So In Love
Amber Bullock shares her story on being crowned BET’s 2011 Sunday Best

The Real Mike Moss
An in-depth look at the man God is working on behind the scenes

* “Fruit of the Spirit” - Devotional
* iPress ft. Karyle Barnes & Thalia Stewart
* Biggest Loser
* Summer Fashion Guide
* Camp Meeting Schedule
CENTRAL STATES CONFERENCE
CAMP MEETING
JUNE 14-16 2012
AT UNITY VILLAGE

THE CHURCH
REimagined
REigned

www.central-states.org

The Church: REimagined REigned

Workshops
Publishing
Trust Services
Men’s Ministry
Technology
Prison Ministry
Community Services
Church Re-imagined

CAMP MEETING FEATURES
Spirit-filled Worship Services
Children First Ministry
Daily Afterglow Sessions
Concerts
Health Walks
Big Baptism
Share the Hope Hour
“Courageous” Ceremony
Ordination/Commissioning Service

All Day Meal Passes can be purchased for $36/day by calling the conference office at (913)371-1071 by June 1.
You may call Unity for room reservations.
For a list of nearby hotels, please visit www.central-states.org.

REGISTER ONLINE AT WWW.CENTRAL-STATES.ORG

Unity Village
1901 N.W. Blue Parkway
Lee’s Summit, MO 64139
(866) 348-6489
features

6 Camp Meeting Youth Schedule

9 “Back2Basics” by Michael Vance

23 Purpose by Design: Biggest Loser

24 Keep it Effortlessly Stylish: 7 Spring and Summer Must Haves

Scan here to visit the website!

Back2Basics Magazine is for the youth, by the youth!
Our mission is simple: “To inform and inspire young people in their walk with Christ.” In this issue, we talk to BET Sunday Best Season 4 winner, Amber Bullock about her new project “So In Love.” Our friend Mike Moss shares his story of perseverance in “The Real Mike Moss.” As publisher of B2B Mag, I strive to fill the pages with relevant content to the youth and young adults looking for simple answers to life’s everyday questions. My purpose has, and will continue to be, to share God’s word by publishing biblical messages and references in an interesting way. It is our hope that you are encouraged by the words and images in this magazine.

Brittany N. Winkfield
Founder & Publisher
I was driving in the car one day and heard one of the most interesting descriptions about a type of fruit in Africa. The reporter described this fruit as a miracle! Now you have to imagine that my mind is glued to the radio station as I’m rapidly weaving through traffic. She goes into the story, “this fruit is the rave of food lovers everywhere, actually we have even heard of house parties being held simply to taste this exotic fruit.” The story continued, “this fruit makes anything bitter or sour taste the exact opposite, it’ll make it taste candy sweet.” At this point, I’m more than curious about this little fruit called “Miracle Fruit.” Sometime later I jumped on the web and looked it up, and it was explained this way: “It’s a bright red, flavorless, tough flesh fruit that has the look and size of a grape. Its chemical properties attach to human taste buds for about an hour, then making other foods, particularly those with a bitter/sour flavor, taste sweet.” Curious ones testing it out will eat Miracle Fruit and then bite into a lemon, and shockingly remark how the lemon tastes super sweet. Truly, this fruit works like a miracle.

This reminds of a story in Exodus 15:22-25. Moses and the Israelites have escaped slavery in Egypt and are moving toward complete freedom in the promise land. However, one of the issues in this new found freedom and journey is the desert they have to walk through to get their destination. Their water canteens run out, they become thirsty, and then they start getting rude (like many of us). They finally come to a pond, but soon learn that the waters were “bitter.” Listen to how verse 23 & 24 puts it “...when they came to Marah, they could not drink the waters...for they were bitter...And the people complained against Moses.” We can identify with this reaction at various times in our lives. When God is supposedly leading us, but the pathway causes us confusion, discomfort, or we lack what everyone seems to already have. It’s at these times we need to react like Moses instead of behave like the Israelites.

