Perhaps you're like many of those I talk with. You feel powerless. Stuck. Sick and tired of being sick and tired.

And it seems that no one cares.

Well, you're right! NOBODY CARES that you're tired, sick, powerless, and stuck. At least nobody else on earth. Not really. Not enough to really make a difference. Not the kind of difference that will make you healthy and strong.

Nobody really cares that much about your wellbeing:

- Not your doctor
- Not your pharmacist
- Not the hospital
- Not the government
- Not your health insurance company
- Not your employer

Your doctor really does have your best interest at heart, but he or she can't be with you every day. The government tries to institute policy that improves public health, but they don't know anything at all about you. Your health insurance company is making decisions based on profit, and those decisions may or may not be in your personal best interest.

And when it comes down to it, do you really want to leave your health in the hands of someone else? Anyone else? Certainly not some un-named monstrous corporation, someone who may have competing interests, or some person or committee that may be thinking about thousands - or millions - of people instead of you!

Here's the cold hard truth: **No one cares more about you and your health than you do!**

But that's really wonderful news. You don't have to leave your health - or your healthcare - up to anyone else!

**You can take charge of your health!**

You can take responsibility for your health - and your healthcare. You can be in charge of your physical and emotional wellbeing. Regardless of whether or not you've let someone else be in charge in the past, you can take charge now!

And yes, you *can* do this! I know you can!
Especially for Women

Because I’m an OB-Gyn physician – and a woman myself – I want to take a moment and talk specifically to those of you who are women.

Men have their issues, but for this moment it’s about you and me, girlfriend!

As women we have a lot of extra “stuff” to handle. Just think of all the things we have to worry about:

- Periods every month for up to 40 years, with their associated inconvenience and the physical and mental symptoms than come with them.
- Pregnancy. As one of my step-daughters said, “Growing a human is hard work!”
- No pregnancy. Infertility is not exclusively a female concern, but we certainly carry the brunt of the physical and emotional load when this becomes a problem.
- Preventing pregnancy. Whether fair or not, decisions and use of contraception fall mostly on our shoulders.
- Hormones changes. Whether it’s PMS, postpartum depression, or menopause, women’s dramatic hormone changes stir up a whole host of issues.
- Getting older. There are a number of diseases that disproportionately affect senior women.

As if those issues weren’t enough, we women are usually the ones making decisions that affect not only us but everyone in our families:

- Finding the best ways to pay for healthcare (health insurance decisions, etc.)
- Deciding when, where, and how to connect with the healthcare system
- Choosing what lifestyle habits, supplements, or other DIY health behaviors to incorporate

Of course men can make these choices also. But it’s well known that women make the majority of the health and healthcare decisions in the family – 80% of them, according to the US Department of Labor. And that’s a big responsibility.

Then there’s another set of personal stresses women carry that may or may not be unique to them:

- Managing multiple time pressures and energy drains
- Maintaining positive mental health habits even with hormonal changes
- Wrestling with an increased risk of anxiety, depression, and other such challenges
- Connecting with your husband (if you’re married)
- Teaching your daughter what it means to be a woman
- Wrestling with how your faith impacts the ethical decisions all these pressures involve
Men aren’t off the hook, but it sure seems that we have the biggest load of “stuff” to carry. And our health can take a beating as a result. We may live longer than men on average, but are we living the best quality of lives that we can?

I believe women are the stronger sex. We have to be! If not, there would be no babies. Men would die young, live in much dirtier surroundings, and eat nothing but fast food. (Of course I exaggerate, but you get the point.)

So what does that mean for you?

**It means that your choices make an extraordinarily big difference – for both you, and your family.**

Your decision to take charge of your health – and your healthcare – will reap amazing dividends for both you and those you care about.

As a woman, you have more power than you think. And it’s time to use that power wisely, and to its maximum effectiveness.

I want you to realize how important it is for you as a woman to make the decision to take charge – of everything that’s within your power to do so. That’s not taking charge of other people, but of everything over which you have decision-making ability.

And that’s a lot more than you may realize. You have more choices than you think.

There’s a huge part of living out the **FULLY ALIVE** life that God makes available to us that depends on you.

Just think, right now, about what your life, and that of your family, will be like in a year, or five years, if you do nothing different. What do you see coming? How healthy are you physically? What is your emotional life like? What is the quality of your relationships? Is that a picture you’re happy with? If so, GREAT!

If not, then it’s up to you to decide to TAKE CHARGE! Nobody can do it for you.

