

# How This Woman's Life-Changing Repentance Helped Her Lose 250 Pounds

I had college degrees and a lot of head knowledge about the Bible, but that still didn't stop me from believing some really big lies about God. I could see the lies others were believing just by looking at their behaviors.

## Lies I Believed

The lies I believed were in my blind spot. I couldn't see them and didn't relate them to my behaviors, even the obvious one of gaining up to 430 pounds.

It took me doing some work to even begin to acknowledge they were there. Recognizing the lies I was believing was the hard part for sure. Finding and admitting truth became the best thing I've ever done for myself.

One big lie I believed was "I have to do everything myself." In essence, I saw any sign of surrender as a weakness. I felt God put me here on this earth to overcome and so overcome I must, but I would have to do it by myself.

## Rebellion Against God

I can never overcome my human faults without submitting myself entirely to God, but I saw surrender as giving into an enemy or opponent. Waving the white flag was the last thing I wanted to do.

God, though, is not our enemy. So why are we in a war with Him in the first place? Our fight should be against the forces of evil. When we are insisting on our own way, when we are going against God's best for our lives, we are in a war with Him, even if we are Christians.

We have rebelled against our God when we decide not to follow what He says and instead get our own way. The process of resisting authority, control or convention is the very definition of rebellion.

## **Fighting for Ourselves**

Yet, when our authority is the God who loves us and only wants the best for us, fighting against Him is to fight against what is best for us. The only solution is to submit to the one who knows what's best for us.

Rebellion creeps in softly, slowly, in small increments. It usually doesn't hit us all at once. We don't call ourselves rebels because we just figure it's our nature to eat too much, drink too much alcohol, take too many prescription drugs, spend too much money, buy bigger houses and cars, and crave more and more and more of everything.

I would have never called myself a rebel back when I weighed 430 pounds and was editing Christian publications and still eating whatever I wanted, whenever I wanted. Now I see clearly that in that one area, I was a flagrant rebel who would not be caught dead waving the white flag.

## **The Sin of Rebellion**

Romans 8:7b, TPT, tells us that "the mind-set focused on the flesh fights God's plan and refuses to submit to His direction." When we set our mind on the flesh, which is our selfish desires, we have made God our enemy.

God is really clear about what happens when we rebel. "Woe to the rebellious children, who carry out their own plans but not mine, and who sign treaties without consulting my Spirit, piling one sin upon another" (Isa. 30:1).

It's not a stretch for me to see myself as the rebellious child Isaiah was talking about. I could have rewritten the verse this way. "Woe to Teresa, who eats whatever she wants,

but not what I show her is good for her, who spends way too much money on diets because she thinks it will be easier than consulting Me and following the leading of My Spirit. Every day, her rebellious acts continue to pile up.”

That was definitely me when I was super morbidly obese. I'm glad the internet wasn't around then because I would still be paying off bills I would have incurred from buying every weight-loss pill, shake or magic fix that promised quick, easy weight loss that showed up in my newsfeed.

## **Following God**

God had revealed His lifestyle change plan for me back in 1977. I rebelled against it, plain and simple. I spent the next 30 years fighting against Him in this one area. Yet fighting against Him in one area is the same as total rebellion. I just didn't see it that way.

I went through the religious motions of going to church, even reading my Bible and praying and hearing from God in other areas. But when I didn't follow what He had clearly shown me, I was still a rebel. Partial obedience does not compute in God's kingdom. It is the same as rebellion.

Since then, I've learned there were reasons I did that. I've allowed God to lead me through a lot of inner healing and freedom coaching work, but there was one huge hurdle I had to get over: I had to stop trying to fix my problems by myself.

## **Surrender Is a Good Word**

I had to willingly submit every part of myself to everything that God is. I had to repent of my rebellion. Then turn around and go the other way.

I had to understand: “The Lord our God is merciful and pardons even those who have rebelled against Him” (Dan. 9:9, TLB).

Making the decision to stop fighting God and totally surrender

to Him was the best decision I've ever made. Many people have asked me, "How long did it take you to lose 250 pounds?" I usually tell them one second or however many years old I am at the time.

Lifestyle change is something we work on all our lives, but there is that one second when we let go and surrender completely to God. It's a life-changing second. If that second had not occurred for me, I'd still weigh 430 pounds.

## **Walking Out the Journey**

Staying surrendered to God will be seen in how we walk out our journeys. It will be seen in our daily behaviors.