And then God even has the audacity to use you as a change agent in this world. Do you remember His words? Remember comments like: “You are the light of the world” to help those in darkness, or statements like “You are the salt of the Earth” to give flavor and spiritual swag in tasteless lives. Jesus has always used and still wants to use ordinary people like you and me to reverse the bitter situations of disconnected people. When they are bitter, Christ uses us to make them better. I want my life to be like that Miracle Fruit, so that wherever I go, and whatever situation I’m thrown into, I make an impact that leads people to Christ, our sweet Savior.

Prayer: Lord you said you want us to bear fruit, please help us to bear ‘miraculous fruit’ so that the lives around us are sweeter by being saved.
Camp Meeting 2012
Youth Ministries

Friday, June 16

TEENS
7:00-9:00 p.m. Power Pac Worship | Karyle Barnes
9:30-10:30 p.m. Outdoor Prayer Experience

Sabbath, June 17

TEENS
10:00 a.m. Sabbath Morning Manna “I Am the Church” | Youth Leaders
11:15 a.m. Divine Worship Service | Karyle Barnes, Jr.
4:00-6:00 p.m. Praise and Worship Explosion
9:00 p.m. Dodgeball Tournament

YOUNG ADULTS
10:00 a.m. Sabbath Morning Manna “Young Adult Leaders”
11:15 a.m. Divine Worship Service | Kory Douglass
3:00-4:30 p.m. Young Adult Summit “Be the Change We Want to See”
9:00 p.m. Young Adult Mixer/Christian Speed Dating
I currently reside in: Kansas City, MO

When I was younger, I used to: Dream of being on the Oprah Winfrey Show and being a writer like Maya Angelou

My favorite thing to learn about is: Psychology

My favorite food is: Jerk chicken, curry chicken with rice and peas, dumplings or festival, akee and saltfish

If I could go anywhere in the world, I would go to: Africa

The farthest place I’ve been to is: Jamaica

My favorite color is: Purple

My current favorite song is: “Freedom” by Da Truth

The book I’m loving right now is: “Cutting For Stone”

I am most excited about: The future. “God has been opening up the doors for me to have many opportunities in ministry or opportunities to write. I’m really excited to see what He has for me next.”

Three words that best describe me: I am so many things, but most importantly I am “becoming”...whatever God wants me to be is what I am becoming.
a conversation with

Michael

I currently reside in: Houston, TX

When I was younger, I used to: Play in a gospel jazz band with my friends.

My favorite thing to learn about is: Everything. Google is my best friend.

My favorite food is: Chicken. I will eat it all day, every day.

The best show on television is: Don’t judge me, but I really liked “Once Upon a Time”.

If I could go anywhere in the world, I’d go to: Bora Bora.

The farthest place I’ve travelled is to: South Korea

My favorite color is: Red

My current favorite song is: “Mighty You Are” - The Walls Group

The book I am loving right now: “Provocations” - Soren Kierkegaard

I’m most excited about: My wedding on June 17th!

Three words that best describe me: Humorous, Thoughtful & Skinny
ith every passing year, our world becomes increasingly more complex. Humans are no longer the only “smart” things on this planet any more, but water and our cell phones have joined the ranks as well. Video games have progressed from having a controller with a directional button and an “A” and “B” button, to being able to capture our body movements to make commands. With all the increases in science, technology, medicine, and overall knowledge, sometimes I think we have become too enlightened.

Instead of plainly reading and studying the scriptures, we have complicated and bogged down the gospel. The Christian faith now has a multitude of denominations and beliefs. A new convert would be overwhelmed as to where to start or who’s actually right.

That’s why I’m so excited to see that there is a shift to return back to our core, our foundation, our “fundamental beliefs” if you will...the basics.

But what is/are the basics of Christianity? What one word would you use to sum up Christianity? Love? Faith? Grace? Redemption?

Those sound good, but I think there’s something better.

Now don’t get me wrong, there’s nothing wrong with either of these answers, but I don’t think they quite capture the true foundation of Christianity. If you were to analyze those ideas of love, faith, grace, and redemption, I believe you would find a concept that is rooted in all of them: obedience.

