

This May Be the Missing Spiritual Step in Your Weight-Loss Journey

No matter how hard it is to forgive someone who has mistreated you or one of your children, siblings, husband or friends, it is exponentially harder to forgive yourself than any other human being.

No Excuses

Although I shared recently that the most difficult person I've ever had to forgive was the man who abused me, that just isn't true. The most difficult person I've had to forgive has been myself.

See, I know what I've done. I can't get away from it. I can make excuses for why I did certain things. I can feign lack of knowledge. I can blame it on my upbringing. I can blame genetics.

In the final analysis, though, it comes down to this: No one spoon-fed me sugar, comfort foods and all the great foods I love to eat. Nope, I did that all by myself. No one forced me or even encouraged me. They didn't have to. I loved certain foods more than my very life, and I would eat them whether anyone wanted me to or not.

When the Engine Dies

Doing that for most of my adult life meant I gained up to 430 pounds. I was a walking heart attack waiting to happen. The doctor told me I might have five years before it happened, but one day, my heart would just give up.

It's kind of like putting the four-cylinder engine from my little Honda Fit in a semi-truck and forcing it to pull the

load. First of all, it probably couldn't be done, but if it could it would not move that truck very far for very long before throwing a rod or doing whatever engines do to totally blow up.

That's what was happening to me. My heart was designed to power a normal-sized body, not one that had morphed into the super morbidly obese category. When the cardiac surgeon gave me five years to live if I didn't lose weight and keep it off, he seemed rude and uncaring.

No Excuses

However, it was the most effective communication I've ever received from a physician. There was no beating around the bush. The news was delivered directly and succinctly.

Lying there in the hospital bed after he and his entourage had left, it finally hit me. I was a 45-year-old woman who had single-handedly managed to eat herself into extreme obesity, diabetes, high blood pressure and congestive heart failure. At any minute I could die, and it was all my fault.

I tried to place the blame elsewhere, but every time I tried to point a finger to something, there were way too many fingers pointing back at me.

Why Do I Want to Live?

During the time in the hospital, I finally began to formulate specific reasons of why I wanted to live because just saying I wanted to live wasn't working. I knew in the moment of temptation that desire would morph into "I want to live to eat that piece of red velvet cake."

No, the reasons I wanted to live had to be greater than what I wanted in any given moment. They had to be over-arching. They had to matter, really matter, to me.

With tears in my eyes, I cried out to God and told Him why I

wanted to live. I want to be here for my children to see them grown up and do all the great things they would do. I want to be here to continue to love and grow old with my husband.

I want to be here to write the books God has always shown me will be in my future. I want to be here to live out my purpose. Those became my big-picture dreams.

What Have I Done?

As I thought about those dreams, though, I became increasingly more angry with myself. *What have I done? Why can't I get a handle on my weight? Why do I continue to eat instead of stopping when I am full? What is wrong with me?*

I resonated completely with Paul's words. "I want to do what is good, but I don't. I don't want to do what is wrong, but I do it anyway ... Oh, what a miserable person I am! Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin and death?" (Rom. 7:19, 24, NLT).

It was in those moments that I realized like everything we go through, God has a process for this, too. In the next verse, Paul says, "Thank God, the answer is in Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 7:25a).

Accepting That I Have Sinned

I finally got it. I finally understood that when I don't do the good that God wants me to do, it is plain and simply sin. When I do what I know is wrong, it is also sin. So how does Jesus free me from sin and the conundrum I find myself in?

He gives me grace when I forgive myself and ask for His forgiveness. Many times in my life, I would cry out to God and say, "Oh God, I'm sorry I overate this weekend and gained weight. Forgive me."

God forgives me, but the problem is, I didn't forgive myself because I didn't accept responsibility for what I clearly did.

Acknowledging my own sin and accepting responsibility for it is the first step in the process of forgiving myself.

This process began in that hospital room, but it didn't culminate until I was willing to admit what I had done was my fault. No one else's. I could not go forward on my journey to transformation until I mourned what I had done, forgave myself, cried tears of repentance and then began the process of totally changing my lifestyle.

