intelligently designed our bodies and created everything they would need—in the first place.

Friend, consider this book a formal invitation to get back to

God's design for us and live a little closer to how we were created to live—to do the slow, perhaps boring, everyday stewardship stuff while living in a society of speed, convenience, often confusing health advice, fads, and quick fixes—all from a place of obedience and freedom instead of obsession and fear.

Cozy up. This conversation is long overdue. I'm so glad I get to have it with you.



PRAYER

God, thank You for my body. Whether I am happy with where I am with my health or feel a long way off from where I'd like to be, help me to be a good steward of what You have given me. Help me treat my body as the good gift that it is instead of as a project to fix. I pray for discernment and wisdom in a world of many trends and opinions, and I pray that You would show me which steps are mine to take and which are not. Amen.

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

Take some time to reflect and ask yourself these questions from the chapter:

1. *Have I turned a good thing (such as my body or well-being) into a god thing?*
2. *Is it possible that a good intention has spiraled into obsession?*

- 3. Am I ready to focus on living in alignment with God's design more than getting tangled up in all the world's health advice?*

Now prayerfully ask God to open your heart to receiving what He has to teach you and where He is leading you on your own unique health journey as you seek to be good to *your* body.