In John 14:15, Jesus says, “If you love me, you will obey what I command.” The lives of Noah and Abraham illustrate that our faith in God is revealed by our willingness to obey Him, even when it doesn’t seem to make
sense. Christ’s life and death and the accompanying grace and redemption they provide were only necessary because of our disobedience and only possible because of His obedience.

Countless stories in the Bible from Uzzah (2 Samuel 6) and Saul (1 Samuel 15), to Moses striking the rock out of anger (Numbers 20) and Adam and Eve eating the forbidden fruit (Genesis 3) show us the consequences of disobedience. These examples should serve as a deterrent to disobedience but sadly they don’t seem to have the effect that they should.

In this post-modern, anything goes, world in which we live, the concept of obedience is a hard one to grasp. As children, we long for the day when we will finally be adults and we can make our own choices and decisions. As adults we watch the clock, waiting for five o’clock to come so we can come from under the thumb of our boss or manager. We live our lives desiring to be in complete control of them, but Christianity requires the exact opposite.

_I’ll be honest and say that I can’t._

What’s really sad is that often times I don’t even desire to strive for total adherence. Most of my efforts are focused on trying to get a better job, a better car, a better house, and other earthly treasures. Not only are my efforts focused on those things, but so are my prayers. I can’t remember the last time I prayed, not just to be saved, but to be holy and obedient.

It’s a humbling admission to say that you’ve been a Christian for all the wrong reasons, but I think that’s exactly the place God wants us. He wants us to recognize that we’re flawed so that we turn our faults and our flaws over to Him. He wants us to realize that we’ve been doing things the wrong way, so that He can instruct us on how to do them the right way.

Back to basics requires not only a change in behavior though, but it also requires a change in mindset. It requires us to no longer view Christianity as only a means to obtain earthly possessions or heavenly salvation but as a way to achieve holiness.

Many people would argue that striving for holiness means becoming a legalist or a Pharisee but in fact they’re wrong. Striving for holiness, for perfection actually shows that we truly understand the point of the gospel. It shows that we’re not Christians just to make it to heaven, but that our focus is to live as God designed: in accordance to His will.

_My prayer is that we all get back to the basics of Christianity, which is humbly submitting our will to God’s and following His plan for our lives._
a conversation with

Hannah

I currently reside in: Kansas City, KS

When I was younger, I used to: Always pretend I had homework

My favorite thing to learn about is: Photography

My favorite food: Spaghetti. Yes, I still slurp my noodles.

The best show on television is: House

If I could go to anywhere in the world, I’d go to: New Zealand

The farthest place I’ve travelled is to: Portland, Oregon

My favorite color is: Lime Green

My current favorite song is: “Make Me Better” - Mali Music

The book I am loving right now: The Roots by Alex Haley

I’m most excited about: What God has planned for me in my life. I think about what he was brought me through despite my lack of faith growing up. As I become more spiritually mature, I can only imagine the blessing He has in store for me.

Three words that best describe me: Passionate, Charismatic, SURVIVOR
Follow me @therealmikemoss

Words by Narda Bailey-Hunt
Photos by Hannah Banks
The Real Mike Moss
An in-depth look at the man God is working on behind the scenes

Like any other college graduate who has worked hard to earn their diploma, Michael Moss was ecstatic to walk across the stage of Oakwood University and receive his degree. But his journey was not like that of most college graduates. His was one of adversity, perseverance and faith. As they called out his name and he began the walk, he had to pause for a moment to reflect and give honor to the God whom he had come to know very well on his journey. The God, with out whom, the day would not have been possible.

Anyone who has ever spent five minutes with Michael Moss has experienced his very large outgoing personality. However, that personality has not always been accepted by those around him. As a junior in high school, he anxiously looked forward to being a senior, and going to college. He felt misunderstood and unaccepted by his peers and teachers. He felt like he was treated differently which caused him to “lash out” at his teachers. He felt most comfortable being the class clown, and so, did not perform to best of his academic ability.