Not a Quick Process

This was not a quick and easy process for me, but it was necessary to walking out my journey. There have been many milestones along the way. One of them was when the doctor gave me five years to live. One was when I stated out loud that I forgive myself and then surrendered sugar to God.

The milestone I love, though, is the moment when my husband and I were in Gatlinburg, Tennessee, doing some shopping after I had done a TV interview. All of a sudden it hit me. I have let all the pain go for what I had done to myself.

I have forgiven myself. It took daily work and doing what I knew God had asked me to do all those years ago, but the process paid off. God brought beauty out of the ashes of my life and I am the better for it.

How to Forgive Yourself

You may be thinking, *That's all well and good, but you don't know what I've done.* No, I don't, but God does and He will forgive you. He tells us He removes our sin as far as the East is from the West. Do you know how far that is? It is for eternity, because there is no end to the universe (Ps. 103:12).

We know this verse, but many times I've found when talking with individuals I'm coaching that they believe God can forgive them, but they can't forgive themselves. I admit it's

a hard thing to do, but realize that when God says He won't forgive us if we don't forgive others, we are included in the "others." We have to forgive ourselves for God to forgive us.

I don't know about you, but I can be my own worst critic. Don't keep yourself from receiving God's grace and mercy. Accept, admit and repent of what you have done wrong. Then turn around and go the other way with God's help. {eoa}

Teresa Shields Parker is the author of five books and two study guides, including her latest, *Sweet Journey to Transformation: Practical Steps to Lose Weight and Live Healthy*, and her No. 1 bestseller, *Sweet Grace: How I Lost 250 Pounds*. She is also a blogger, spiritual weight loss coach (check out her coaching group, *Overcomers Academy*) and speaker at .

This article originally appeared at .

My Husband's a Sex Addict; What Can I Do?

You and your husband are Christians, but you've just discovered his terrible secret: sexual addiction. Maybe he confessed it to you, or maybe you walked in on him while he was watching online porn. Maybe he's been sexting with another woman. Or maybe the addiction has gone as far as soliciting prostitutes or an extramarital affair.

You're a wife in pain. You're embarrassed, angry and unsure. And you may be like most women, says Diane Roberts, co-founder with her husband, Dr. Ted Roberts, of Pure Desire Ministries. "Usually the first thing the wife thinks is, *There's something wrong with me,*" Diane says in the Robertses' interview with host Marti Pieper on the "Hope for Your Marriage" series on Charisma News.

How could this happen? And where can you go for help?

With sexual addiction and the #MeToo movement in the news almost every day, Pure Desire Ministries offers resources for hope and healing. And the nonprofit has a unique focus in its ministry to betrayed wives.

"From the get-go, 20-plus years ago when we started this ministry, Ted started working with the men and then all of a sudden as the husbands were starting to talk about their issues, honestly ... their wives were in shock," Diane says. "They didn't know what to do. So they all came to me and we realized, *We need to do something for the women.*

"When a church focuses only on the men and not the wives who are really hurting, the analogy I give is, it's as if the husband has just run over the wife with a Mack truck, and then the church, the ambulance, comes and takes the man away," Diane adds. "[The church] helps him, takes him to the hospital and leaves the wife bleeding in the middle of the road, not knowing what to do with her pain." Pure Desire's Betrayal and Beyond groups and resources offer hope and help for betrayed women concurrent with the ministry's Seven Pillars groups for men.

Pure Desire also found that 25-30% of women in the church struggle with sexual addiction, too, says Diane, and offers them help as well. The ministry's accountability groups go beyond just "stop it," Dr. Ted says, to treating the roots of the addiction and beyond. He says, "We don't want them just to

stop the behavior. We want them to put good things in place of that behavior,” such as husbands and wives praying together every night or instituting a regular date night.

