

How a Surgeon's Rude Remark Helped This Food-Addicted Woman Choose Life

Sometimes God comforts us. Sometimes He lets us understand where we have gone wrong and how we can course correct with His guidance. Sometimes He just calls to mind things we already know but have felt were not applicable to us.

How Do I Choose Life?

A verse I had memorized appeared in my mind. I picked up my Bible to read it word for word. "Today I have given you the choice between life and death, between blessings and curses. Now I call on heaven and earth to witness the choice you make. Oh, that you would choose life, so that you and your descendants might live!" (Deut. 30:19, NLT).

I always stopped there, but this day I needed to know if there was more. As I continued reading, words leaped off the page and into my heart.

"You can make this choice by loving the Lord your God, obeying Him, and committing yourself firmly to Him. This is the key to your life. And if you love and obey the Lord, you will live long in the land the Lord swore to give your ancestors" (Deut. 30:20a, NLT).

This was my biblical promise. This was my vision. I wanted to choose life, but I realized it couldn't just be lip service. God had spoken to me through His Word.

How Do I Really Love God?

The way I can choose life is to love God. In order to love God, I have to show Him I love Him. I have to commit myself firmly to Him and obey Him by actually doing what He tells me

to do.

Love is the key, but it had to be revealed in my actions. If I follow through with where my committed love for God leads me not only will I live long, but my descendants will as well. My choice of life meant I would have to do more than just say, "I love God." I was going to have to make some serious choices and deep surrenders.

As I pondered the words, I thought about my children, my descendants. I wanted to be present in their lives and see them grow up to do all the things I knew they would do.

I wanted to be present at my daughter's wedding. I even pictured myself there, what that day would mean for her, what it would mean for her future and what it would mean for the future of our family. I wanted to watch my son become a man, maybe one day even a husband and a father. I wanted to grow old with my husband and go on many more adventures with him.

How Do I Know God Isn't Finished With Me?

I knew God wasn't finished with me yet. He had given me dreams and visions. I had more to do, even though in that moment, it felt impossible for any of it to come to fruition.

I saw books that I knew were books I would write one day. I didn't know their names. I didn't know what they were about, but I knew if I lived, they would be written. I saw people who would be impacted in some way by what I wrote.

I also saw myself smaller. I'd been through enough weight-loss programs to know that it was good to have a dream picture of the size I'd like to be one day. It could be a magazine picture or a picture of me at a smaller size.

What Should Be My Dream?

Until that moment, I never had a dream picture. Lying there in that hospital bed, I saw my wedding picture. It was a time

when I'd been happy at the size I was. At that moment it seemed like an impossible dream for me to ever get there, but still that picture was embedded in my mind.

I said to myself, "One day, I will be that size again." I didn't tell anybody about it because 250 pounds seemed too big a mountain to move. How could I lose the weight of two people?

I cried tears of regret. The Holy Spirit was right there with me holding me, comforting me, being near to me and being real in the time of what felt like my deepest sorrow. I was mourning what I had done to myself and the possibility that I might not be with my family much longer.

I was not grieving what I had done to God or the sin that I had done against Him or how I'd not listened to or followed Him. I was just sad for myself.

How Do I Accept What I've Done to Myself?

This was my monumental time of acceptance of what I had done to myself. I even saw glimpses of what the future would be like without me. No doubt my husband would remarry, and my children would call another woman "Mom."

Would they remember anything at all good about me, or would I just remain a fat blob in their memories? It was really the first time I thought about my legacy. How would people remember me?

This day, the day a rude cardiac surgeon told me I had five years to live, was one of the worst and best days of my life. I felt I had pretty much ruined any plans God had to use me. Instead, because of the truth that doctor gave me, God began putting the broken pieces of my life back together to make something beautifully useful. {eo}

Teresa Shields Parker is a wife, mother, Christian weight loss coach, speaker and author. Her newest book is *Sweet Journey to*

Transformation: Practical Steps to Lose Weight and Live Healthy. *She also has four other books, including Sweet Grace: How I Lost 250 Pounds. Get free chapters of her books, plus many other free resources, on her blog at . Connect with her there or on Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest or Instagram.*

This article was excerpted from Sweet Journey to Transformation and originally appeared at .