

Dealing With 9/11 Anniversary PTSD? Here's the Life-Giving Advice You Need

It was bedtime as usual on the night of Sept. 10, 2001. Little did we know that by the next morning, countless Americans would *never* again be the same! And maybe you and your loved ones are more impacted than you realize.

Since 9/11, an astounding number of people have been afflicted with or re-activated by Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (**PTSD**), a condition that can affect *anyone* who has been exposed to a traumatic or life-threatening event. It has been described as a "normal reaction to an abnormal event."

I just received a desperate text from another wife of a veteran who battles PTSD. She said, "Welby, I'm not sure I can handle another 9/11 anniversary. Last year my husband was triggered so badly not only did I think he was going to end up as one of the suicide statistics, but *I found myself* struggling with PTSD symptoms too and just wanted to run away! Why is it that our warriors are so drawn to war movies and horrific news when it actually makes them worse? He won't turn off his news feed on Facebook, and stays glued to the T.V. and all the replays of the disasters. What am I supposed to do?"

Veterans are just part of the millions who have been severely affected by trauma. And even if a person was not directly involved with the disaster, horrific events such as 9/11 can retraumatize those who already have PTSD. It's similar to grief. Those who have deeply grieved the loss of a loved one, find that any further grief or loss in their life will also exhume all the grief they thought was buried.

One amazing lady shares, "I already had PTSD after the suicide of my husband, so when 9/11 hit, things went from bad to

worse. Now I am remarried to a Vietnam veteran who also has PTSD. When his PTSD kicks in, mine does too ... and it gets really interesting here! I still cry at the drop of a hat, but volunteering, connecting with others and also directing my grief in positive ways has really helped.”

As one of the most tragic days in the history of the United States approaches, (or any patriotic holidays or traumatic anniversaries), be alert for increased symptoms of PTSD in yourself and those around you. These may include anxiety, avoidance, depression, fear, flashbacks, hyper-vigilance, numbing, nightmares, difficulty sleeping, relationship problems, outburst of rage and other emotions, withdrawal, employment problems, increased substance abuse and suicidal thoughts.

But before you toss in the towel, I’m here to tell you there is hope. I see victory over PTSD every day in my veteran husband, who has battled it for decades. Although it is never easy—a continuous challenge—the rewards are so worth it!

I encourage everyone who struggles with PTSD and all the loved ones who also live with it, to do all you can to be prepared for triggers and traumatic dates like 9/11.

Bottom line: know what resources are available and connect with others who care. I encourage you to visit for helpful information about PTSD, resources and ways to connect with others.

How Those With PTSD Can Prepare for the 9/11 Anniversary

1. Stay aware of your body and emotions.
2. Talk about it with someone who is supportive.
3. Have the courage to call for help if you need it (1-800-273-8255).
4. Avoid the news, photos and all T.V. about 9/11.
5. Plan something enjoyable to do that day and the next.
6. Consider volunteering or helping someone with a need.

7. Be with someone you trust and who cares about you.

How Loved Ones of Those With PTSD Can Prepare for the 9/11 Anniversary Too

1. Stay mindful of your own body and emotions.
2. Remember you cannot “fix” the one you love.
3. Give them space if they need it.
4. Encourage them to connect with a support group and/or counselor.
5. Keep the television and all media off or tuned to something unrelated.
6. Connect with others in a similar support role.
7. Do something special for *you*.

And as for the young lady who is dreading 9/11 and wants to run away, I reminded her that she cannot control her husband or his reactions, but she can continue to express her love and support, while at the same time staying focused on taking care of herself and her children.

As a person of faith, God has given me an incredible promise to hold onto as well. Jesus said in John 16:33b (NIV): “In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.” Our story doesn’t end with PTSD. Our grief and our tears are not in vain, because we are promised a hope to come.

As long as there is trauma, there will be PTSD. And although people with PTSD may never again be the same, they *can* live happy and fulfilled lives in spite of it. I know. Because *we do*. {eoa}

Welby O’Brien holds a master’s degree in counseling from Portland State University and a teaching degree from Biola University, and based on her own life journey, she has authored *LOVE OUR VETS: Restoring Hope for Families of Veterans with PTSD* (), *Goodbye for Now (grief support)* and *Formerly A Wife (divorce support)*. Join Welby and thousands of

others on Facebook: Love Our Vets – PTSD Family Support, LLC on Facebook.