For more information about the problem of sexual addiction and how Pure Desire offers betrayed wives, sexual addicts and others lasting hope and healing, listen to this podcast. {eoa}

Before You Jump to Wrong Conclusions, Here's What You Need to Do

Autumn is here. Splashes of red, orange and gold punctuate a green canopy. Falling leaves blanket lawns. A nip in the air and hot apple cider are on the stove (or in the microwave!). Sweaters and scarves become go-to accessories.

Or not.

Here in South Florida, the only red and orange we see is found in flaming sunsets across blue skies. There might be the occasional falling leaf, but for the most part, the only thing blanketing our lawns are grass clippings from the last mowing. And we're not quite ready for hot apple cider. Cold water and iced lattes are still the beverages of choice. Sweaters and scarves? Not for another few months, when a "cold front" slips through and the temperature dips into the 50s and 60s.

Things aren't always what they seem, are they? Autumn in South Florida is less like a different season and more like a cooler version of summer. Yet if you've lived here long enough, you

can sense the subtle change in the air. A bit of a breeze. A lessening of the humidity. Of course, there are man-made indications, as well. Children back in school. Halloween displays in the stores and Christmas decorations lurking in the aisles that used to contain patio chairs and barbecue supplies.

People are not always what they seem, either. We make judgments based on assumptions and past experience, often arriving at the wrong conclusion.

The bully in school may be compensating for an alcoholic father. The neighbor who keeps to herself may be afraid for anyone to see her bruises. The co-worker who eats lunch alone may be doing so because he doesn't want anyone to know that he can't afford to join his colleagues at the local restaurant.

But God sees what we can't see, and knows what we don't know. "For the Lord sees not as man sees. For man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart" (1 Sam. 16:7b).

The problem isn't just that we make wrong judgments. It's also that wrong judgments are made of us. I've been misheard, misconstrued, misinterpreted, misunderstood and misjudged countless times. Still, I have a choice. I can lash out in my hurt, dishing out payback, which I'm sorry to say I've done more often than I'd care to admit. Or I can remember I don't have all the facts and ask God for the ability to view that other person with His perspective.

Autumn in South Florida:

-Sunscreen at the beach.

-An iced latte at the Starbuck's drive-thru.

-Flip-flops or bare feet.

Yup. Things aren't always what they seem. {eoa}

Ava Pennington is a writer, speaker and Bible teacher. She writes for nationally circulated magazines and is published in 32 anthologies, including 25 Chicken Soup for the Soul books. She also authored Daily Reflections on the Names of God: A Devotional, endorsed by Kay Arthur. Learn more at .

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Prophet: There Is a Spirit of Death Over Our Nation

There is a spirit of death over our nation and people. And the alarming thing is that many do not see it, but nevertheless, it is here. And it is working hard against us in these last days. Perhaps when we do not realize the connection between the physical realm and the spirit realm, we don't understand the root of the problem; therefore, we try to fight our battles in the flesh, but they are won in the spirit.

In my latest work, *Conquering the Spirit of Death*, I deal with the many ways it is attacking us and our loved ones today. But more importantly, I teach you through the Word how to conquer this spirit of death. But before I share with you the how-to, I feel it is important that we consider some of the ways it is attacking us today. (*Author's Note: The following is an excerpt from Conquering the Spirit of Death, Chapter 1, "The Spirit of Death," pp. 8-9*).

It is very evident to me that today many are in need of this

teaching as well. This week alone, the prayer requests from my readers are filled with distress calls for deliverance and healing from the spirit of death that is rising against them in many forms.

God's people are crying out for deliverance from a spirit of suicide, for encouragement and a reason not to abort their children and for divine intervention and protection from near deadly attacks from abusive family members and demon-possessed strangers.

Many others are seeking help to heal from the last stages of breast cancer, prostate cancer, kidney failure, and rare and incurable diseases.

The news is filled with disasters that are sweeping the lives of hundreds and thousands off this earth and into an eternity in hell with no hope of escape. And not so popular in the news, whether it be Christian or secular sources, is the onslaught of persecution of our Christian brothers and sisters around the world who are being martyred for their faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

As followers of Jesus, how do we respond? How do we go beyond just mere survival in these last days and step into the promise that we are more than conquerors, and actually defeat and conquer the spirit of death?

