

How a Supernatural Occurrence Helped This Woman Lose Her Wheelchair—And 71 Pounds

The first time I met Peggy Burgess, she was in a wheelchair and was no longer able to drive. I was helping with a writer's conference in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. She lives close by, so her daughter graciously brought her to my hotel so we could meet.

Divine Connection

One thing I dislike about an online coaching group is not being able to meet my members in person. So whenever I travel, I love getting together with current and past members of my coaching groups or courses.

Visiting with Peggy was a delight. I felt from the moment we met that we had a divine connection. I realized that but for the grace of God it could have been me in that wheelchair and not being able to drive.

Loss of mobility means loss of independence. I'm not sure how I continued to be able to walk and drive when I weighed 430 pounds, but I did. Once I was asked by a Christian television show hostess about who enabled me when I was super-morbidly obese. She said, "I see these people on TV who are so large they can't get out of their homes. Who enabled you when you were that large?"

My answer was that first of all I was not bedfast. I was mobile. I was able to walk. I was able to drive. No one enabled me. I enabled myself. Those of us who have issues with food will find a way to get what we want. We are stubborn that way.

Many Major Health Issues

I'm so glad I met Peggy back then. She has been in my coaching groups for four years now, and her before and after story is amazing. She's had many major health issues, not the least of which was not being able to walk for three years. She had kidney cancer, an operation on her esophagus, blood clots, hip replacement and depression.

"I also I had little or no spiritual companionship," she said. "I was looking for a church after my wonderful small group disbanded when the pastor went back to school. Not to mention I had relationship issues with my children and grandchildren. I knew God, but I was at a point where instead of walking closely with Him, I was far out in the crowd.

"My prayers at that time were of desperation. They were simply, 'Help!' I knew that He alone could fix things."

Divine Promotion

She was reading *Charisma* magazine and saw an ad for my then-new book, *Sweet Grace: How I Lost 250 Pounds and Stopped Trying to Earn God's Favor*.

This is astounding to me because even though *Charisma* has been running my articles since 2013, I've never paid for an advertisement. Yet, Peggy remembers a boxed ad with a picture of *Sweet Grace*. I don't doubt it. God has promoted *Sweet Grace*. Not me.

In whatever way she saw it, she says, "I knew God had sent me this information. I read the book, joined Teresa's group and began a journey not only to get healthy, but to draw closer to the Lord. I finally realized that nothing would happen unless I took some steps."

Slow and Steady Wins the Race

I remember working with Peggy back in 2015 when she first came

into my group. She had a lot of weight to lose, but I encouraged her to take it slow and make sure each step of her journey was on solid ground. Slow and steady does win the race, especially the race we are in.

“Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us” (Phil. 3:13-14b, NLT).

She started with what had become a bad habit and a trigger food. She started by giving up the candy she had sitting in a bowl on her desk.

Changing Habits

I also told her that stopping a bad habit will only work if we focus on a good habit we want to start. She chose to start reading her Bible every day. It was something she wanted to do but had been putting off.

That began to feed her in a way she had been longing for. She didn't try to change anything else until she got that one bad habit under control and had the one good habit started.

“Each success has encouraged me,” she said. “I am the only one responsible to God for what I do. My journey is not the same as anyone else's. I wish I could say I was immediately obedient in every area. But here is a summary of what has happened in the past four years.”

Then and Now

“Back then I was wheelchair-bound, mostly house-bound, could not drive and weighed 388,” she continued. “I had no energy and felt hopeless.

“Now I walk only with a cane. I drive wherever I need to. I volunteer at our Ronald McDonald House. This summer, I have had the stamina to babysit four of my great-grandkids a day or

two a week. Another great blessing is that a wonderful Bible-believing church found me!"

Peggy is 69 years old and has lost 71 pounds in four years. She has never given up, even though she has more weight to lose.

"I know as I am obedient to the Lord, my weight will continue to go down," she says. "In the past, I would have given up and gone over 400. That will not happen as long as I am on God's path. He is faithful."

Consistency, Focus and Desire

There are three things I love most about Peggy. They are her consistency, her focus on her destiny and her desire to please God in everything she does.

"I am enjoying life again," she says. "I want a future, and the best part is my relationship with God is getting better and better. Sometimes when I start to get in a funk, my prayer is 'God, You see me and how I am. Make me want to do the right things.'"

When she's in those down times, she reminds herself, even as she is reminding us, "God loves you. He has wonderful plans for your life. Be encouraged."

I'm so grateful to God for Peggy and for her journey.

Stubbornly Refuse

My desire for every person who has issues with food and weight and the overwhelming frustration that comes with that is to fall into the arms of God and taste and see that He really is good. He really is all we need. He really does want to set us free to follow Him completely.

Speaking of freedom and of being stubborn. There is one good thing about being stubborn. It's found in Galatians 5:1 (TPT,

emphasis added): “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.”

You are set free in order to stay free. {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 .