When I began to obey God, He brought order to my very chaotic and confused life. This brought me peace for the first time in many years. "God is not the author of confusion, but of peace" (1 Cor. 14:33a, MEV).

I also saw how the enemy had only one thing in mind for me. He wanted "to steal, slaughter, and destroy" my life. But Jesus said, "I have come to give you everything in abundance, more than you expect—life in its fullness until you overflow!" (John 10:10, TPT).

## **God's Strength**

Walking hand-in-hand with Him is a daily journey. I am always mindful of the weakness I have, but I now know that my weakness, when surrendered entirely to God, can be used in powerful ways. "When I am weak [in human strength], then I am strong [truly able, truly powerful, truly drawing from God's strength]" (2 Cor. 12:10, AMP).

God was the only one who knew how to lead me out of super, morbid obesity. And yet He was the one I was rebelling against. I know I'm not the only one. Many Christians I talk to have the same problem. We want to do better, but we have not discovered the way to do that.

God has been showing me the way for at least 10 years now. He has clearly shown me that the victory He has given me over my food issues is not just for me. It's for you, too. {eoa}

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## **The Leviathan Spirit and the Crocodile Have This Dangerous Characteristic in Common**

The gift of discerning of spirits is multifaceted, but one important component is discerning different types of demons, says Jennifer Eivaz. The prophet and podcast host says it's important to learn "how to discern certain things in the spiritual realm so that you can respond appropriately, respond intelligently, know how to pray through it, know how to cleanse your own heart."

In a *Take 10 With Jenn* podcast on the Charisma Podcast Network, Eivaz discusses the spirit principality known as

Leviathan which, she says, “is also known as the king of pride.” Here, she unpacks the truth about the Leviathan spirit.

Job 41, Eivaz says, describes this spirit principality in detail. The chapter starts out by asking, “Can you draw out Leviathan with a hook?” and ends with “He beholds every high thing; he is king over all the children of pride,” Eivaz explains.

“It’s talking about what appears to be a sea creature ... a creature in the sea that was probably more known to our ancient friends than to us,” Eivaz says. “And so we have to ask a question: Are we talking about an animal, or are we talking about a spirit?”

The answer, she explains, is both. The Bible will sometimes “start out talking about something in the natural, but then it will take on spiritual dimensions,” Eivaz says. “And that’s exactly what happens with this sea creature known as Leviathan. ... we begin to realize that this is also a standing metaphor for some kind of spirit. ... When you read it, you’ll begin to understand that there are attributes that are associated with this sea creature that are also attributes of this spirit prince known as Leviathan, and so [Scripture] refers to it as “the king of pride.”

Eivaz goes on to say that the spirit of pride “wants altitude, and it seeks to invade the high places. It wants to infect people in high places because it’s a glory stealer; it steals the glory that should go to Jesus Christ. ... Now, people infected by Leviathan .. they’re going to act higher and better and more superior than you,” she says. “They’re going to have a high and mighty attitude. You know, they deal with grandiosity and they fight unusually hard to be right—at your expense. That’s the nature of the spirit of Leviathan.”

“The closest word picture in the Hebrew for Leviathan is the

crocodile,” Eivaz adds. “And what does a crocodile do? It will get you in its jaws, and it will thrash you until you’re too tired to fight. It tosses you back and forth, one way after the other, to make you give up. And when it attacks you, this spirit tries to confuse you.”

To learn more about how to combat the Leviathan spirit principality, [click here](#).

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## **How This Godly Relationship Can Transform Your Spiritual Life**

Scientists say it’s possible for us to see the light of a distant star, farther from the earth than our own sun, after that star has died. The star might be long gone, but we may still benefit from its light gleaming in the heavens today.

### **Mentee**

This past week, I lost such a star. Marilyn Gaeta was a godly woman who mentored me for almost 10 years. The ultimate “Titus 2 woman” (Titus 2:3-5), Marilyn took this (then) young woman under her wings. I was barely 30 when she began encouraging and discipling me in every area of life: marriage, discipleship, ministry, teaching, speaking. Who I was as a wife and who I am as a woman, a Christian and a ministry leader is due in large part to her influence.

Marilyn encouraged me in countless ways. And she challenged me to grow. She did not shy away from saying the hard things I

needed to hear. But she wrapped the truth in love. Her desire was always for my eternal good and God's ultimate glory.

And now this faithful servant of Jesus Christ is worshipping her Savior face-to-face before the throne of God. Our loss is her gain.

