

Steps to Freedom From Obsessive Compulsive Disorder

“I’m having an OCD fit.” “I’m a little OCD.” “I am so OCD.”

Obsessive Compulsion Disorder, or, as it is often called, OCD, has now become a cultural term. What can be a diagnosed mental illness is also used to describe a fit one may be having in the mind. People can even use OCD as an adjective to describe someone else.

“I’m going to have an OCD fit!” “He is really OCD.”

The word “obsession” has become an acceptable cultural term, especially if you are obsessed about things that seem harmless. People become obsessed over their jobs and get promoted. Quite often, obsession becomes rewarded, as long as one is obsessed over the “right” thing. But it is healthy to be obsessed about anything?

I meet Christians who say they addicted to Jesus or obsessed with Him. Yet “obsession” is really a dysfunctional term, alluding to the reality that one has an unhealthy dynamic towards God.

Love in a relationship stabilizes us. Obsession drives us, consumes us and controls us without any “groundedness.” But you can have a deeply passionate relationship with God, an all-consuming fire working within you, without being obsessed.

We’ve Become Obsessed

The reality is that our culture is obsessed. Anything we do has to be over the top or nothing at all. Our thoughts match the speed of our lives: endless stimulation and constant hurriedness.

Our “love” relationships are not based on true love but a

desire for constant intensity, so we never settle into the peaceful groundedness that healthy relationships can bring. The reference for relationship becomes based more on lust than anything else.

Our obsessive thinking compels us into quick actions that lack wisdom, impulsive decisions driven by obsession and careless behavior. OCD has become a way of life. Like King Saul in Old Testament, we become driven by compulsion, rather than led by grounded thought patterns.

Somewhere between 2.5 and 3.5 million people are diagnosed with OCD, but this is more than just a diagnosable issue. It's a modern plague of thought. People have become slaves to the thoughts that consume them. Most live their whole lives in silent torment, while others know of nothing else but to act on their endless ruminations.

As we move along, I'm going to spiritually break down where OCD comes from and how each part builds upon each other.

Two Main Areas

The first part of Obsessive Compulsive Disorder is the obsession. This is the repeating and revolving door of thought that has a very narrow focus. It repeats so much that it becomes tormenting. It has captivated the attention of the person and has deeply woven itself into the neuro-pathways of the mind.

This obsessive thought pattern becomes so constant that it eventually demands action, which leads us to the compulsion, the second part of OCD. This obsessive thought needs an outlet, so it trains us to act compulsively.

Compulsion steals our ability to live with self-control, regarding our emotions. We become under its power, so instead of living out of self-control, we become controlled by compulsive living. The compulsion may be an act, having to

constantly talk something out or ruminating over the same thoughts and issues over and over endlessly.

There are different extremes of this battleground. Many OCD issues can lie underground, as people utilize coping skills to keep this torment at bay. But they are never really at peace. Others see this build up so strong they have to act on it so constantly that it disrupts everyday life.

Religious Obsessions

People who grew up with a religious spirit are very prone to obsessive thinking. The religious pressure they were raised under makes them more prone to OCD-like ways. In fact, I have found those who grew up with a legalistic pressures, black-and-white thinking and law-based living struggle deeply. They see everything as all evil or all good, with no room for grace or process. They struggle with having a thought that would displease God.

I have sat down with countless people who struggle with this kind of lens. I developed this in my own life, and it took some for me to unwind myself out of it. I lived thinking my every decision carried a weight of obedience or disobedience to God. I even got to the point where I would buy something at the store and come home thinking I disobeyed God in purchasing it. I became legalistically tormented by a simple store purchase. Too often, because of a religious spirit I carried, I always felt that if I wanted something, God did not want it for me. So I lived in endless double-mindedness. This caused me to obsess over many things in the day that did not matter.

So my heart goes out to people who battle these religious obsessions. I have sat with people who fast endlessly with the hopes they will get breakthrough. Their desire to break free has become a dangerous obsession. Some go into deep seasons of separated prayer while they neglect their families for weeks on end. I have counseled people who were convinced they

committed the unpardonable sin. Others felt they had blasphemed the Holy Spirit and were doomed for hell.