God wants us to know how to conquer this spirit of death. He wants us to have His full revelation concerning our victory in Christ. His Word so beautifully tells us in 2 Corinthians 2:14 (NKJV), "Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place."

Let's pray.

Dearest Holy Spirit,

You are our teacher, and we ask You to diffuse the fragrance of Your knowledge in every place so that we might triumph in Christ. Glory be to God in the manifestation of this revelation in our lives that we are more than conquerors, including victory over the spirit of death. In the mighty name of Jesus we pray, amen. {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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Anne Graham Lotz: I Was 29 Years Old Before I Actually Noticed the Holy Spirit

How many things have been around us for a long time that we simply have not noticed?

Like the bagel lever on my toaster. I recently went online to find another toaster because the one I've had for about 20 years no longer toasted both sides of the bread. When reading the reviews of the brand I was interested in, I came across one purchaser who was pleased that the model she selected toasted one side of her bagel while leaving the other side warm and chewy. I jumped up to see whether that could be why my toaster was toasting only one side of my bread. Sure

enough. My toaster had a bagel feature that was turned on. When I turned it off and put in a slice of bread, both sides toasted evenly. I had to laugh, even as I felt foolish for not having noticed the bagel feature that had been there as long as I had owned the toaster.

While toasters hold nowhere near the significance of the Holy Spirit, could it be that many of us have never really noticed Him either? Maybe we've never been taught to notice Him. Even though I was raised in a home where Jesus was beloved and obeyed, I don't remember being taught about the Holy Spirit. This has made me wonder whether you would say the same thing.

What have you learned or been taught about the Holy Spirit? The only recollection I have of any mention of the Holy Spirit is from church—and we went to church every Sunday. Except that He wasn't called the Holy Spirit. He was called the Holy Ghost. At the end of the church service, the pastor would pronounce the benediction, indicating in my small child's mind that now we could go home and have a delicious Sunday lunch. So I wasn't very attentive or curious about the way he concluded with a benediction. I was vaguely aware that he always pronounced the final prayer *in the name of the Father, in the name of the Son and in the name of the Holy Ghost. Amen.*

It was not until years later when I was teaching a weekly Bible class that I learned the amazing truth of who the Holy Spirit is. I was 29 years old, in my second year of Bible teaching and doing my best to convey insights into the Gospel of John for the 500 women who sat before me each Wednesday. In hindsight, I was like the blind leading the blind. The only reason I knew more than they did was that I had studiously crammed during the week leading up to the lecture.

The week before Feb. 22, 1978, I was cramming as usual in preparation to teach John 14 to my class. And there it was! Jesus told His disciples, "And I will ask the Father, and He

will give you another Counselor to be with you forever. He is the Spirit of truth. The world is unable to receive Him because it doesn't see Him or know Him. But you do know Him, because He remains with you and will be in you" (John 14:16-17, HCSB).

Several thoughts came to me in quick succession:

- That the Spirit was another counselor.
- That the Spirit was a distinct person from Jesus but just like Him.
- That the Spirit would come from the Father.
- That the Spirit was with the disciples at that time but would be in them at a future time.

Like a time-delayed video of a flower bud opening into full bloom, the revelation seemed to unfold gradually. The Spirit would be another counselor. So who was the first counselor, who would make the Spirit another one? Jesus! The Spirit would be exactly like Jesus yet another distinct person. He would come down from God. Even as Jesus had come down from God in human form, the Spirit would come down from God in spirit form. Jesus clearly identified the Counselor as the Holy Spirit (John 14:26). The disciples already knew Him because Jesus was filled with the Spirit. They were with Jesus; therefore, they were already with the Spirit. But Jesus was announcing that a day would come when they would no longer be with the Spirit because the Spirit would be sent to actually indwell them.