For more on dealing with PTSD, listen to the podcasts included with this article.

Your Spiritual Secret to Bearing Kingdom Fruit

In a recent devotional, we discussed how we learn about faith from others, and today, we will learn to grow our faith by the study of God's Word.

Jesus shares with us a parable in Luke 8:14-15 about how faith grows in different types of spiritual soil. Let's look to these Scriptures to learn how to grow our faith. "And as for what fell among the thorns, they are those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by the cares and riches and pleasures of life, and their fruit does not mature. As for that in the good soil, they are those who, hearing the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with patience."

Obviously, when we read this portion of Scripture, we sense a pricking in our spirit, and we do not want to be found among those with thorny spiritual soil. But how do we prevent this from happening in our faith walk with Jesus? What measures can we take to prevent thorns from producing in our spiritual soil? Firstly, we need to examine our own hearts, judge our thoughts, words and actions against the Word of God. Ask ourselves, "Have I allowed life's worries to overrun my mind

and emotions?" "Are the riches and pleasures of this world controlling me?" "Am I in the same condition, spiritually speaking, as I was last year in this area of life?" If when we judge our hearts and find that our faith seeds have been choked out by the weeds of this world, we need to pull the weed seeds out of our spiritual gardens, change out the soil and replant our gardens. How do we do this?

- Admit to God that we are not where we should be in our faith walk.
- Ask Him to forgive us for allowing the things of this world to choke out our faith.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to lead and guide you into all truth.
- Open up your Bible and read it, study it, speak it and this time, live it.

After reading this portion of Scripture from Luke 8:14-15, can you honestly say to yourself that you have overcome these weaknesses and temptations in your life and are stronger in the faith than you were last year? You will know that you are growing in the faith as you can look at the fruit being produced in your life. Healthy vegetation produces from good soil that is filled with the necessary nutrients to produce good fruit. But even though you may have a strong crop now in your life, you still must maintain a lifestyle in the Word of God. For even strong and healthy soil, if not tended to properly, will get depleted and only be able to produce thorns, those spiritual weed seeds that are not healthy for us and hurt us in our physical lives.

In Joshua 1:8, God shares the secret to growing our faith and living it out successfully, "This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success."

Let's pray this simple but heartfelt prayer together:

Father God, In the name of Jesus, as I examine my faith walk, I see things that I know are displeasing to You and are preventing me from being where I should be with You, spiritually speaking. Forgive me for allowing the cares of

this world to suppress my faith and prevent it from growing strong. Holy Spirit, I ask You to lead me and guide me into all truths in Your ways as I make a quality decision and open up my Bible and read, study, speak and live out Your Word today. In Jesus' name I pray, amen. {eoa}

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

This article originally appeared at .

How You Can Stir Up the Angelic Spirits Assigned to Your Divine Destiny

There is a new assignment of angels all around us—angels that will connect us with our destiny. I call them angels of destiny. They are assigned over the prophetic word over your life, and they help you fulfill it. The Bible calls them “ministering spirits sent forth to minister to those who will inherit salvation” (Heb. 1:14b).

Angels have been assigned to all of us to help us get across to our next season in life. Many of God's chosen have been receiving prophecies about promotion, and where there's promotion, there's always an adversary that wants to stop us from going through the door. But God is releasing a new force, a new company of angels that will be governed by the Holy Spirit to break you through. They will war with you, protect

you and bring you to that place of new beginnings.

During my prayer and study time, God has continued to put images of angels before my eyes. He keeps challenging me to study them. He's been showing me that He is doing something new with angels on behalf of the chosen. He is reintroducing us to a whole company of supernatural agents on call to do our bidding. To get them to act on our command, we must speak what God is speaking. Our actions and instructions to them must be in line with God's will. Angels are not genies, and they are not subject to flesh. This is why it is so important that we walk according to the Spirit and in the knowledge of God's will for our lives.

As we pursue God and press in to the Spirit, the Lord will begin to give us revelations about the natural army—you and me—and the spiritual army—the angelic host of heaven—moving together. What we see with this collaboration is a picture of the natural and the spiritual converging in the coexisting spirit realm.

I want to show you here how to stir up the angelic spirits sent to minister to us and the various roles they play in the life of the chosen.

“The angel of the Lord camps around those who fear Him, and delivers them” (Ps. 34:7).

