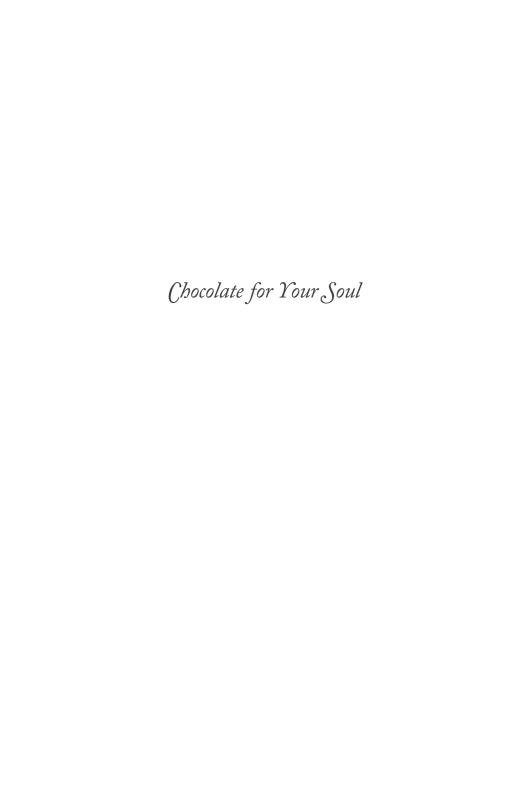


your
relationship
with God
through
food, faith,
and fun

SHERI ROSE SHEPHERD

Bestselling author of the His Princess™ series





Food, faith, and fun to satisfy your deepest craving

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Chocolate for Your Soul: Food, Faith, and Fun to Satisfy Your Deepest Craving

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—— Introduction

Chocolate for Your Soul

Taste and see that the LORD is good. Oh, the joys of those who take refuge in him!

PSALM 34:8

Ask women to name their guilty pleasures or biggest cravings, and chocolate is likely to be on the list. After all, most of us find its sweet, creamy texture both soothing and delicious. No wonder chocolate is a staple in our pantries and a common treat at women's gab groups. Interestingly, science has discovered that cacao, the natural base of chocolate, provides many health benefits. For instance, eating chocolate stimulates the release of endorphins, chemicals in the brain that lead to feelings of happiness and pleasure. Dark chocolate may also help lower blood pressure and improve the cardiovascular system.

This sweet treat may be good for your heart, but God invites you to indulge in blessings that are like chocolate for your soul. He offers you three amazing gifts—food, faith, and fun—to satisfy and refresh you and your loved ones. Much as we crave chocolate, He wants us to desire more of Him and His good gifts.

Life can be hard, so it is sometimes tempting to focus on what you are not allowed to do and what you should not eat, but that will leave you feeling deprived and depressed, bored and burned out. That's not how God intends for you to live. It's time to let go of guilt, grab hold of grace, recapture the life God made you for, and then . . . *live it*!

In this book I will share many of the benefits and blessings of following Christ as you discover a new kind of faith walk, one filled with joy

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and a refreshing perspective on life. I'm also excited to share with you some delicious, healthy recipes that helped me conquer chronic fatigue and lose over fifty pounds and keep it off. (For some delicious dishes featuring chocolate, see chapter 1. And for even more faith and food coaching via video, visit hisprincess.com.)

Together you and I will learn to embrace the life Christ wants us to live while enjoying the wholesome and amazing food our God created for us. (Please note: I am not a medical professional, so if you are looking to make lasting changes to your diet or other parts of your health regimen, be sure to check with your doctor first, particularly if you have any medical conditions.)

As the wisest man who ever ruled, King Solomon, said in Ecclesiastes 5:18:

It is good for people to eat, drink, and enjoy their work under the sun during the short life God has given them, and to accept their lot in life.

You are about to taste and see that the Lord is good and that your faith can become a fulfilling adventure. That's great for the soul!