What an amazing, wonderful discovery that still thrills me! It is more than worthwhile to give Him our attention so we can get to know Him, love Him and enjoy the presence of the one who is Jesus in me—and in you. {eoa}

Anne Graham Lotz, *second child of Billy and Ruth Graham, is the founder of AnGeL Ministries and former chairman for the National Day of Prayer Task Force. She has authored 15 books,*

including her new release, Jesus in Me: Experiencing the Holy Spirit as a Constant Companion, from which this article was excerpted.

This article originally appeared at . {eoa}

Couple Offers Life-Changing Tips to Avoid Divorce

Ted and Charity Bradshaw have something in common with many couples today: They're both the children of divorce. The impact those divorces had on their young lives led each of them to decide never to marry "because we didn't even want that kind of pain," Charity says.

But after they met and later became engaged, that early pain moved them to make a special commitment in their own marriage, they tell host Marti Pieper on the "Hope for Your Marriage" series on Charisma News. "We both very soberly went into marriage, knowing that there are possible negative outcomes that we didn't want, and we really wanted to set our marriage up from the beginning for success," Charity says.

That mindset, and how they have sought to live it out, inspired their recent book, *Staying I Do*. In this podcast, the Bradshaws each offer a top tip for couples who want to maximize their marriage potential and avoid divorce. Charity says that early on in their marriage, "I was putting God-sized pressure on Ted to be everything for me." She has what may seem like an ordinary solution for this common problem—but in

her view, it's not ordinary at all.

"One of the best things I did was I actually started reading the Bible every day; I used the YouVersion Bible app," Charity says. "I would encourage every single person [whether you're struggling in your marriage or not] ... This is not contrived. This is not trite. This is the truth: You need to know more about what God has to say about you, how He designed you, who He decides to use, how He's equipped you, how special you are to Him. And once you have the knowledge, it translates into confidence. It translates into belief that you have value, and then when you have value, when you believe that, you can add value to somebody's life versus sucking all the value that they could possibly have, and it will never be enough for you."

And Ted has his own top tip for those who want to succeed in marriage: "Be yourself. You have to be open and honest ... but you have to also be vulnerable and be willing to show every side of you," he says. "Don't hold anything back thinking that the other person can't handle it. Because No. 1, that's not true. We all have problems and issues that we have to work through. Your spouse does as well. They're not as perfect as you think they are. You're not as perfect as you think you are!"

"But being yourself, being your true, authentic self, you'll never come to a place where they think, *Who is this person that I married?* If you're growing together with God's guidance in your life, and your spouse is growing with you, you both can achieve what you want. But if you're trying to be somebody else, or what you think they want, you're never going to hit that moving target."

For more from Ted and Charity Bradshaw and their tips for building a stronger marriage, listen to this podcast.

Prophetess: How a Spirit of Praise Can Guide You Into Supernatural Weight Loss

God is a God without limits, but we often try to put limits on him anyway, says prophet Jennifer Eivaz. “We so often think that’s he’s not going to get into certain things, that those things are off-limits or that He doesn’t care or He has left that up to us.”

What we need to remember, Eivaz says on the “Take 10 With Jenn” podcast on the Charisma Podcast Network, is the scriptural truth that God is our helper through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. “He is our helper; He’ll help us. And He gives us every key for abundant life in His own Word.”

One of those keys, Eivaz has discovered, is the miracle of supernatural weight loss. She began looking into this miracle and studying it because the Lord had never used her in this way. As she studied, she says, she experienced the Holy Spirit’s supernatural anointing in this area.

“Not only did I have this anointing, but all of a sudden, I had an understanding from the Word of God about how the Lord wants to help us be at our ideal weight, the weight that helps us to accomplish His purposes, His destiny in our life,” Eivaz says. “And I want to point that out because this isn’t about vanity. This is about purpose. This is about you being able to run your race the way God wants you to run it.”

One insight came from Isaiah 61:3, “to grant those who mourn in Zion, to give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness ...

that they may be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord that He may be glorified," Eivaz says. "I asked myself this question: Is there such a thing as a spirit of heaviness? And if so, what does that spirit do to you? And we see a key right there to break it. The garment of praise. Something about praise breaks the spirit of heaviness."