When I would see angels, the Lord would tell me to lift up my voice in praise and worship. “You are dispensing angels,” He'd say. He was helping me understand that praise and worship are how we release angels to set up ambushes against our enemies. We forget that at times, but when we open up our mouths and praise the Lord, angels start moving on our behalf.

Psalm 103:20 tells us that angels hearken to the voice of God's Word. Angels excel in strength. Angels are powerful spirits that have been sent to assist us in advancing the kingdom. Though it can be hard to realize, it is important to

know we are not alone. First, God has given us His Spirit to comfort, guide, teach and empower us for our chosen assignments, but we also have the ministry of angels, which have been sent forth from the throne of God to minister on our behalf. That gives us supernatural assistance.

Many who hear the word of the Lord spoken over their lives wonder how His word can manifest in their lives. Have you ever received a prophetic word that seems almost impossible? God has assigned angels to make it so. They help fulfill His divine purposes. When we speak and decree the word of the Lord, angels begin to minister on our behalf.

Angels are at work behind the scenes, influencing cities, nations, governments and history, and as we've discovered, they are also sent to minister on behalf of individuals. And yes, angels are involved in helping you fulfill your destiny and purpose.

✘ *Adapted from Chosen by Michelle McClain-Walters, copyright 2019, published by Charisma House. This best-selling author will show you how to move to the next level, knowing that you are "chosen" and have a divine destiny and purpose. To order this must-have book, click on this link.*

Prayer Power for the Week of Sept. 8, 2019

This week, thank the Lord that He has chosen you and you have a divine destiny and purpose. Thank Him for the angels He has assigned to help you fulfill that purpose. Remember those who have been victimized through no fault of their own, those who lost loved ones through crime, accident or natural disasters. Pray for those recovering and those grieving over their losses. Ask God to show you how you can be a blessing in the midst of tragedy. Continue to pray for revival, and for the nation, its leaders and allies. Read 2 Chronicles 7:14; Psalm 34:7, 91:11; John 15:16.

For more of Michelle McClain-Walters' powerful teaching,

listen to the podcasts included here!

Try This No. 1 Way to Be a Victor, Not a Victim

True confession: I totally got the idea of this blog title while I was watching TV.

Pretty spiritual, huh?

But as I was really wrapped up in the plot of this show, I felt like God whispered a little secret in my ear about the characters I was watching. And as usual, it was pretty profound. Wanna know what He said?

Okay, let's start at the beginning. One of the main characters on the show—let's call him Dan—ran into an old friend he hadn't seen in years, not since the days when they were Marine pilots together. The two old friends went out to dinner to reminisce about old times. But as they sat talking, the friend confided that he and his wife were separated, heading for divorce.

Dan felt terrible for his friend and said, "I'm so sorry to hear that. Man, marriage is hard, isn't it?" In response, the friend spit out sarcastically, "Not for Dan Do-Right."

Dan was stunned as his friend followed that barb with a long bitter diatribe about how perfect Dan's life was, how selfish Dan was and how it was Dan's fault that he (the friend) had ended up where he was today. When Dan asked him

what in the world he was talking about, the friend got increasingly hostile.

A 25-Year Grudge

To Dan's amazement, his friend spat out, "You should have stopped me! It's all your fault!" He was talking about an incident that had happened 25 years before. It had happened when they were serving as Marine pilots and were out bar-hopping until the wee hours. Unbeknownst to Dan, his friend had an important flight test coming up the next day, but he got roaring drunk.

At 1:00 a.m., he finally told Dan about the next day's flight test, and as soon as Dan heard it, he insisted they should go home. But the friend wanted to keep partying, and they stayed out even later. As a result, the friend failed the flight test, which in turn disqualified him from flying in Desert Storm with all his other pilot buddies. Basically, that one decision to stay out late changed the course of his life.

The amazing thing was that he had been bitter toward Dan about it for 25 years! Never mind that it was *his* fault (and not Dan's) that he drank too much and went to bed too late (and never mind that *not* having to fly in Desert Storm was probably a blessing in disguise!).

We all know someone like this. When they talk about an issue that hurt them years ago, it sounds as if it happened yesterday. The pain has held them in bondage all that time, and wreaked havoc in their life.

That's what unforgiveness can do to you. And as I watched, I heard the Lord whisper, "Forgiveness was his answer, and he chose bitterness instead." Wow. The No. 1 way to be a winner instead of a victim is to *forgive*.

