



# Introduction

Now what?"

That is the first question most people ask after they read Dr. Rex Russell's popular book, *What the Bible Says about Healthy Living*.

While Dr. Russell's Three Principles provide sound guidance for how to *think* about food choices from a biblical perspective, we are here to help you *take action*.

In creating our recipes, we kept Dr. Russell's Three Principles in mind.

## **Principle 1: Eat only substances God created for food. Avoid what is not designed for food.**

Since our generous and benevolent Father gave us such a large variety of foods to enjoy—all with different tastes, smells, colors and nutrients—we have tried to use a wide variety of God's ingredients throughout this book. And because neither of us eats enough vegetables, our recipes incorporate a lot of them, since they are one of God's most healthy gifts.

## **Principle 2: As much as possible, eat foods as they were created—before they are changed or converted into**

**something humans think might be better.**

We believe that, since God designed our food and He designed our bodies, eating His foods in a form as close as possible to their original state is healthiest. This motivates us to cook from scratch as much as we can, avoid processed foods and ingredients, use whole grains and flours, and buy as many organic ingredients as we can afford.

At the same time, we both “cut corners” in order to be realistic and stay motivated, given life’s time constraints. For example, canned beans and tomatoes are staples in our pantries, and this reality is reflected in our recipes. We view eating God’s way as a lifestyle marathon to be run and completed, not a short race to be run perfectly.

## **Principle 3: Don’t let any food or drink become your god.**

We find that if we follow Principles 1 and 2, Principle 3 often takes care of itself because we tend to feel quite full and satisfied when we eat God’s ingredients. While we still indulge in desserts, you will notice that our sweet treats

are either fruit based or include honey or maple syrup. These less-processed ingredients are closer to God's original design than refined and bleached white sugar, so they help us avoid swerving down the path of idolatry. Give it some time; your tastes and desires will adjust.

The Bible is filled with examples of people eating together—and even eating with God Himself. Carving out time to prepare home-cooked meals to eat with family or friends often fills the void that eating or drinking to excess tries to fill.

If you are new to cooking—or to healthy cooking—first read “Getting Started” on the pages that follow. Many people get excited about cooking, but they quit if they do not have key ingredients. “Getting Started” includes a list of ingredients to keep on hand for our recipes.

Our first three chapters (“Vegetables, Dressings and Sauces,” “Grains and Potatoes,” and “Fish, Poultry, Beef and Lamb”) are this cookbook’s backbone. If you are not sure what to make for dinner, just pick a recipe from each chapter and you will be set. “Meatless Mains” (chapter 4) are not just for vegetarians—they are healthy, economical ways to add variety to meals.

## THE RECIPES

We do not think that God expects us to spend hours and hours in the kitchen to prepare the food He gave to us. Besides, few people have time to plan a menu, buy groceries or actually cook as much as they want to. If this sounds like you, do not despair. Our recipes will help

you prepare meals that are easy to fix and tastier than what you might expect from “healthy cooking.”

Since Amy is a stickler for taste and Hope is (by her own admission) lazy, our recipes had to meet both of our standards. However, just because a recipe is tasty and speedy to us, it might not be for you. For example, chopping onions and garlic might seem tedious to you. Fear not—it will become second nature if you persevere. And, if you are not used to natural foods, the end products may taste different than the foods you are used to (less sweet, for example).

Just remember: Change takes time. Our suggestion? Be patient and feel free to adapt our recipes to suit your needs. By doing so, you will enjoy cooking (and eating) much more.

## FORMAT AND FEATURES

Cookbooks that look visually splendid but are hard to follow frustrate us, so with the help of our talented designer (Casey Hooper of Casey Hooper Design), we created our dream format, which is designed to help you easily see what ingredients and steps are involved with each recipe. We also list different ingredient options to give you variety and to allow for personal preferences. When we list several choices (like in *Fruit and Nut Granola*, page 146), a combination of ingredients is often the tastiest. But feel free to just use a single ingredient. Sometimes we give quantity ranges for ingredients—especially for sweeteners and salt—rather than exact amounts. This also allows for personal preferences.

Most recipes include one or more of the following:

- **Divine Design . . .** Inspired by *What the Bible Says about Healthy Living*, these nutritional facts point to God's amazing design behind your food. This information often compels us to prepare and eat healthy foods we might otherwise not try—we hope it will inspire you to do so as well. Regardless of your religious beliefs, you will find these notes interesting. (By the way, you'll notice the little olive branch symbol next to these facts; olives and olive oil represent God's goodness throughout the Bible.)
- **Variations** These changes to the ingredients or directions give you variety and room to experiment.

- **Love Thy Leftovers** These tips give you ideas for unintentional—or intentional—leftovers. For example, if you make a batch of *Basic Cooked Rice* (page 39) for a dinner side dish, the next day the leftovers can be used to make *Fried Rice* (page 99).

While this book includes some nutritional education, please remember that it is just a cookbook. If you are intrigued by the topic of God's design for eating, we urge you to read Dr. Russell's classic, *What the Bible Says about Healthy Living* (Regal Books, 1996).

We pray that this cookbook inspires you to move toward God's design for eating and enhances your cooking and eating experience!

*For God's glory,  
Hope Egan  
Amy Cataldo*