Eivaz learned more and more as she studied and "tested the spirits" by posting to her online community about what she had learned. In a Facebook Live event, she asked people to praise and then report to her the results. "I started getting these testimonies. People started feeling heat on their body; they started feeling cold on their body; their body started shaking involuntarily, and a few other things. But what was most important is, the testimonies that came, there was a mix of testimonies that people started losing weight instantaneously. . . . And by the next week it'd be like five pounds, eight pounds. That's a big deal. That doesn't happen overnight."

Later, Eivaz used this principle of praise in some of her meetings, and, she says, "people started losing weight right before our eyes. One girl in Tampa, she lost so much weight right in front of us instantaneously. She was swimming in her clothes because the weight was coming off supernaturally. And her testimony back to me was this, that she felt like bricks were coming off her.

"And what I noticed is this beautiful woman began to emerge out of all of this, this heavy weight that was on her, weight that she couldn't get off. And it happened when we engaged in praise."

To learn more about Eivaz's teachings on keys to supernatural weight loss, listen to this podcast. {eoa}

Prophetic Word: 'My Beloved, It's Time to Rise and Shine'

The Spirit of the Lord would say to you this day:

It's time to rise and shine with the Resurrection power of Holy Spirit.

It's time to rise and shine with all boldness, not withholding in this late hour.

It's time to rise and shine and declare the goodness of God to a lost and dying world.

Yes, the Antichrist spirit is rising up quickly, and it's strong—but even still, greater am I, Jesus, in you than he, Satan, who is in this world.

I created you to be a light in the darkness; now rise and shine, and yes, give God the glory.

I created you to be victorious; now fight the good fight of faith.

I created you to be a conqueror—more than a conqueror.

But you cannot win, if you will not fight the battle before you.

Pick up your spiritual weapons and fight the way My Word instructs you.

In Me you are undefeated.

With Me you win.

And I created you to win always, not just once in a while.

But you choose this day to win or to give up.

Remember, I never gave up on you, and I never will.

I overcame the human will, so you can overcome it too.

This is the first step to win any and every battle that you face.

Now remember to rise and shine with My Resurrection power today.

*And again I say, "My beloved, it's time to rise and shine."
{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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RT Kendall: Why So Few Believers Read Their Bibles Today (and Why We Should)

It is sadly true that today, most Christians—whether liberal, evangelical or charismatic—*do not know their Bibles*. It does not help that less and less expository preaching exists today

throughout the world. Topical or motivational preaching has largely dominated the airways in our day. Not that there is anything wrong with topical or motivational preaching. The best of God's servants have done it and still do. But a key component of expository preaching is a high view of Scripture. One is hardly motivated to preach chapter by chapter—not to mention verse by verse—if they do not believe the Holy Spirit inspires every word.

One of the greatest adjustments I have had to make—and am still having to make—is to *assume nothing* when I preach and when I write. I must keep in mind that many of my hearers and readers—thank God for the exceptions—will need my help to grow in their understanding and knowledge of Scripture.

It is a new generation, somewhat like the new Pharaoh who did not know Joseph (Exodus 1:8). There was a time when all Egypt rejoiced in Joseph and his family, but that era did not last. There came a new pharaoh that owed Joseph nothing, a new generation that did not appreciate Joseph—indeed, a generation who felt threatened by Joseph's legacy.

It is much like that today. So many people in the church do not know their Bibles because they do not often read their Bibles. Not only that, church leaders themselves often do not know their Bibles; neither do they urgently encourage Bible reading. Worst of all, there is an ever-increasing number of people in the pulpit and pew who have not been persuaded by the inner testimony of the Holy Spirit that the Bible is the Word of God.

This is how we know that the Bible is the Word of God: by the inner testimony of the Holy Spirit. There are those who have tried to lean on the so-called “external” proofs of Scripture—archaeology, testimonies of people who say what the Bible has meant to them and so on. These external proofs will not totally persuade. Only the Holy Spirit totally persuades. And because there has been a diminishing of the knowledge of

the Holy Spirit in our day, it is not surprising that many people are “tossed to and fro” by “every wind of doctrine” (Eph. 4:14, ESV).