Mike was excited when he entered Oakwood University, or “the promised land” as he referred to it, in the fall of 2003. He always knew that he would go to Oakwood, and when he got there he was not disappointed. The University became a ‘safe haven’ for him. While his personality was the cause of him feeling like an outcast in high school, in college his big personality was embraced. In his freshman year, he earned the title of “Freshman of the Year” at the annual banquet. He got all the attention he wanted and became very influential among his peers. He was certainly the life of the party wherever he went. Unfortunately, Mike was unable to find the balance between academics and his social endeavors and so he failed two classes his second semester of his freshman year. For him, this was the beginning of the most trying period of his young life.

In 2008, a year after he was originally scheduled to graduate, Mike discovered for himself what it meant to have a personal relationship with God. He found himself in a pattern of planned failure. He would do well in the beginning of his classes but then would become overwhelmed. Because of his fear of failure, he would just give up on his studies. He reasoned that if he gives up on something, it’s better than trying his best and failing anyway. He began to feel like he would never succeed and graduate. Despite the encouragement of his family, friends and professors, he still doubted his ability to achieve his goal. It was around this time that he was introduced to the Cadet family. He began attending bible studies in their home and found something that he did not know existed. He found a REAL God. He says “I, like a lot of young people, was looking for something real in all the wrong places, like sex, money, relationships etc,” but “Jesus is the realest thing I’ve ever known.”
He was very energized about sharing what he discovered with others, but he struggled with the question “how can God use me to reach others when I’ve been such a negative influence?” What Mike didn’t know was that as he struggled with this question, the way he lived his daily life and the transformation that was being wrought was influencing those closest to him. Because of his influence, three of his closest friends gave their lives to Christ.

Notwithstanding his new found relationship with Christ and the endless support of his mother and other family and friends, Mike still struggled academically. He still did not believe he could succeed. It was especially discouraging to see his siblings enter Oakwood after him and graduate before him. But he decided to push on and persevere. He covenanted to do his part and left the rest to God, believing that God would come through for him.

The 2011-2012 school year proved to be a time of severe testing for Mike. He had finally determined in his heart that he would graduate but it seemed like everything was against him. The task of getting cleared to register for classes became a year long ordeal. However, God made it possible for him to still be able to take classes through an educational program called the LEAP program. He went through the whole academic year not knowing whether or not he would graduate. But he kept the faith and persevered. It literally came down to the last moment before he was cleared to graduate. Mike got confirmation the day before graduation that all his hard work and faith would finally pay the ultimate dividends... He would graduate and get to walk across the stage. Even though he did not have confirmation, Mike had bought his cap and gown in faith and now he would get to wear them proudly. His mother and aunt, strong women of faith, had made the trip down to Oakwood the day before graduation, believing but not knowing that their boy would be among the graduates and were among the loudest cheerleaders as he made his walk across the stage.

You might expect that Michael would harbor some resentment or bitterness about what he had to go through, but not so. When asked “what is the best part of waking up everyday?” Michael’s response was “the best part of waking up is knowing I can do anything I want to do through Him [God]. Anything I ask for that is in His will, I have access to. Jesus is the realest thing I’ve ever known. Nothing compares to the relationship I’ve found with Jesus.” He credits his experience for making him the man he is today. He learned perseverance and most importantly he can now bear witness to the awesomeness of a REAL prayer-answering, personal God.

Mike graduated with a Bachelor’s in General Studies with an emphasis in psychology. Whats next for him? “Whatever God wants me to do.” At the moment he believes he is being led to go to Korea to teach English for a year. We wish him the best of luck in his endeavors.
AdventSource
IS PLEASED TO BE A SPONSOR OF CSC YOUTH MINISTRIES

I AM THE CHURCH!

AdventSource
WWW.ADVENTSOURCE.ORG • 800.328.0525
"It’s hard to beat a person who never gives up.”