## **Mentor**

The same weekend I received the news of her graduation to heaven, I also received a request to mentor a young woman. She's the third person to ask for a one-on-one mentoring relationship in the past several years. I say this not to boast. Heavens, no!

Instead, I say this with continued surprise that anyone would view me in this light. I still see myself as the "younger woman" needing the mentorship of someone older and wiser than myself. Yet the calendar and multiplying gray hairs tell me it's time to also embrace this season of life. And each time I speak into the life of another, I pray I will be an echo of what Marilyn was to me.

I haven't—and none of us has—"arrived" in our spiritual walk. And we won't, this side of heaven. But in the great circle of life, we will almost always find other Christians both ahead of us and behind us on this journey. Regardless of where we are, there's always someone else we can encourage, disciple and (dare I say it?) mentor. Don't wait till you have all the answers. Sometimes the relationship is about seeking those answers together.

What does this connection look like? Check out the resources here. For the younger woman, it begins with a willingness to ask and seek as the Holy Spirit prompts. For the older woman, it begins with being willing to follow the Holy Spirit's promptings to be attentive and open to the younger women around her. And for both parties, it requires a willingness to be real, to be vulnerable and to see the value in cross-

generational relationships.

So, where are you in this process? Mentor? Mentee? Or neither ... yet? Will you tell God you're open to seeing how He might use such a relationship in your life? Then follow as He leads! {eoa}

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## **Why Bestselling Marriage Author Now Tells Us 'When to Walk Away'**

Pastor, scholar and spiritual writer Gary Thomas is well-known as the author of the bestselling book, *Sacred Marriage*, whose premise and subtitle, "What if God designed marriage to make us holy more than to make us happy?" has changed countless marriages. *Sacred Marriage* teaches people to embrace, not run from, their difficulties and what God has to teach them through those issues.

With years of that kind of thinking, teaching and experience

behind him, what could have motivated Thomas to write *When to Walk Away*, his most recent book? “I think [before now] I was reading the Bible a little subjectively,” Thomas tells host Marti Pieper on the *Hope for Your Marriage* series on *Charisma News*. “My thought was, if I could just launch this great offense, be surrendered to the Lord, walk in obedience, be guided by the Holy Spirit, gain experience and understand Scripture, I [could] just play on offense, offense, offense, and everything [would] fall open in front of me.

“It never even occurred to me the need to play spiritual defense against toxic people,” Thomas says. As he ran into some toxic relationships in his own life, friends encouraged him to go back to Scripture and study what God has to say on this topic. “A counselor friend ... just encouraged me to go to the book of Luke and count how many times Jesus chose to walk away from someone, to let somebody walk away from Him,” Thomas says.

The author admits that, at one time in his life, he would have considered himself a failure if “there wasn’t complete victory in the situation. And when I saw how many times in the four Gospels together—I counted 41 citations where Jesus let somebody walk away without chasing after Him, or Jesus Himself chose to walk away when [people] wanted to do Him harm or they were just closed-minded—Jesus just needed to move on.

“It gave me a new freedom, and it helped me look at the strategy with which Jesus lived His life. I think too often I got bogged down in wanting to be known as the nicest person in the world. Jesus didn’t seem to wear that worry; instead, He was focused on being strategic and accomplishing His heavenly Father’s will.”

Thomas emphasizes, however, that a difficult relationship, including a difficult marriage, does not always fit the definition of “toxic.” “The difference with a toxic relationship is that two people aren’t growing through the

difficult,” Thomas says. “A toxic relationship is somebody who wants to hurt you. They’re slowly destroying you. They’re undercutting your sense of peace and security and sanity. They’re masters at gaslighting, which means they make you feel crazy for stating the truth.”

But Thomas says ultimately, the true danger of letting toxic relationships, marital or otherwise, continue is the threat they pose to your destiny in Christ. “God uses people who have this vibrant experience with God, they have a piece of who God is, they have a joy in what God has provided, a confidence not in themselves, but in the truth of God’s Word, the power of the Holy Spirit to work through them,” he explains. “When somebody is destroying all of that, they’re not just assaulting the relationship; they’re assaulting your ministry. And that’s a very different situation, where, basically, it’s undercutting everything that God created you to be.”

Listen to the entire podcast to learn more of what the Bible says about *When to Walk Away*.

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## **How a Friend’s Simple Invitation Led to God’s Miraculous Intervention in This Woman’s Life**

When she was at the lowest of low points, God broke into Dr. Kim Maas’ life. And not a moment too soon.