That may sound easier said than done, but it's so worth it. Ephesians 4:31-32 tells us to "Let all bitterness, wrath,

anger, outbursts, and blasphemies, with all malice, be taken away from you. And be kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ also forgave you." Forgiveness is freedom.

And God just wants you to *want to*. So I encourage you: forgive today. It's never too late to become a winner instead of a victim.

Karen Jensen Salisbury has been in ministry over 30 years. Formerly a lead pastor, then an instructor at Rhema Bible College, she is currently an itinerant minister and author of several books. Connect with her on her website, , on Facebook, Instagram or Twitter.

This is an excerpt from Karen's book "I Forgive You, But ..." For more help with forgiving those who have hurt you, read the first part free right here. This article originally appeared at .

The Supernatural Access You Need to Solve Your Problems at Work

Have you ever felt disconnected in your calling, as though your professional life and your spiritual life didn't quite match up?

You're not alone, says host Linda Fields on the "Linda Fields Show" podcast on the Charisma Podcast Network. The Old

Testament patriarch Joseph experienced this in both the prison and the pit. And accessing his wisdom, she says, is part of what she calls “going to the counsel table of the Lord” for strategy and prayer.

Business strategist and intercessor Dean Briggs, her podcast guest, agrees that gaining access to supernatural wisdom is critical. “When [Scripture] talks about the prophets in the Old Testament, you see them talking about having access, kind of behind the veil, to dimensions of heavenly realities that are part of the birthright of the believer in the New Covenant, but it was only occasional in the Old Covenant.

“When we talk about the range of problems facing the earth, they are beyond human wisdom, yes, but they are not beyond the wisdom of the Lord. And ... we can learn how to—by faith and practice and discernment and experience—understand that we’ve been given access into heavenly dimensions, heavenly realms, and that there are answers in the heart of God for the trials we’re facing today.”

Briggs again points to Joseph as an example of an average man who received unfair treatment but “his gift made room for him; he’s literally going from slave to second in command. And Pharaoh says, ‘Where can we find a man like this, who has the Spirit of God in him?’

“Every business professional has that potential to be in their sphere of influence, in their market, in their demographic, in their business, and have the Spirit of God in them in a remarkable way.”

To learn more about accessing the counsel of God as a business professional and to hear about Fields’ upcoming IMPACT 19 gathering, listen to the podcast included with this article.

Instead of a Diet, Try This Simple Spiritual Weight-Loss Plan

Why do we have to complicate everything? Why can't we just live simply so we can simply live to follow Christ?

This is so true of weight loss. It really isn't complicated, but many want us to think it is.

I won't lie. For those of us with weight issues, weight loss can be the most difficult thing we've ever had to tackle even for a Christian. It may be hard, but the best plan is to just start with one simple thing, and I don't mean a diet.

Why Diets Don't Work

Anyone who knows anything about me knows I've lost 250 pounds, yet I am not a proponent of diets. Since I once weighed 430 pounds, I've been on most every diet imaginable.

The thing I hated about most diets was their complexity. Many had various lists of foods. I could choose some from this list, one or two every once in a while from this list, none from this list, at least one a week from this list and all I wanted from this list.

I had to keep track of macros and nutrient content, weigh my food and keep track of my calories or points. Or I had to eat only prepackaged food I bought from the company, which was never enough for me. Some had menu plans I had to follow exactly.

With every diet, as soon as I stopped paying the diet company

money, I would go off the plan and start gaining weight again. Even though they had maintenance plans, it was an extra cost and that just didn't interest me.

All or Nothing

Every diet felt like an all-or-nothing proposition. Before the diet, I was eating all I wanted of anything and everything. Then, bam, I'd go on the diet and totally change everything at once and basically eat nothing.

There was no plan for permanent lifestyle change. It was simply go on this plan, lose 100 pounds and then live happily ever after at the new weight. That never worked. I hadn't changed the way I ate. I couldn't wait until I got off the diet and could eat all I wanted again.

When I finally got the point where it was lose weight or die, I wanted to figure out not just how to lose weight but how to change my lifestyle. I was ready to live, really live a full and happy life. I wanted to learn how to do that.

Start With One Thing

The easiest, most uncomplicated thing I learned is to just start with one thing I wanted to change. We all have bad habits. They can be things we eat, drink, lack of exercise, bad sleeping habits, even emotional, mental or spiritual issues.