– Babe Ruth

What is your idea of heaven?
My idea of heaven is a place where I finally have eternal peace away from the craziness sin has brought to this earth. To me it will be a great reunion. I lost my mom to cancer at age 7 so being connected with her once and for all will be great as I would love her to see the man I have become. I also see heaven as a place where I have unlimited and interrupted time with God. So much competes with my time with him like school and life in general. I’m curious just to know what God and angels look like and to experience perfection!

What would you name the autobiography of your life?
"The Road to Discovery"

If you could learn to do anything, what would it be?
I would love to learn how to skateboard, I tried it once before and...let's just say I didn't make it too far. But really it has always appealed to me since I was younger. I grew up watching the X games on ESPN and seeing people like Tony Hawk and others do all these tricks and I've always wanted to learn how to do that myself.

@KB_618
What do you think about when there is nothing you have to think about?
Well besides food (lol)... I’m thinking of sports, I’m a huge basketball and football fan. Also I’m constantly thinking of ways of helping people in both spiritually and practically. A lot of suffering exists around us, many people are afraid to dream and be different which results in cycles in life that bring more harm than good. I really believe that the world not only wants but needs something new, something that delivers what it promises. As much as I can I want to make change and be effective. So in essence that’s what I’m thinking of mostly.

What would you like to add to your life?
Honestly, I would like to add more contentment. Everyday I’m reminded of what I don’t have and there’s always the push to have the latest of everything and if I don’t have it then somehow I’m not good enough or I’m missing out on life. I’ve started to realize that I can’t be the best at everything but I can work hard and be the best me I was created to be.

What is your number one priority?
Right now it's graduate school; I have two degrees that I’m working on and trying to finish soon.

What was the last experience that made you a stronger person?
My first year in grad school. It was a really rough transition being in a new place with new people, not having a job and even feeling like God was not with me at times.

What’s the #1 most played song on your iPod?
“One Sixteen” by Trip Lee…it’s like the anthem of my life!!!

What single piece of technology makes your life easier?
My cell phone… I can Tweet, hit up Facebook, read, record rough drafts of my songs, and text all on one device. Without it life would definitely be complicated!

I Am the Church
While I was at Andrews I linked up with Elijah3 ministries, which is a ministry focused on reaching youth in the urban city. We’ve been teaching teenagers who live in Benton Harbor, MI how to understand the Bible as well as helping them get through school and issues that they face on a daily basis (drugs, growing up in a single parent home, sex, violence, low self-esteem, etc…). Along with Elijah3 and a good friend of mine, Muta Mwenya, I just finished a four part series entitled “Transformed” which targets youth and teaches them how to go from very little knowledge of Jesus and what it means to be a Christian to a mature believer actively involved in making a difference in the world through their lifestyle.

Outside of that I am working on releasing an EP or mixtape some time in the near future. My vision is for it to be something everyone can feel. I want to address real life issues that we all see and things that Christians go through yet don’t always express. It will also include bits and pieces of my life story and the journey I’ve been on for the last 22 years. I’m really excited about it and I pray God will use it to change lives!
Thalia Stewart

“You love God as much as you love your worst enemy, so don’t waste time hating, just love!”
– Thalia Stewart

@t03as

Q&A

What did you realize during the 2012 “I am the Church” Youth Congress event?

I realized how important it is for us to realize that making excuses about church gets us nowhere. We are “the church,” so if we want to see changes, we need to get up, stand up, and take action.

What would you name the autobiography of your life?

“With Great Avidity”

If you could learn to do anything, what would it be?

To play the guitar.

When you have 30 minutes of free-time, how do you pass the time?

Daydreaming.
**What is your number one priority?**
To sit beside Jesus and talk for hours, and days.

**What’s the #1 most played song on your iPod?**
All I Have To Give - Mali Music

**How is life post graduation?**
Life is going really fast.

**What are your career plans?**
I hope to be a United Nations Ambassador... or to do Ambassador work for an NGO.

---

I long to help young folks, and even older ones, enhance their artistic skills, and discover how to use their talents for God.
So
In
Love

Amber Bullock
Amber Bullock, Season 4 winner of BET’s Sunday Best, describes her lifestyle change after winning the gospel singing competition as “rapid."