Although raised in church, she had spent many years walking

away from Him, the ordained minister and ministry leader says on the *Move Forward* podcast with Dr. Kim Maas on the Charisma Podcast Network. After a tumultuous four years of marriage and two children, she had just left her drug-addicted, alcoholic husband and moved into a small apartment with her daughters when a friend invited her over.

“They were planting a Vineyard church, and she invited me to come to her house, and just have coffee and talk,” Maas says. “And so I told her the whole ugly story, and I’ve got to tell you, this woman—wow. It was the beginning of redemption in my life. Really, it was the beginning of the setup for a miracle that God would do. But she didn’t judge me and she didn’t condemn me. And she didn’t read me all the verses that told me what a sinner I was; she was actually just kind and she listened. And then she invited me to her church.

“So I went for a couple of weeks and I helped set up chairs and everything,” Maas says. “It was in a high school auditorium, and I don’t remember anything that went on in those two Sundays, but I remember afterward buying myself a Bible—first one I had had in years, and I was sitting in my very bleak apartment; my two girls were sleeping in the back room.

“And I opened up my Bible, and I heard the audible voice of God,” Maas says. “Nothing could have prepared me for that. I didn’t know that God spoke. I didn’t know that He could speak. I didn’t know that He would speak. I didn’t know that He would love me enough to speak.

“Anyway, He said one thing. He said, ‘If you’ll go home, I’ll take care of everything,’” Maas says. “And I was shocked. I was shocked, too, by hearing the voice. It was so loud on the outside and the inside; it filled up everything. When I got over the shock, then I was just mad. And I stood up, and I was ranting and raving around in the house, and I was saying, ‘Don’t you understand? Do you have any idea what you’re asking

of me? Do you have any idea how badly I was treated? Do you have any idea how hurt I am?’ ... I was just yelling and screaming at Him, and He didn’t say another thing. And I just had this knowing. ... I knew it was a fork in the road. I was either going to go one way with the Lord and go there for the rest of my life, or I was going to go the other way on my own and never return.”

To find out what happened, [click here](#).

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## **How Hannah’s Supernatural Story Teaches Us to Believe God for the Impossible**

Faith: We only need a mustard-seed portion to witness amazing things. With just a bit of faith, the miraculous can invade daily routine and exceed our expectations for what’s achievable: “Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly beyond all that we ask or imagine, according to the power that works in us, to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen” (Eph. 3:20-21).

Provision, restoration, resurrection—it all takes faith. But sometimes faith has to fuel more than one quick prayer—maybe more than one month of prayer—as the Lord leads the way through a journey of faith. From initial request to the time of enjoying the answer’s arrival, it is through that “substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (Heb. 11:1) that we can enter what the Lord desires to

actively work out in our lives.

Faith pleases the Lord, and faith is a vital aspect of the Christian life. Faith causes us to move forward during those challenging times when every factor seems to point toward inevitable impossibilities. The interesting thing about faith is that the Lord uses it to sustain us in the waiting as we cast our cares upon Him, believing life will still be OK despite perceived delays. And there are moments when it seems an answer has been given by the Lord's hand only to have Him lead us from having the faith to receive it unto the faith that releases it back to Him.

Hebrews 11 outlines faith well, highlighting moments of our spiritual forebears who, against all odds, saw the miraculous hand of God move in impossible situations. Abraham and Moses, Noah and Gideon, Sarah and Rahab, Joseph and David—these imperfect followers take their place in the hall of faith as dictated by a gracious God whose love truly covers a multitude of sins.

They fought the good fight of faith and stood strong to see the Lord prevail. Despite challenges, testing, temptations and troubles, they awaited the power of God for breakthrough and turnaround. Every name is included with great reason. Their stories, located throughout the Bible, teach and encourage us in our day-to-day life. "They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they loved not their lives unto the death" (Rev. 12:11).

Perhaps someone who would share a strong testimony of steadfast faith would be Hannah. One of two wives to an Ephraimite named Elkanah, Hannah was greatly loved by her husband. But she was also greatly taunted by his other wife, Peninnah, who, unlike herself, was able to have children (1 Sam. 1:6-7).

In 1 Samuel, during the annual time of worship and sacrifice

in Shiloh, Hannah pours out her heart to the Lord in prayers, allowing her tears and prayer to flow freely.