Love, Sheri Rose hisprincess.com



CHAPTER 1

Craving Something Rich

Chocolate Recipe Relief and Treasured Faith

I AM CONVINCED that chocolate should be in the food pyramid underneath fruits and vegetables. I often wonder if there will be unlimited chocolate fountains flowing in heaven (preferably the kind of chocolate that does not cause migraines). I believe chocolate is a gift from God, and believe me, in this chapter I think you're going to find some relief from the guilt you feel for craving it.

Soul Food

And I will give you treasures hidden in the darkness—secret riches. I will do this so you may know that I am the LORD, the God of Israel, the one who calls you by name.

ISAIAH 45:3

God's Word tells us that wherever our treasure is, there our heart will be also. Many times we miss the secret treasures the Lord desires to give us, because our hearts are so focused on what we want. As a result, we miss the better and richer life God designed for us.

Let's look at those riches that will last forever and crave everlasting wealth. When we do, we will leave a rich legacy for all those we love and know. After all, we brought nothing into this world, and we will leave with nothing except a rich faith and treasure in heaven.

New Life Recipes

1. LIVE AS ROYALTY

For you are a chosen people. You are royal priests, a holy nation, God's very own possession. . . . He called you out of the darkness into his wonderful light.

I PETER 2:9

Live like a chosen child of the King. In other words, talk more about your riches in heaven and the blessings of being God's chosen one than about your burdens here on earth.

To remind you of your "royal status," you might frame one of your favorite Scriptures or eat rich dark chocolate while reading His Word in the evening.

2. INVEST IN ETERNITY

They themselves will be wealthy, and their good deeds will last forever.

PSALM II2:3

Make it your goal to do one thing a week that has eternal value. Give money to a great cause or e-mail words of encouragement to a friend. Commit to pray one day a week for our country.

3. COUNT THE COST

What do you benefit if you gain the whole world but are yourself lost or destroyed?

LUKE 9:25

Take a few moments to make a list of what you do with your time and energy each day. Next to this list, jot down the names of people you hang out with, what good is coming from those relationships, and what results (what the Bible calls "fruit") you are seeing from the ways you spend your time. Then pray and ask God to show you if these activities are all worth investing in.

POWER UP WITH PRAYER

Dear friend, I hope all is well with you and that you are as healthy in body as you are strong in spirit.

3 JOHN 1:2

Dear God,

I want to live a rich life that will leave a legacy, so please give me what I need to have a rich faith. Give me as much as You want to provide for me and to help meet the needs of others, but not so much that I forget to rely on You.

Amen.



No food . . . is richer than becoming a reflection of His glory.

Real Rich Recipes

Sometimes, particularly on special occasions like birthdays and anniversaries, nothing is more appropriate than chocolate or a special cake. Indulge your sweet spot with one of these delicious recipes.

ALMOND CHOCOLATE SMOOTHIE

Serves 2-3

Ingredients:

- 1 cup almond milk
- 1 cup chocolate Rice Dream ice cream (or low-fat chocolate ice cream)
- 1 teaspoon honey
- 1 teaspoon almond extract
- 1-2 cups ice

Directions:

- 1. Mix all ingredients together in a blender until smooth.
- 2. Pour into glasses and enjoy!

Recipe tip:

You can use real almonds instead of almond extract to make this more of a raw recipe.

CRAVING CHOCOLATE CAKE

Serves 12

Ingredients:

- 1 package Pamela's chocolate cake mix or another gluten-free cake mix
- 1 package Pamela's dark chocolate frosting mix (optional)
- 1 cup sour cream
- 1 cup canola oil
- 4 eggs

½ cup warm water

2 cups semisweet chocolate chips

Powdered sugar, if desired

Pint of fresh raspberries, if desired

Directions:

- 1. Preheat oven to 350°.
- 2. In a large bowl, mix together the cake and frosting mix (if added), sour cream, oil, eggs, and water. Stir in the chocolate chips, and pour batter into a well-greased, 12-cup Bundt pan.
- 3. Bake for 50–55 minutes, or until a wooden toothpick inserted comes out clean.
- 4. Cool cake thoroughly in pan at least an hour and a half before inverting onto a plate. If desired, dust the cake with powdered sugar and place a few raspberries alongside each piece.