By Brittany Winkfield

Amber Bullock, the St. Louis, Missouri native and Central States family, topped a talented field of singers to win BET’s 2011 Sunday Best crown. The Season 4 winner released an EP, Thank You, on December 6, 2011. The CD debuted at #1 on Billboard’s Top Gospel Albums chart. “So In Love” is set to release on July 10, 2012. “Expect every type of music you would want to hear,” Amber shares. There’s everything from go-go, reggae, traditional heart-felt gospel, fun jazz, pop-infused, even a little country. Her “So In Love” album is fully produced by P.J. Morton and a couple of features on the album include Kirk Franklin, Shaun Martin, Isaac Carree. “It’s music you’ll want to repeat over and over again.”

Bullock captured the hearts of millions on the #1 rated weekly gospel music competition show, Sunday Best. Over 2 million viewers tuned in to watch the Sunday Best finale. Season 4 ranks as the #1 telecast in BET franchise history and the #1 cable competition show and Sunday’s #1 cable series among blacks in 2011. Thank You features new studio recordings of jazz infused and neo-soul inspired interpretations of some of Bullock’s most memorable songs performed on Sunday Best.

Sunday Best mentor, Kim Burrell, said “Amber Bullock has a voice that can take her from the church to the top of the charts.” The show judges all echoed her sentiments about Bullock’s extraordinary talent. “She’s amazing from top to bottom,” say Erica Campbell of Mary Mary. “She’s the real deal...A stylist,” said Donnie McClurkin; and Tina Campbell of Mary Mary concluded, “Sunday Best ain’t never seen nothing like that.”

Prior to her Sunday Best fame, Bullock was living and working in Dallas, where she had moved to be with her mom. She is mother to her now three-year-old daughter, Amya. Shortly after moving to Dallas, Bullock and her daughter were in a bad car accident that totaled her car. After another unfortunate incident, Bullock ended up sleeping on the floor in the house of a co-worker who had six children. She was also unable to get Amya into a daycare center. Life had become so difficult for Bullock that she had to send her daughter to live with her father. Once her daughter was with her father, it was difficult to see her regularly without a car, which made her life even more challenging. Praying for a blessing, Bullock decided to attend the last day of Sunday Best auditions at the Potter’s House in Dallas, Texas. Near the end of the day, word had spread among the staff and other contestants that Amber had the “most
amazing voice and the slickest runs.” Bullock recalls praying “Lord, let your will be done.” The rest is history.

Bullock has received overwhelming support from a broad array of people, from celebrities to her community in St. Louis. New England Patriots’ wide receiver, Chad Ochocinco, tweeted to all of his followers to encourage them to vote for her during the finale. After being crowned Sunday Best, an “Amber Bullock Homecoming Celebration” was hosted at the historic Kennelrly Temple Church of God in Christ in St. Louis.

During her earlier career, Bullock performed with a variety of recording artists, professional choirs and ensembles. In November 2011, a dream of a lifetime happened, Bullock had an opportunity to work with one of her favorite recording artists. She was the opening act and special guest artist on Kirk Franklin’s Fearless Tour, along with Isaac Carree, Deon Kipping and Jason Nelson. She also was one of Franklin’s featured vocalists during his music set on tour.

Bullock attended Oakwood University in Huntsville, Alabama, where she studied classical vocal performance. As a member of the Oakwood University Aeolians, a concert choir, she traveled throughout the U.S. and the Caribbean.

Bullock started singing at an early age; her father remembered “At three years old, Amber marched down the aisle to sing with the children choir.” Amber shared her thoughts about young people, “I believe that there are some youth in the next generation that will stand and that will hold people accountable and lead the way. They are waiting on their time to come and when it does, it will be amazing. I believe that children are our future.” Her musical influences include P.J. Morton, her mother, Linda Bouie, and Cherise Carrol of St. Louis. Bullock is the second artist to have a CD project released on Mathew Knowles’ Music World Gospel label, under the Sunday Best franchise. She is also co-managed by Music World Artist Management.