For today, won’t you make this pledge?!

*I choose, under God, to TAKE CHARGE of my life and my health.*
Does God Want You to Be In Charge?

Yes. And No. And it’s getting the Yes’s and No’s mixed up that gets us into all kinds of trouble.

When you try take charge of things that God has reserved for Himself you only end up frustrated. You wear yourself out, and it doesn’t work anyway.

When you don’t take charge of things that God has placed in your control, you end up miserable and upset, and tempted to blame God for your problems.

Right from our creation, human beings were created to rule. God is the Ruler of the universe, and we are created in His likeness. We can never become God. (Have you ever tried? We get into all kinds of trouble when we do that, too!) But ruler-ship, dominion, being In Charge, is built into our DNA from the very beginning by God Himself. And that’s a good thing.

Consider at what God said at our creation:

“Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground."” (Genesis 1:26-28, emphasis added)

You notice there’s nothing in there about ruling over other people. Remember, they are made in the image of God also. Leadership is not about domination; it’s about servanthood. God has strong things to say to leaders who get that wrong. A position of leadership is a serious thing in God’s eyes.

But back to you; there are definitely things God has placed you in charge of. There are things God won’t do for you. And in God’s eyes, we shirk our responsibility when we refuse to exercise the authority He has given us over those dimensions of our lives.

Let your mind imagine the big picture of what God is doing in your life, in our lives, in His Church, in His kingdom on Earth. A great deal of what the Bible reveals about God’s purposes involves preparing us, training us, for ruler-ship. He uses the troubles we encounter to mature our character – for what? To be set on a shelf as some pretty glass ornament? NO! To prepare us to sit with Him in His throne, to be an extension of Him in administering His rule in the universe, to be kings under the authority of the King of Kings.

- “But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.” (1 Peter 2:9)
• “and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father-- to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen.” (Revelation 1:6)

• “To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne.” (Revelation 3:21)

The little book **“Don’t Waste Your Sorrows”** presents a strong argument that the very reason God allows us to go through troubles here is to prepare us for ruler-ship in eternity. And as the title indicates, the more we allow God to use those trials to change us, the better we can be prepared.

There’s a lot more theology that could be discussed here. But the bottom line: God created you to be In Charge! Not of everything, but of many things.

In addition to what we know from God’s Word, modern research has demonstrated that those who see themselves as working together with God to solve problems, rather than sitting back and waiting for God to do it all, generally come through those problems with better physical and mental health and a more resilient spirituality.

If you’re like me, every now and then a lightbulb moment happens. You’ve been struggling with something that just doesn’t seem to be getting any better. You’ve wished, tried, perhaps prayed about it to no avail.

Suddenly the light goes on in your brain with the thought, “It’s up to me!” That might look like:

- I don’t have to listen to that negative person’s lies about me!
- I don’t have to eat the same unhealthy food any longer!
- I don’t have to keep working in this miserable place!
- I don’t have to stay sick and tired forever!

Has the lightbulb gone on for you? Is there something which you feel God nudging you to take charge of that you haven’t before?

**Then it’s time to begin TAKING CHARGE!**
Three Steps to Begin to Take Charge of Your Life

You’ve had a wakeup call of some kind. Somewhere in your soul there’s a glimmer of hope. Maybe it’s only a flicker, but it’s there. The wisest part of you realizes that nothing will get any better until you act. There’s some area in which you need to take charge of your life, and you’re ready. But how do you do that?

Or perhaps you’re doing quite well in most ways. But there’s a pesky problem that just won’t leave you alone. Perhaps it’s those extra pounds you’re carrying around, a slew of dark thoughts that keep crowding in, the hormones that make you feel like a stranger in your own skin, or the stress that threatens to eat you alive. When you’re honest with yourself you know that the rest of your life will start to suffer if you don’t get that one issue under control. You need to take charge. But how do you get started?

We’ve talked about the fact you can’t count on anyone else on earth to care more about your wellbeing than you do. God cares, but what’s your role in this? As a woman in particular, your physical, emotional, and spiritual wellbeing won’t get any better unless you take charge. God Himself created you to responsibly exercise authority over a great many areas of your life, and you honor Him by doing so.

Now it’s time to take action in moving toward the Fully Alive kind of life that you desire, that God created you for, and that will allow you to accomplish the purpose for which you are here.