God would not send His Son to us and then allow what He came to do to be forgotten. That is why we have the Bible. God gave us our Bibles. Are you thankful for the Bible? If ten God gave us Bibles, does He not want us to know what’s in them?

The degree to which we believe the Bible is infallible, reliable and faithful often determines how much we care to read it. Mind you, the church being in a deep sleep has resulted even in many advanced Christians being dormant in their Bible reading. As I said, I can recall a day—in my lifetime—when *laymen* knew the Bible so well you could say people read their Bibles, but they also memorized large portions of them. Such a practice has virtually perished from the earth today. I’m sorry, but even many preachers do not know their Bibles. Some only turn to the Scriptures when they need a sermon!

I would plead with every person who reads these lines to have a Bible reading plan, preferably one that will take you through the Bible in a year. It means reading approximately four chapters a day. Doing this 1) keeps you in the Word and 2) gives you what the Holy Spirit will call to your remembrance later. One promise concerning the Holy Spirit is that He will call to remembrance what Jesus taught (John 14:26). Some say, “What I need is to be slain in the Spirit.” I say: If you are empty-headed when you fall, you will be empty-headed when you get up. There will be nothing in your head of which the Holy Spirit can remind you!

We need the Bible and the Holy Spirit! Scripture needs to be applied and the Holy Spirit will do that as we read the Word, and heed the anointed preaching of God’s Word.

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Prayer Power for the Week of Nov. 3, 2019

This week, renew your commitment to hide God's Word in your heart by reading it daily and memorizing key verses. Read the Bible prayerfully and ask the Holy Spirit to apply what you need to your life. Continue to pray for our nation and its leaders. Declare that righteousness will prevail in this land. Remember our allies, those serving as first responders and in our military, and their families. Ask God for wisdom for upcoming elections. Pray for those who are suffering loss through wildfires and other harsh weather conditions. Read: 2 Chronicles 7:14, Matthew 25:3, Ephesians 4:14. {eoa}

How This Woman Overcame the Emotional Pain of the Abuse That Drove Her Into Food Addiction

That God commands us to forgive is a scriptural truth we cannot get around no matter how hard we try. The issue is, how do we forgive when the hurt has run so very deep, we think we

will never be the same again?

God Doesn't Rate Sin

Part of the problem is we categorize the sins that others do to us. God, however, doesn't have categories of sin. To Him gossiping is as much of a sin as our spouse cheating on us.

To us they are vastly different because one may cause us to be slightly perturbed, especially if people are gossiping about us, but the other wrecks us emotionally, ruins our marriage and family and makes us feel devastated.

God is not asking us to disregard the trauma that any number of difficulties bring us. When He tells us to forgive, it is for our benefit. It is to help us move forward with our lives instead of staying stuck in the past and allowing that situation to rule us.

Sex, Money or Power

God wants better for us, but He also gave all people free will. That means no matter what, people can make really bad choices. They go with their wants and desires and ruin lives in the process. They aren't thinking of anyone else but themselves.

They may never change, and we cannot change them by holding grudges against them. They have moved on and are living off their own desires for sex, money or power, the three main motivations for most of the anguish others cause.

If we harbor the anger and try to get back at them, we have played right into their plan of advancing their agenda because it will eventually ruin us.

How Do I Forgive?

God's plan to cut through this is simple. Forgive and you will be forgiven (see Matt. 6:14). Understand that we must see

their sin as God sees ours. It doesn't make sense to us because we rate sin. To God, though, our sin of telling what we consider an innocent lie is as wrong as someone stealing our inheritance.

The question then becomes, how do I forgive? The biggest issue I've ever had to forgive and work through so far was being molested when I was 11. When something monumental happens to us at that age, we don't know what to do with it. I told no one. I was afraid people would think somehow I was to blame.