Recipe tip:

After making the cake, cut it up in small slices; seal each in Tupperware and freeze so you can use individual slices as needed.

CAROB PUDDING

Serves 2-4

Ingredients:

2 avocados

1 cup honey

 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup carob powder or unsweetened dark cocoa powder

¼ cup cocoa powder

1 tablespoon raw sugar or stevia

Directions:

In a blender, mix all ingredients until mixture is smooth and creamy. Add water as needed for desired consistency.

Recipe tip:

Add semisweet chocolate chips for a chocolaty surprise in the pudding. This pudding will keep for three days in the fridge.

CHOCOLATE DIP

Fills a small-size bowl

Ingredients:

½ cup unsweetened dark cocoa powder ½ cup honey or agave syrup 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Directions:

Place all ingredients in blender and mix until smooth.

Recipe tip:

You can heat this up if you want your chocolate dipping sauce warm. Make sure to have your favorite fruit cut and ready to dip and enjoy!

MAKE MINE CHOCOLATE CAKE

Serves 12

Ingredients:

- 1¾ cups whole-grain or gluten-free flour
- 2 cups sugar
- 3/4 cup unsweetened dark cocoa powder
- 2 teaspoons baking soda
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon sea salt
- 1 tablespoon instant coffee (optional)
- 2 eggs
- 1 cup buttermilk
- ½ cup canola oil
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Directions:

- 1. Preheat oven to 350°.
- 2. Grease and flour two 9-inch round cake pans or one 9 x 13-inch pan.
- 3. In a large bowl, combine flour, sugar, cocoa, baking soda, baking powder, salt, and instant coffee, if desired. Make a well in the center.
- 4. Add eggs, buttermilk, oil, and vanilla. Beat for 2 minutes on medium speed. Batter will be thin. Pour into prepared pans.
- 5. Bake for 30 to 40 minutes, or until toothpick inserted in center of cake comes out clean.
- 6. Cool for 10 minutes, then remove from pans and finish cooling on a wire rack. Layer and frost as desired.

Recipe tip:

Use the Chocolate Dip recipe on page 169 as frosting for this cake.

PURE FUDGE LOVE

Serves 24

Ingredients:

9.7-ounce bar of semisweet chocolate

3 cups raw sugar

34 cup unsalted butter

 $\frac{2}{3}$ cup unsweetened coconut milk

7 ounces marshmallow creme

2 teaspoons vanilla extract

Directions:

- 1. Butter a 9 x 13-inch baking dish or line it with parchment paper.
- 2. Chop the chocolate bar fine, and set it aside.
- 3. Place the sugar, butter, and coconut milk in a thick-bottomed, medium-large saucepan. Slowly bring the mixture to an active boil, stirring constantly. Continue boiling for five minutes over medium heat. If you are using a candy thermometer, it should read about 235°.
- 4. Remove from heat, and stir in the chopped chocolate. Continue stirring until the chocolate is melted. Then add the marshmallow creme and vanilla.
- 5. Pour the fudge mixture into the prepared baking dish, and let it cool.

Recipe tip:

You can also use this as a hot fudge chocolate dip!

SHAKIN' ME TO PIECES SMOOTHIE

Serves 2-3

Ingredients:

3/4 cup peanut butter

3 cups ice (more if needed)

3 cups chocolate almond milk

1 tablespoon raw sugar or stevia

 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup semisweet chocolate chips

½ cup chocolate protein powder

Directions:

Place all ingredients in blender and mix for 1 to 2 minutes, until smooth. Pour and enjoy!

Recipe tip:

If you are allergic to peanuts, try using almond or cashew butter instead.



No amount of riches can buy you peace of mind or a home in heaven.