I hear from people often who are just like you, struggling with any number of things. Some examples include:

- food being your “frenemy,” and every meal a battle
- trying to always be so perfect that you aren’t taking action where you can
- diabetes that stays out of control while you keep falling back into less-than-ideal eating patterns
- fear over a difficult conversation you need to have with your wife
- depression that doesn’t seem to go away – year after year
- the sense that your efforts to help other people are pointless and not worth continuing

I know you would love an easy fix – if there was one.

But you’re here now. And you want to take some action to make things better. You’re ready to start.

There’s nothing easy about any of these issues. But you and I both know that things won’t get any better unless you do something different. So let’s get started. These Three Steps apply to almost any problem you need to begin taking charge of in your life.

Ready? Let’s get started.
Step One: Choose to Be In Charge

We’ve hinted at this first step earlier, and I think it’s the most important one of all. If you see yourself as a victim, you’ll probably stay that way. But if you see yourself as taking charge, your whole outlook will be different.

Remember, it’s not nearly so important how much you weigh, what your marriage relationship is like, or how faithful you are in helping others today or next week. It’s much more important what those aspects of your life are like a year from now, or even five or twenty years from now.

Choosing to take charge of that problem area in your life may not change your outside circumstances today. But it will change the internal working of your mind. You’ll begin to see things differently in relation to that problem. You’ll notice places where your actions can make a difference that you never paid attention to before. You’ll feel a little stronger where you felt hopeless before. You’ll have ideas about actions you can take that you would never have imagined previously.

*Have you made the choice to be in charge?*

Step Two: Look at What is in Your Control

While taking charge of the important areas of your life makes all the difference in the world, you aren’t in control of everything. There are some things you can’t change, even while there are things you can. You’ll wear yourself out if you keep focusing on what you can’t change.

The Serenity Prayer makes this clear: “*Lord, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.*”

You can’t, for example, change the past – even your past. You can’t change other people. You can’t change your genetic background.

But within those same areas, there’s so much that IS within your control. You can plan out a day’s or a week’s menu in advance so you don’t have to think about it at each meal. You can get a “diabetes buddy” and talk to each other daily about your lifestyle habits. You can write out a letter to discuss with your spouse to make that difficult conversation somewhat easier.

Separating out what you have control over, and choosing to focus on that, will help you take charge. Better yet, write down one or several things that ARE in your control related to the problem you’re taking charge of.

*What is within your control – right now?!*
Step Three: Do One Small Action NOW

Hopefully you’ve written down one or several things that are in your control. Remember, you can’t change other people, or the past. We’re talking about starting now, and taking charge of what is within your control to move toward a **Fully Alive** kind of tomorrow.

(And isn’t that the whole message of the gospel? That because of Jesus, we can begin again. And again. And again. And again.)

Look over your list, or your one thing, and imagine doing it. That might be:

- Creating a healthy food shopping list
- Making an appointment with your spouse to have that talk
- Signing up for an online class about diabetes, or depression, or ….
- Asking a trusted person for feedback on why your efforts at helping people seem so fruitless

**Then do it!**

Taking one small action in the direction of taking charge will create a small feeling of success. And that breeds positive feelings, and the willingness to take more action.

All of this is just a beginning. Yes, there may be a long-ish road ahead. But you’ll never get to your **Fully Alive** destination if you don’t get started. And that’s what today’s thoughts are about.

**What is the one thing you are going to take action on today – something that you DO have control over?**

Use this space to write down what you have control over, and action steps you plan to take.

These are things I DO have control over:

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These are actions I will take:

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Overcoming the Resistance to Taking Charge

You’ve decided to take charge of some problem area in your life. You’re feeling encouraged. You’re taking the first steps to gaining control of your health – physically, mentally, and spiritually. Hurray!

You’re off to a great start. But I’ve got some news that may seem disappointing. As soon as you begin to take charge and make progress, the resistance will show up. It can feel almost magical – in a negative sense. Anything and everything that can go wrong will start to happen. Negative people, negative thoughts, and negative circumstances will come out of the woodwork to make your life difficult.

- Your spouse gets grouchy at the meal plan you’ve created
- You get a nasty cold and your diabetes control gets even worse
- Your spouse erupts in anger after you share your vulnerable letter with them
- The project you put out there, even though it’s imperfect, gets lots of criticism
- The people you reach out to help don’t want your assistance

Every story of accomplishment, of growth, of healing, of health includes the resistance. Do you know anyone who overcame anything significant who didn’t have a tough time? Anyone who did something that made a difference who had it easy? That’s the way our sinful world works.