“So she made a vow and said, ‘O Lord of Hosts, if You will indeed look on the affliction of Your maidservant, and remember me and not forget Your maidservant, but will give to Your maidservant a baby boy, then I will give him to the Lord all the days of his life, and no razor shall touch his head’” (1 Sam. 1:11).

Her vulnerable moment of prayer is interrupted by Eli the priest, who mistakes her quiet prayers as a sign of drunkenness. Hannah quickly interprets the cry of her heart, attributing her tearful prayers to sorrow, not alcohol. In turn, Eli sends Hannah home with a promise of her prayers being answered.

As He’s done repeatedly, the Lord once again shows Himself faithful. Within a year, Hannah conceives and gives birth to a son named Samuel. And just as the Lord kept His word to Hannah, she responds in faith to the Lord’s good gift of a male child and keeps her vow to God.

*Then the man Elkanah and all his house went up to offer to the Lord the yearly sacrifice and his vow. But Hannah did not go, for she said to her husband, “I will not go up until the child is weaned, and then I will bring him, that he may appear before the Lord and live there forever.”*

*So Elkanah her husband said to her, “Do what seems good to you. Wait until you have weaned him; only may the Lord establish His word.” So the woman remained, and nursed her son until she weaned him.*

*When she had weaned him, she took him up with her with three bulls, one ephah<sup>l</sup> of flour, and a bottle of wine. And she brought him to the house of the Lord in Shiloh, though the boy was young. Then they slaughtered a bull, and they brought*

*the boy to Eli. And she said, "Oh, my lord! As you live, my lord, I am the woman that stood by you here praying to the Lord. For this boy I prayed, and the Lord has given me my petition which I asked of Him. Therefore also I have let the Lord have him. As long as he lives he will be dedicated to the Lord." And he worshipped the Lord there (1 Sam. 1:21-28).*

Hannah receives the answer to her prayers, only to relinquish control back to God. She delivers Samuel to the priesthood to be taught by Eli. A woman who was wracked by the grief and shame of being barren takes the child of her prayer and truly places his care into God's hands.

Without any Plan B, any caveats or conditions, Hannah sets her heart to fulfill her vow to the Lord and places her only son in an environment that's equivalent to a debauched frat house. When good logic and Christian parental groups would have dictated that the best scenario for a precious gift from God would be a place where holiness is practiced—or at least a place with his mother—Hannah instead honors her word and her God with unwavering faith and takes Samuel to the temple despite it being a place known to be unholy, depraved and the exact opposite of what it was created to be, to exemplify and to accomplish.

"Now the sons of Eli were corrupt. They did not know the Lord" (1 Sam. 2:12). "Therefore the sin of the young men was very great before the Lord. For the men treated the offering of the Lord with contempt" (1 Sam. 2:17).

And Hannah doesn't show her commitment only for a couple of days, waiting to see if everything meets her standards or turns out OK before she rushes back to Samuel's side to take him home with her. She fully entrusts her only son into God's care.

With eyes of faith, Hannah looks past the very real factors of Samuel's impressionable young age and the sinful actions of

those who are expected to mentor him in a holy profession. She rests her gaze on the God who is faithful. Through her practical actions, she displays her respect for her son's profession and her trust in the Lord, who sees all, hears all and answers prayer.

"But Samuel ministered before the Lord, as a boy, wearing a linen ephod. Now his mother would make him a little coat and brought it to him every year when she came up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice" (1 Sam. 2:18-19).

And once again, the Lord shows His response to faith—not just to Hannah, but also to Samuel and ultimately to Israel. In a time when the word of the Lord was rare and Israel was being represented before the holy one by leaders who were knowingly sinning against God without remorse, God uses Hannah's promised child, Samuel, to prove that "He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him" (Heb. 11:6b).

In faith, Hannah's offering to the Lord is multiplied back to her. "The Lord visited Hannah, so that she conceived and bore three sons and two daughters. And the boy Samuel grew before the Lord" (1 Sam. 2:21).

Even in an environment that could influence Samuel toward corruption, the Lord ensures and cultivates Samuel's maturity into holiness. "Now the boy Samuel was growing both in stature and favor with the Lord and also with men" (1 Sam. 2:26).

Not only does God ensure Samuel's holiness, but He causes him to become a prophet through whom God corrects and guides Israel.

"And Samuel grew, and the Lord was with him and did not let any of his words fall to the ground. All Israel from Dan even to Beersheba knew that Samuel was proven to be a prophet of the Lord. And the Lord appeared again in Shiloh. For the Lord revealed Himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of the Lord" (1 Sam. 3:19-21).