It doesn't work to just stop a bad habit. If we tell ourselves, for instance, that we are going to stop eating sugar, all we are going to think about is sugar, sugar, sugar. So instead of stopping, we eat it all the more because we're thinking about it even more.

Eating way too much sugar was my biggest sin. So kicking sugar was first on my list. However, I also knew from past diets that stopping sugar cold turkey never worked for me. I could

power through it for a while, but then I'd go off the diet. The minute I gave into temptation, I couldn't stop eating sugar and I'd gain the weight back again.

Habit Change

I wanted to do this the right way. I needed a way to stop eating sugar a little at a time, but make it permanent. My mentor explained that to stop a bad habit, I needed to start a good one. I needed to put all my emphasis on starting the good habit while putting firm boundaries around the bad habit I was stopping.

For my mind to understand what I was doing, both the bad and good habits had to be specific and identifiable. Most of all it had to be something I really wanted to change.

For my first habit change I decided to stop eating candy. This worked well because my mind couldn't trick me into wondering if it was candy or not. I put firm boundaries around candy.

Instead, I focused my attention on getting to my water exercise three times a week for 30 minutes. Since I was doing no exercise, this was a great start. I put this on my calendar and planned any appointments around that time.

How It Worked

That was at least eight years ago. These days, my goal is to exercise five days a week for 45 minutes to an hour. I rarely miss my exercise time. It has become my time to unwind and even to communicate with God.

Stopping candy was easy when I focused on establishing my new habit of exercise. As that became firmly embedded in me, I moved on to other habit change areas. I tried to make sure I had one habit change firmly in place before I added anything else.

As I stopped eating candy, I began to see I was going to other

sugary treats like cookies and baked goods. One at a time I started eliminating those things and starting other good habits that would help me on my journey, such as learning to eat salads, getting to bed earlier, spending quality time with God, learning to cook new, healthier meals and so much more.

'It Ain't Dat Hard'

Each time, I was only stopping one thing and starting another. I did this with the help of a coach and a group where we discussed our successes and failures.

Like a coaching client said, "It ain't dat hard. It had to be easy for me to be able to do it!" I say losing 250 pounds is the easiest hard thing I've ever done because I had God's strength to help me.

Truth is, I could not have achieved this monumental lifestyle change without God's power. I knew I couldn't lose the weight without His help. I tried and failed way too many times. I am weak around sugar. Admitting my weakness became the portal to God's mighty power that is living in me. (See 2 Cor. 12: 9-10, TPT.) It is the only way I was able to lose the weight and keep it off.

It also helped for me to know that God truly does desire that I succeed and prosper and be in good health physically as my soul prospers spiritually (See 3 John 1:2, AMP.) His desire is that all people be healthy and alive to fulfill the destiny He has for each of us.

Live simply by simply living following Christ. It is what He wants for us. {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 best-seller, *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 .

Instead of ‘Why Me?’ Here’s the Faith-Filled Question You Should Ask Instead

Living in Florida, I recently engaged in a stressful dance with Hurricane Dorian.

For those who haven’t been following the vagaries of tropical weather, Dorian crossed the Atlantic as a tropical storm that grew into a Category 5 hurricane. With a peak wind speed of 183 mph, Dorian is one of the strongest Atlantic hurricanes on record.

Those of us in Florida watched with trepidation as Dorian appeared to target our state’s east coast. We prepared for the worst and hoped for the best. And many of us prayed.

We prayed for Dorian to turn north before it made landfall in Florida. *Not here, Lord!*

Then we watched this monster storm engulf the Bahamas. It devastated the islands with punishing and merciless winds before continuing its deliberate journey toward us.

And we prayed some more. *Lord, help those in the Bahamas. But please don’t let that happen to us. Not here, Lord. Not me, Lord.*

Even as I prayed this, I found myself wondering, *Why not me?*

Have you ever asked, “Why me?” Or perhaps, “Why not me?”

- Why am I the one who received that prognosis?
- How come I didn't get the last seat in that class I wanted to attend?
- Why didn't I get the job?
- How come the hurricane hit my city?
- Why did someone else get what I should have received?

Where do we get the idea that bad things shouldn't happen to us? Of course, no one *wants* to experience sorrow or suffering. But when these situations occur, we often seem to think God has somehow let us down. That He violated an unwritten agreement: I'll believe in You and You will protect me from anything bad.