It's so common to have these religious obsessions that they are now documented in mental-health manuals. People fear they will commit a horrific sexual act, destroy their own marriage or urinate on the church wall. Every crazy thought that can be thrown at people is hitting them with vivid imagery, convincing the person this thought is actually a reflection of their identity. So people inevitably conclude, "This must just be the way I am."

This is why I believe many people act on dreadful thoughts. They cannot shake them, so they act on them to ward off the nagging images. This is why taking thoughts captive is more important than ever. The enemy is keen at giving you a thought while convincing you the thoughts originated with your own mind.

Fear's Role in Obsessive Compulsive Disorder

Understand the battleground of what the enemy is doing. He sends a thought and then makes you fearful of the thought. The fear increases a narrow focus. Fear also convinces us to live in a false peace. We try to create an entire world around us based on the obsessions that will help us find peace. It is not a real peace, but a false one. It's a temporary relief, but because that monster is being fed. It keeps going, and it builds the next time.

Our lack of safety fuels this fear. We become convinced, "if I just keep everything around me feeling okay, then I will feel at peace" but you're never truly at peace. So then control becomes a way of life. The person becomes consumed with controlling not their thoughts, but their environment. They become hostile with friends and family when that aura is messed with. Their preoccupation with order, cleanliness and symmetry become the dominant priority.

Immersion and Facing the Problem

For those who compulsively act on cleanliness. The only way they'll get free is if they want to be free. The more they justify their way of living, the more they will stay planted in their bondage.

But if they want to get free, they need to be immersed into experiences that break the pattern. For example, back when the *Oprah* show was on TV, they walked some people who struggled with cleanliness OCD out to the woods into a cabin. They had all the people put their hands on the floor of the cabin, kneel down and put their hands on the floor. After that, each person had to stand up and do the unthinkable: They had to lick their fingers.

You could see their bodies pitch a fit with the mere thought of licking dirty fingers. At that point, they had a decision to make: Will I remain in my stubborn habits or am I going to take my life back?

OCD had trained them to become germophobic, even though their actions did not line up with science. Washing your hands over and over and using hand sanitizers every five minutes actually makes you more prone to sickness. People who use hand sanitizers too much are actually killing some of the good bacteria that help your immune system fight off bad bacteria. You might be destroying the bad with some Purel, but you're also destroying the stuff you have on your skin intended to fight off good bacteria. But again, we have to remember, obsessiveness doesn't always make sense. We think, *I'm truly clean if I do this.*

Summary of Steps to Freedom from Obsessive Compulsive Disorder

Here are some practical yet very spiritual positions you can take when overcoming Obsessive Compulsive tendencies.

1. Begin acknowledging areas of brokenness where obsessive

thoughts come in to provide a false reality of finding peace.

2. Begin breaking agreement with addictions in your life and your family line. Verbally repent of them and move your heart and mind in a new direction of peace and grounded thinking, one thought at a time.

3. Break agreement with fear, and this includes anxiety, worry and insecurity. Tear down the fear that drives you to find peace in obsessing or acting on those obsessions.

4. Disempower the thoughts, knowing they are just thoughts. Disconnect them as being your thoughts or how you feel. Make them an enemy and see yourself separated from those thoughts. Let the thoughts float right on by.

5. Let God heal you in His love to fill the voids that obsessions consume. Rest in His safety.

6. Face the fear that drives the obsessiveness. You repented of it; now face it. See every facing as an act of deliverance.

7. Take in God's grace and get out of black-and-white thinking that binds you to legalism. People who live in black-and-white thinking often fall into self-accusation and condemnation, as if heaven and hell are weighing over the smallest issues.

8. Get around people who will partner with you in your freedom, those who will hold you accountable to disempower these destructive thought patterns.

9. When others tell you to stop thinking about it and talking about it, don't see it as a mean thing. See it as an act of love towards you.

10. Allow yourself time to get free. Develop patience and learn to become your own best friend in this process. Stand your ground and don't ever quit. {eoa}

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