In times when life's challenges seem impossible and any type of turnaround seems unlikely, we, too, can be like Hannah. She knew where to take her problems. She knew who collects tears. And she knew who answers prayer.

Faith the size of a mustard seed is perfect for the planting and birthing of the miraculous. When those uncomfortable, aggravating, impossible moments collide with the power of God and He's connected to our faith, the impossible once again becomes reality. Mourning is turned to joy, desires of the heart become reality and even the dead live again.

We, too, experience the benefits of covenant from the God who can bring the dead back to life and make new things out of nothing. He sustains. And He responds to faith.

He lifts our heads until we can declare like Hannah, sing like Hannah, even rejoice like Hannah in the midst of impossible-looking situations. Even in the face of perceived defeat, we remain confident "There is none holy as the Lord, for there is none besides You, and there is no rock like our God" (1 Sam. 2:2).

*Where in your life can you grow in faith? {eoa}*

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# The One Thing You Must Do to Experience True Spiritual Weight Loss

It frustrates me to no end to have a choice I need to make and not be able to make a decision. I have to make a choice or it drives me crazy. I'd rather make a wrong decision than no decision.

## No Commitment

That's why being on the fence is an overwhelmingly frustrating place for me to be. It is a place of no commitment. For some, though, it is being stuck in what has become a comfortably uncomfortable rut.

It's comfortable because it's a routine that's already programmed into our brains. Our brains use millions of shortcuts we aren't even aware of. Most of us do the same thing every morning. We do it without thinking.

I get up and brush my teeth without thinking. I take my vitamins without thinking. If I didn't have them in my weekly pill box, many mornings I wouldn't remember if I had taken them or not. I'm on autopilot because a shortcut in my brain takes up less processing space.

## Shortcuts

It's just like a shortcut on our computer keyboards. We hit a key that already has that shortcut programmed in, and it performs the function right away because it's in a different place on the hard drive, a more accessible place.

This is why we reach for that bag of chips, favorite cookies or ice cream. It's our programmed response to stress. It's a habit we have. We come home after a hard day, sit down in front of the TV and snack, even though we've just eaten a full meal.

Let me be clear: We aren't making choices when we do this. We are running on shortcuts we have preprogrammed by our earlier choices. Now, they are so ingrained we think we have no choice. We are stuck.

## **Thank God for Free Will**

I am thankful, though, that God in His wisdom provided a wonderful thing for us called free will. This is the ability all humans have to choose a different way of doing things, to break bad habits and form better ones, to get off the fence and make a determined and thoughtful decision instead of just doing what we've always done and expecting different results.

This is really the crux of the issue for food addicts, bingers, overeaters, those who purge and chronic dieters. It's what we've always done, and we just keep doing it, but nothing different ever happens.

"God has called us to live a life of freedom in the Holy Spirit. But don't view this wonderful freedom as an opportunity to set up a base of operations in the natural realm. Freedom means that we become completely free of self-indulgence" (Gal. 5:13, TPT).

## **Nothing Works for Me**

Many women with extreme weight issues are like I was. We think nothing will ever work for us, but we will always fork out money for the latest, greatest diet plan that promises we will lose 20 pounds a month or some other incredible goal.

These promises never work because the basic diet plan isn't our real problem. The problem is the choices we are making,

the habits we can't seem to break.

When we think about seriously trying to get down to the core issue of why we can't lose weight and why we can't make good choices or change our habits, we run the other way. Part of it is because we are afraid of facing what's there.

## **I See You**

I know you. I see you. I know the other part is, you just want to believe that lie that says 100 pounds can be gone quickly and easily. It can be gone, but I won't lie to you. It won't go without kicking and screaming!

However, it will go when you make the right choices and learn to confront and overcome the core reasons you aren't doing that.

You will have times you are frustrated and overwhelmed, but that's why you want to have a coach and group of peers like you who can support, encourage and challenge you to keep going.

## **Indecision Nearly Killed Me**

I know all of these problems all too well because I've faced every one of them. There came a point in my life when I just gave up on all weight-loss plans and just decided to be fat. I felt it was my lot in life.

That decision of staying on the fence and doing nothing is what helped me gain up to 430 pounds. It almost killed me. For years, every moment of every day, I made bad choices by putting extra food in my mouth and damaging the body God gave me to house His very Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19).

So I made the biggest decision of my life. I decided after 50 years of living and at least 20 years of being morbidly and super morbidly obese that I would surrender this issue to God.