But the Bible never promised a life without sorrow and suffering. Actually, just the opposite. Jesus told His followers, “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have tribulation. But be of good cheer. I have overcome the world” (John 16:33).

Living in a broken, sin-sick world means we are *guaranteed* to have trouble. It's not an *if*, it's a *when*. And our heavenly Father doesn't always stop the trouble from happening. But He does promise peace in the midst of difficulty.

Besides, how will the world understand the reality of the peace brought by the Prince of Peace if nothing negative ever happens to Christians?

So the next time we're facing a difficult circumstance, let's not ask, “Why me?” Instead, ask, “Why not me?” Then ask, “How can I live for Christ in this situation so that others will want the relationship with Him that I have?”

I still intend to pray hurricanes will steer away from me—and

from others! And not just physical hurricanes, but all storms of life. Still, if—no, *when*—they do come, I also pray I'll exhibit the peace and strength that comes from knowing who I am in Christ. That I will surrender to the promptings of the Holy Spirit to live out the reality of my identity as a child of God regardless of my situation. And that the way I live might be the salt which makes others thirsty for that same relationship.

Why me?

Why *not* me? {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 .*

This article originally appeared at .

For more on our faith and difficult circumstances, listen to the podcasts included here.

After Randy Clark's Prayer, Supernatural Manifestations Reveal God's Shekinah Glory

Jennifer Eivaz couldn't help but feel disappointed. After all, she and her husband had traveled a long way after a long workday to hear Randy Clark's teaching on supernatural

healing. Then, they had waited in a two-hour line to have Clark pray over them and impart the gift of healing.

“I thought I’d feel something to prove that we had received a fresh anointing, and we didn’t feel a thing,” Eivaz says on the “Take 10 With Jenn” podcast on the Charisma Podcast Network. “Well, it’s like [Clark] must have read my mind, or the Holy Spirit just told him. ... He said, ‘Just [as] when somebody prayed for me, and I didn’t feel anything, but I did receive, I pray the same for you.’”

That week, Eivaz and her husband led separate men’s and women’s Wednesday-night services, and healing manifested in both. “Every person in that men’s service who needed healing—everyone got healed. And in mine, every woman, as they crossed the threshold into our meeting room ... it was like the Holy Spirit kissed them Himself. And they would fall to the ground, weeping or shaking beautifully in His presence. ... God showed up to let us know, ‘I am here; I am dwelling with you.’ And it was so powerful; I never forgot it.”

This experience, Eivaz says, reveals the concept behind the term “*shekinah* glory.” One commentator explains the *shekinah* glory as “when the invisible God becomes visible, when the omnipresence of God becomes localized. ... He’s saying, through these acts of glory, ‘I’ve come to dwell with you,’” Eivaz says.

For more of Eivaz’s powerful teaching on biblical and present-day manifestations of God’s *shekinah* glory, listen to the podcast below!

When You're Desperate to Lose Weight, Here's How Jesus Can Set You Free

"I need help," the text on my phone read. It was 11:39 on Sunday morning and I was taking notes on the sermon as I always do, but I knew God wouldn't mind that I answered Andrea's urgent plea.

"What's going on?" I replied.

"I need to get healthy," she said. "I cannot do this anymore. Who I am is dying."

Tears came to my eyes. Andrea, who weighed over 300 pounds, was desperate to lose weight, so desperate she'd tried starvation diets, but they were always short-lived. She just wanted to be free of the desire to eat continually.

Desperate to Lose Weight

I totally understood where she was coming from. I've been there too. You may be there now.

You are desperate to lose weight. Like Andrea, you know your very life, or in the least your quality of life, is at stake. You have to lose weight, and you know it.

You have lost weight and gained it back plus more. You can't seem to lose more than a few pounds even though you have 50 or 250 or more to lose.

Taste and See

You know God is the answer, but you can't figure out how to find the key to let Him into your food closet.

You truly want to taste and see that the Lord is good, but you

just can't figure out how that works when all you really want is a big piece of cherry pie with a double scoop of homemade ice cream.

You want so badly to lay down the weight that has so easily entangled you, but you don't want to give up the foods you love more than life.

You want something to happen to make you change overnight without going through what you are sure will be an agonizing process.

Beyond God's Help

I have been where Andrea was and where you are. I have been so trapped in my own body that I didn't even know if the real me was still in there somewhere or not.

I knew God had a purpose and plan for my life, but I had piled on so much weight and had dug such deep ruts of bad habits that I was sure I was beyond help even from God.