Make sure you tune in to the next season of Sunday Best to see Amber and past winners make guest appearances starting July 8, 2012.
I have been on this weight journey for as long as I can remember, and every day I strive to overcome the DIS-EASE of overeating. I can remember struggling with my weight and being teased by peers when I was in grade school; which was never a good feeling. Being unable to deal with my weight, I would always run to food, which would provide some form of comfort for the time being, but would make me feel worse than before after I was done eating.

Probably around my freshman year in high school, my sis-in-law introduced me to Weight Watchers, which was the first weight loss program that I was ever successful on. When I started the program, I had to be in my 250’s; and that was a lot of weight for a teenager to have to carry around. Looking in the mirror and not liking what I saw was a major issue for me. Thinking that starving myself would show quicker results was an EPIC FAIL. I lost weight, for the first time, by just monitoring my portions and believe I was in my 230’s by the time I was ready to graduate high school. It was such a relief, to be able to go to the doctor and hear, “keep up the good work.” I was so overwhelmed with hearing the doctor tell my mother, “ma’am, you need to put your child on a diet,” or “ma’am your child is too overweight.” Who wants to hear that? What child wants to be deprived of eating the foods that they like? Thankfully, I was able to make up my mind and commit to Weight Watchers. By losing weight, I was able to get off the medication that was prescribed to me due to being overweight, PRAISE GOD!

After graduating high school, I attended a Christian University away from home; which was something new for me. New opportunities, new environment, on my own, and a little scary at first. For the first time in my life I was living on my own, and had to fend for myself. By this time, I was no longer on Weight Watchers, because I could not afford the monthly payments. However, surprisingly I was able to eat out often… TALK ABOUT PRIORITIES!!! I was not too happy with the all vegetarian diet of the University, and honestly, due to the way I looked, or felt about myself, I rarely went into the cafeteria. I found myself at the take out line or snack bar, and would eat out at fast food restaurants whenever I would get the opportunity to find a ride off campus. Unconsciously, I was buying bigger dress sizes, not even realizing that I was putting on so much weight. Before I knew it, I was in my junior year in college, in a weight training class, and my instructor conducted a BMI test. I weighed in at 292lbs, my heaviest ever, falling into the obese category. I was stunned, disgusted, overwhelmed, and terrified! All I could think about was, “How did this happen and when? I can remember my class instructors exact words still today, “You need to be on the treadmill, everyday, for an hour, on an incline of 11”, in order to get healthy and lose weight. These words continue to stick with me.

By this time, I had a part time job at Target, and returned back to Weight Watchers. It’s funny how such a scare, can motivate one to do what they once thought was impossible. I was determined to walk across the graduation stage thinner; HEALTHIER! I got back into my routine of monitoring my portions, playing racquet ball with one of my good

Continued on page 26
By Melanie Joyce Pullman, Fashion Stylist

1. Floral Maxi Dress
   - ASOS $108.85
   - Forever 21: $24.80

2. Jersey Blazer
   - Add your pop any look with ASOS $27.83

3. Mascara
   - Lancome Hypnose Drama $26.00

4. Wedge
   - Zara $79.90

KEEP IT EFFORTLESSLY STYLISH

7 spring and summer must haves
4. Cross Body

A pop of color with black with a cross body.

27.83

6. Jumpsuit

Jumpsuits are easy to put on...hair in a high bun or down...dress it up with wedges or heels, or wear it more relaxed with cute flat sandals. Easy Breezy!

ASOS $95.67

ZARA $69.90

7. Shirt Dress

Effortlessly stylish...the lightweight material is perfect for spring and summer

ASOS $165.25

ASOS $165.25

Forever 21 $48.0
girlfriends, walking at 5:30 a.m. with my housemates, and feeling much better about myself. Before I knew it, I had lost 40+lbs. (Philippians 4:13 “I can do all this through Him who gives me strength.”) Can you believe that? WOW! The very thing I thought I could not do, God showed me that I could and He would help me. For the first time in a while, I felt so good about myself, the way I looked. The way I felt, and the compliments did not hurt either! I felt in control of the way I was taking care of my body.