## Self-Sufficient

When we get right down to it, we know God will help us, but we just aren't sure how to access His help. Surrender is always the key, but surrender involves trust, as I talked about in this post. We want to be self-sufficient and do it our way.

In the famous words of Dr. Phil, "And how's that working for you?" Still, I get it. I've been there. It's the American Dream to do things on your own. But it's God's dream if we do things not just with Him, but in Him—through Him and by His strength.

Philippians 4:13 is a great scripture. I love this verse in the Amplified Bible because it addresses this problem head-on: "I can do all things [which He has called me to do] through Him who strengthens *and* empowers me [to fulfill His purpose—I am self-sufficient in Christ's sufficiency; I am ready for anything and equal to anything through Him who infuses me with inner strength and confident peace.]"

## In Christ's Sufficiency

Did you get that? I am self-sufficient, but only in Christ's sufficiency. He gives me the tools to do the right things and infuses me with strength and peace.

Our trust issues will affect whether or not we can completely surrender our food issues to God. This can happen only if you make a wholehearted commitment to seek God for your very own journey to transformation.

It's time to get off the fence. Are you ready? {eoa}

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at . Check out her new podcast, Sweet Grace for Your Journey.

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## **Prophetic Healing Evangelist: Here's the Greatest Cure for Your Mental Illness**

The greatest cure for mental illness is the Word of God. And I believe much of what the world refers to mental illness is demonic oppression or possession. I also believe that most deliverance will come by renewing the soul (the mind and the emotions) with God's healing Word. The Bible tells us in Isaiah 26:3, "You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You."

Do you need this perfect peace operating in your life today? If so, you're not alone; many of God's people are suffering from attacks on their mind and emotions. But I am a firm believer in the power of God's Word. If we will keep our thoughts focused on God and His promises, this perfect peace will belong to us.

We are responsible for taking control of our thoughts. We are not to allow them to wander off into territory where we don't belong. Proverbs 4:23 warns us to "Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life." Philippians 4:6-7 teaches us how to guard the innermost thoughts of our

hearts. It admonishes us in this way: "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything, by prayer and supplication with gratitude, make your requests known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will protect your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

What have you been thinking about? What arena are your thoughts dwelling in? Your heart will eventually follow after your deep, inner thoughts. And once they get inside your heart, your actions will follow after them.

If your thoughts are dwelling on sexual sins, your actions will follow after those unclean thoughts. And if you allow yourself to dwell in these dark places, you will become enslaved to sexual perversion of all types.

If you are watching satanic movies or reading books about the occult, you will open yourself up to the realm of the devil, and he will make sure his demons take control of your mind and emotions.

Drugs and alcohol cause your spiritual filters to fail you, and you become easy prey to Satan's demonic strongholds. Then you will either become oppressed or possessed with demons.

If you are unequally yoked with a nonbeliever, whether in marriage, business or friendship, you put your soul (mind and emotions) in jeopardy of transferring of spirits. And that same spirit controlling them enters and inhabits your domain.

No matter the unwelcoming situation you have found yourself in, there is hope for deliverance and healing in God's Word. But you have to choose to be free and make quality decisions on a daily basis to get free. If you are standing in proxy for a loved one, you have to fight for the freedom of this person by prayer and fasting and standing on the promises of God.

"My son, attend to my words; incline your ear to my sayings. Do not let them depart from your eyes; keep them in the midst

of your heart; for they are life to those who find them, and health to all their body” (Prov. 4:20-22).

I believe that most deliverance will simply come by staying in the Word of God: living a lifestyle of reading and studying, meditating on the promises of God, speaking these promises aloud over yourself and doing what it says to do. If you will do what I just wrote here, most of you will find your freedom. And the others who are further into the bondage of Satan will need others to fight for them.

Jesus says in Matthew 17:21 concerning certain types of demon possession, “this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting.”

I pray this has helped you to see where you need to start on your journey of deliverance from mental illness and to regain your mental health and well-being. {eoa}

**Becky Dvorak** is a prophetic healing evangelist and the author of *DARE to Believe*, *Greater Than Magic*, *The Healing Creed* and *Conquering the Spirit of Death*. Visit her at .

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## **Why the ‘Little Words’ in Ephesians 2 Make a Big**

# Difference

Just as the simple things in life matter, so do little words. And often, the little words in the Bible are the ones we need to notice most.