My dad never wanted me to wear shorts or short-sleeve shirts. It was summer, and I was wearing both of those. Maybe it was my fault. Maybe my family would side with the much older, popular friend of the family and think I was to blame or they wouldn't believe me at all.

Memories Can Terrorize

I couldn't chance it. I didn't tell anyone. I determined I would protect myself. I would try to never be in a position to be alone with him.

For years after it happened, I told myself it was OK to eat whatever I wanted, whenever I wanted because then I could protect myself from men like the one who molested me.

Whenever I thought of him, I saw him looming as a monster in my mind and I was a tiny speck in comparison. There seemed to be no getting away from the terror those memories caused.

It wasn't until I was a married adult wife and mom that I began to understand the depth of emotional pain I was carrying because of this incident. I happened to hear Joyce Meyer share her story of being raped continually by her father.

Simple Process of Forgiveness

Her story was 10 times worse than mine, and I wondered how she could be such a dynamic Bible teacher with that past. Then,

she shared how God had led her to forgive him.

As she led us in a prayer, I simply said, "God, I choose to forgive my abuser for the fear and anguish he caused me. I don't want to carry this pain any longer." I didn't realize how ready I was to release the pain. The moment I said those words, he became like a little shriveled up old man in my mind.

I've faced other situations, though, where someone has made a choice that hurt me deeply. Those have been harder for me to forgive because I always want to change the scenario.

I want them to admit they made a wrong choice. However, their choice has already been made. They aren't going to change their minds. It's not a story that can be rewritten.

Forgiveness Is a Process

Forgiveness is a process we must go through. The person who wronged us will be held accountable to God. Our job is to forgive them.

In those cases, I finally had to be obedient to God and forgive them. I did not go to the person and tell them, "I forgive you." If the person is not sorry, that will only cause more problems.

First, I told God that I choose to forgive this person for the specific thing they did. This starts the process. This is our first act of obedience. When my mind once again starts replaying the incident over and over, I have to stop the tape and say, "I choose to forgive this person for (this specific thing)."

Once again, I release it to God and leave it there. If I pick it up again, I forgive again. Each time I have had to do this, a little more of my anger, frustration and pain is released.

Do It Until It's Done

Forgiveness is a process. We do it until it is done. Eventually the obsession with the issue fades. One day, months down the road, something may trigger a thought of the person, situation or circumstance. I know forgiveness is done when I can think about it without the emotional turmoil I felt in the past.

This is the point at which I once again become so grateful that God's plan of forgiveness actually works. I can look back and remember times when I spent months writing out the ways things should have gone that would have made the situation better for me.

I was obsessed with fixing the issue when the issue was unfixable by me. Only God can make everything work out in the end. He is the author and finisher. He knows the entire story. We don't.

Getting the Most Out of Pain

God uses everything we go through to help us learn how to depend on Him even more. Some things people choose to do to us hurt and are not in God's perfect plan for our lives, but it still does not take Him by surprise. He will use the pain they caused to help us focus on Him even more.

It's only as we navigate through our difficulties that we understand how deeply God loves us. Only then do we get the courage to keep on going because in this life and the next there is still more beauty to grab hold of.

"We never give up. Though our bodies are dying, our spirits are being renewed every day. For our present troubles are small and won't last very long. Yet they produce for us a glory that vastly outweighs them and will last forever! So we don't look at the troubles we can see now; rather, we fix our gaze on things that cannot be seen. For the things we see now

will soon be gone, but the things we cannot see will last forever" (2 Cor. 4:16-18, NLT).

Forgive. It's one of the best things you can do for your emotional, spiritual and physical health. It has rewards here and for all eternity. {eoa}

Teresa Shields Parker is the author of five books and two study guides, including her latest, *Sweet Journey to Transformation: Practical Steps to Lose Weight and Live Healthy*, and her No. 1 bestseller, *Sweet Grace: How I Lost 250 Pounds*. She is also a blogger, spiritual weight loss coach (check out her coaching group, *Overcomers Academy*) and speaker at .

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*For more about forgiveness, check out Charisma's e-book *Forgive Them Anyway*, available at this link for just \$.*