The Bible is full of stories of those who were doing God’s work who faced the resistance:

- Moses faced Pharaoh and the Egyptian army
- David faced Goliath, and then the anger of Saul
- Elijah faced Jezebel and the prophets of Baal
- Jesus faced the hostile religious leaders
- Paul faced the hostile Roman empire

Really, do you think you’re likely to have it easier than Moses, David, Elijah, Jesus, and Paul?

I don’t think so.

If there’s a pull in your heart to take charge in some area, if God is prompting you that there’s something He needs you to do, if you’re determined to live the Fully Alive kind of life that Jesus came to bring, you will meet the resistance.

That resistance may come in the form of people, circumstances, or your own thoughts. Behind it all lies God’s enemy and yours, the devil. Scripture talks about evil personified, a spirit unseen by human eyes that’s out to oppose everything and everyone on God’s side. This is not primarily about the theology of evil. But your soul can feel empowered by realizing that it’s not your spouse, your friends, or your world that’s against you. It’s more personal than that. But because Jesus won, you’re on the winning side too if you have decided to follow Him.
Steps to Overcoming the Resistance

You and I can never repeat what Jesus did on the cross in defeating the devil. But we do have a role to play in walking out that victory in our own lives. Experiencing the Fully Alive kind of life God created you for does not mean everything will be easy, but it will be meaningful. You can know that kind of life in your body, soul, and spirit.

The only real way to overcome the resistance is working together with God in never giving up.

Here are some keys to doing exactly that.

1. **Choose sides.** If you only go with what’s easy, the default position, you’ll never overcome. You’ll be defeated before you even start. It takes an intentional choice. Joshua said, “Choose this day who you will serve.” (Joshua 24:15) James said, “Resist the devil.” (James 4:7) You may have made that intentional choice already, but you often need to make it again on a daily basis.

2. **Don’t give up.** Losing weight, learning to have a positive attitude, rebuilding a relationship with your spouse, helping someone in need—those all take time. The growth of your own character takes time as well. God is patient, and you should be also. That means paying attention to your thoughts and actions every day, and making sure they are moving in the direction of what God has asked you to take charge of. Jesus said the one who “endures to the end” will be the winners. (Matthew 24:13) You want to be that person!

3. **Work WITH God.** There are things God wants you to take charge of, but you can’t do it all. You take every action God asks you to, give Him permission to do whatever He wants with and through you, and then rest. Overcoming the resistance, living Fully Alive, accomplishing God’s purpose for you, will take every bit of courage you have. But it’s not about anxious striving; it’s about continuing to listen, obey, and grow. Hebrews talks about being “diligent to enter that rest.” (Hebrews 4:11) We do what God asks us to do, and leave the results in His hands.

That may sound rather spiritual. But it becomes very practical when you’re facing the resistance. With my husband’s chronic illness, that means praying daily for healing and health—AND diligently following medical recommendations, eating healthfully, and getting plenty of rest. With my people-pleasing personality, that means taking a day to feel bad when a new roadblock appears in the growth of this ministry—AND getting back up again the next day and doing what God is asking us to do.

It’s likely you don’t have anything nearly as difficult to overcome as David, Elijah, or Paul. Whatever it is, if you’re following what God has put in your heart to do, you can overcome!

Don’t give up!
You really CAN live the Fully Alive kind of life that Jesus came to bring each one of us!

If you’ve decided to take charge of your personal wellbeing in the areas of physical, mental/emotional, relational, or spiritual health, I’m so happy for you!

And if you’d like further help as you continue that journey, I’d love to be a friend and helpful guide along the way.

Here are three ways you can get further help to take charge of your wellbeing and live that Fully Alive kind of life:

- **Join my email list** (if you haven’t already!) You’ll get encouraging articles FREE in your email inbox a couple times each week. You’ll have opportunities to ask questions, leave comments, and hear my response to others just like you who are moving toward living Fully Alive.

- Obtain your copy of *Dr Carol’s Guide to Women’s Health: Take Charge of Your Physical and Emotional Wellbeing*. This guide brings together medical science, my practical experience, and a faith perspective in addressing the issues women face during the different stages of their lives.

- **Work with me individually**. I take a limited number of personal clients, but you may be the next one! I’d be glad to schedule a FREE no obligation 20-minute phone call to help you decide if this is right for you. [You can find out more here](#).

I’d love to hear from you!

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