“Ephesians 2 actually has a whole bunch of those little words in it that we need to pay attention to,” says pastor and mentor Ruth Hendrickson on the *Real Truth With Ruth* podcast on the Charisma Podcast Network. “... I really want to encourage you that next time you open the Word of God, really pay attention to some of these little words.”

The first word Hendrickson points out is the word “all” in verse three of Ephesians 2, “among them we all also once lived in the lusts of our flesh, doing the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and we were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.” “All of us used to live that way,” she says. “Now, what does the word ‘all’ mean? It means every single one of us. That means we can’t escape.

“And one of the things that that word ‘all’ does is it puts us on a level playing field. So all of us used to live that way,” Hendrickson continues. “What way? Following the passionate desires and inclinations of our sinful nature.

“So it’s really important to see that word ‘all,’ because as I already mentioned, it puts us on an even playing field,” Hendrickson says. “But the other thing I want to say is not only do some of us struggle—we can struggle with pride, and we can feel that we’re better than anyone else. We’ve been walking with the Lord for years, or we do good moral deeds, whatever. But the truth is, *all* of us have lived that way.

“And the other thing is, we have people who feel like they’ve done something so horrible that they can never measure up—that God can never forgive them,” she adds. “And so that even playing field is also very important because it says, ‘Wait a

minute, we've all been there.'

"Our stories might look a little different. But truth be told, every single one of us used to live that way," Hendrickson says. "And so [the word 'all'] gives hope. It gives destiny. It gives purpose. It says that what I have walked through doesn't have to define me and it doesn't have to label me. Because *all* of us used to live that way."

For more biblical teaching on the small words in Ephesians 2, listen to this podcast. {eoa}

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## **What I Learned About God After My Husband Unexpectedly Died**

On New Year's Day 1997, my husband, Brent, went to bed before I did, and that was last time I saw him alive.

When I got to the bedroom a couple hours later, he wasn't breathing. I called 911 and the paramedics came, but he was never revived. He hadn't been sick or anything—he just went to bed and went to heaven at 37 years of age. (You can read more about it in my book *Why God Why: What To Do When Life Doesn't Make Sense*).

As you can imagine, that event rocked my world. I was caught completely by surprise. Our sons were 12 and 13 years old, and the three of us were plunged into a season of grief and bewilderment. As for me, I had to take over parenting teenage sons, pastoring our 4-and-a-half-year-old church and getting

over the sudden death of my husband.

That was over 20 years ago now, and looking back, I can see that while it was the worst time of my life, you could say it was also the best time of my life. I know that sounds weird, but it's true. I can say this because I pressed into God like never before, and He met me in a profound and life-changing way. He was right there, a very present help, drawing near to me every time I drew near to Him. It's really the time I fell in love with Him.

I spent hours reading my Bible, running my finger down the page like a 5-year-old learning how to read. I *had to have it*. God's Word is Him talking to us, and I wanted to hear Him every minute during those first days of recovery.

Psalm 119:92-93 says it like this: "Unless Your law had been my delight, I would have perished in my affliction. I will never forget Your precepts, for with them You have revived me." That was me. His Word was a lifeline for me—I felt like I would have perished without it. Night after night, I just sat in a quiet place and let His Word wash over me. He gave me life through His Word—it was my delight.

I found God through His Word. I found out He is so faithful, so available for us whenever we call upon Him. Psalm 46:1 (NKJV) says, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." As I found out firsthand, that's absolutely true! As I drew nearer and nearer to Him, He was such a present help—I could feel Him right there with me each day as I navigated my way through the days and months after my husband's death.

James 4:8a says, "Draw near to God and He will draw near to you." I found out He's always available when we draw near to Him. There's really no one else you can say that about. Think about it: Even the people you love most can't be available for you 24/7. There are times you might call on them and get their

voicemail, or they're simply too busy to drop everything and rush to your aid.

But not your Father God. He's never too busy for you. You'll never get His voicemail. *Every single time* you draw near to Him, He'll draw near to you.

Now, I would say that I knew God before my husband died. I would even say I loved Him, yes! I had read all those verses before. I had preached the Word and been a faith girl. But there's something about pressing in during a time of need—a time of desperation, really—that helped me find out that He really is a very present help in times of trouble. That time period after my husband died is really when I fell in love with God.

Why? Because I spent so much time with Him. {eoa}

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*This article originally appeared at . It is an excerpt from my new book Closer Than You Ever Imagined: Experiencing the Deep Relationship With God You Always Wanted. Read the first part FREE and/or order your own copy.*