Next stop, grad school! Single woman, living with a roommate, trying to remain healthy; Now that’s a new challenge! Thankfully, I had a roommate who was also on Weight Watchers and was also about living a healthy lifestyle. During this year of grad school, I think I was able to get down to the 220’s FOR THE FIRST TIME EVER!!! My roommate and I joined a Zumba class, we had a work out facility in our complex, I was practicing my culinary skills, and I was living my life the best way I knew how. This year, living away from home again, just showed me that I was capable of maintaining a healthy lifestyle and capable of taking care of my “TEMPLE.” I walked across the stage for graduation and remember my dad saying, “Trace, I did not even recognize you when they called your name on stage,” due to losing so much weight. Also, early this same year, I started my natural hair journey, and I “big chopped”, so my hair was really low cut.

After grad school, the real test began. I was unemployed for about two months, stressed, anxious, and gained a few pounds. Fast forward almost four years later, to the present, I still struggle with my weight. My weight fluctuates constantly, but I have come to realize that the goal I used to have about my weight has changed. Yes, I was to slim down, however, my ultimate goal is to be healthy, and content with who I am. Yes, I continue to be on this journey, and yes it continues to be a daily struggle, however, everything worth having is worth WORKING HARD for. So many times I want to give up on myself, but the countless amount of support I receive from those who love me reminds me I have some fight left in me and goals to achieve. I have also come to the realization that I have come too far to give up on myself now. I know God has not, and will not give up on me. 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 “Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.”

Presently, I am a member of Lucille Roberts and take fitness classes there. I try to stay as active as I can, especially with my hectic work schedule, employed full time. I am currently participating in a “Biggest Loser Challenge” at work, which ends on June 29, 2012 (three month competition). I have been motivated these past couple of weeks to allow God to complete the process in me that He has already begun. I receive support from my Facebook Group “Losing Big with Trace #2,” and daily I try to make decisions that I can benefit from in the long run, health wise. This group was created to motivate others who struggle with their weight to no longer complain and make excuses about what they think they can’t change about their health, but to allow God to help us overcome the things that allow us to turn to food for comfort, receiving temporary relief, rather than calling on Him.

Our bodies are God’s temples, where He chooses to reside in. When we invite guest into our homes, we tend to prepare by cleaning, dusting, cooking and providing a healthy environment where our guest will feel comfortable and want to return to. Same goes for our bodies (temples). We must cleanse our bodies from the toxins, the unnecessary calories, and unhealthy lifestyles so that God can move in, and reside in us, and complete the task He has already begun in us.

Stop looking at this weight loss journey as a DIET, but as a LIFESTYLE CHANGE. Take it day by day, and see all that you are capable of. Change your perspective and see results; the glass can be have full instead of half empty, depending on the lens/angle you are looking from. Philippians 1:6 “Being confident of this, that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.”

Ready, Set, LOSE!!!

See you at the finish Line - ETERNAL LIFE!!!
ANNOUNCING

COLLEGE DAYS 2012

October 7-10, 2012

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

OAKWOOD UNIVERSITY
Office of Enrollment Management
7000 Adventist Blvd. NW.
Huntsville, Alabama 35896

PHONE: (256) 726-7356
E-MAIL: admission@oakwood.edu  WEBSITE: www.oakwood.edu
CAMP HIGHPOINT
SUMMER CAMP ADVENTURE

I AM THE CHURCH!

www.iamthechurch.me

JUNE 24 - JULY 1, 2012

CAMP HERITAGE
376 Camp Heritage Road, Climax Springs, MO 65324

Ages 9 thru 16
Register or Sponsor a Camper TODAY!
Phone: (913) 371-1071 • Fax: (913) 371-1609
Online: www.iamthechurch.me