At 430 pounds, I felt hopeless. There was no diet that would fix me. No exercise plan that would instantly transform me. Yet, if I didn't lose weight, a cardiac surgeon told me, I would be dead in five years.

Coping Mechanism

Food had become a way to comfort myself at the end of a horrible, no-good, very bad day. Since I worked long hours and came home to housework and children and a husband, it seemed every day was unending.

Of course I had to fix supper, and I would fix the foods that would fill the emptiness inside me: things with high carbohydrate content like pastas, cheesy casseroles, fried meats, potatoes fixed every way I could, gravies and sauces.

If that didn't do the trick, there were always brownies,

cookies, cakes and the endless bag of chips and dip I would keep by my computer when I worked on projects at home. Eating would get me through the day and the night. It would numb any pain, frustration, anger, bitterness, regret, failure or sadness. Or at least I thought it did.

It was my coping mechanism, but it was not working.

Endless Cycle of Bondage

In reality when I numbed my negative emotions with food, I also numbed the positive emotions too. So I ceased to feel happiness, joy, love, peace, hope, mercy, compassion and grace. My life became a huge flat line, devoid of emotion.

I thought that was better than screaming like a crazy lady, but I just ended up feeding my addiction. I simply continued to stuff my feeling of nothingness with more food. Of course, that just made it worse. It became an endless cycle that I willfully put myself in bondage to.

I chose to do that to myself, one bite at a time.

God Sees

God sees what we are doing and knows where it will lead. He doesn't beat us over the head and tell us we are wrong, at least that wasn't my experience. If anyone deserved to be beaten over the head, though, it was me.

When I would get to the end of my rope and ask Him for help, He would tell me exactly what I needed to do, but I didn't like His answer. So, I simply ignored it and did what I wanted anyway.

I didn't like it because I was not ready to fully trust Him with the foods that I was sure I couldn't live without. I didn't trust Him because I had some deep emotional, mental and spiritual issues that needed to be addressed first.

Jesus Set Us Free

Jesus set us free. It's His desire that we are free to follow Him completely, but when we have turmoil inside that we want to get rid of and choose to eat it away instead of dealing with it, we put ourselves back into bondage.

"Let me be clear, the Anointed One has set us free—not partially, but completely and wonderfully free! We must always cherish this truth and stubbornly refuse to go back into the bondage of our past" (Gal. 5:1, TPT).

I needed help to get free of the bondage I had put myself in. That meant going back to understand some issues I didn't want to face. I just wanted to continue to stuff them. But once I faced them with His help, He set me free. As a result, I lost more than 250 pounds.

Whatever your issue is, Jesus will set you free if you let Him show you how. All it takes is a little bit of interior work to clean up years of feelings we don't know what to do with.
{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 best-seller, *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 .

Your Prov. 18:10 Protection for This Season of Storms

Take comfort in the Lord's strength during these very turbulent times. It's more than good advice, and sometimes downright difficult to walk out when we are in the midst of a violent storm. And God's people, including you, are passing through many different types of storms right now. My desire is to send you the strength of His comfort during this difficulty in your life.

You may be in the midst of great trouble right now, call out to Him. He will see you through this troubling time. The Bible tells us in Psalm 46:1-3 that God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. God is always present and always willing to help you. We are designed to be more than overcomers, not in our own strength, but in His.

Proverbs 18:10 says it this way, "The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous run into it and are safe." When you call upon the name of the Lord, He hears you, and He responds to your sincere call of faith. He is your strong tower—your source of protection. You can trust Him to see you through this distressing time in life. In saying this, there is a decision that we all must make: We must choose to trust in His faithfulness to carry us through.

Let's join our faith together and pray.

Father God, You are my strength, my refuge, my strong tower, and I call out to You with all sincerity of faith for your protection. Your Word promises me that no weapon formed against me shall prosper (Isa. 54:17). So I make the decision to trust in your faithfulness to carry me through this violent storm that I am passing through. And I rely upon Your strength, not mine. I take comfort in Your strength, Oh, Lord.

I thank You that You will never leave me or forsake me (Deut. 31:6). And when I pass through the waters, You will be with me; and when I pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over me, (Isa. 43:2). I choose to take comfort in Your strength. In Jesus' name I pray, amen. {eoa}

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

This article originally appeared at .

For more on facing storms in the power of the Spirit, listen to the podcasts included here.