

What You Need to Know About God's Power to Heal Eating Disorders

Treatment of an eating disorder is a complex process and requires guidance from a strong team of medical, nutritional and mental health experts. It is unfortunate that one resource that is vital for recovery, spiritual support, is often overlooked. Many Christian women cite that their key support for healing and finding their identities apart from their eating disorder is their faith in God. For others, their eating disorder may be a source of shame or guilt and cause them to distance themselves from God.

A relationship with God does not in any way negate the mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual healing necessitated when an individual is being treated for an eating disorder; in fact, that journey to recovery can actually be maximized when paired with specialized Christian programming. Christian programming is able to help women integrate who they are in relation to God while they rebuild their lives. A spiritual relationship can benefit growth in treatment and fuel the hope that recovery is possible. It has been recognized and valued for strengthening spiritual ties, increasing self-compassion and learning to trust His love, faithfulness and grace.

At The Renfrew Center, the country's first residential eating disorder treatment facility with locations across the country, Christian-based programming is offered for individuals seeking the practice of nurturing a sound mind and a sound body.

For those who choose to participate, the program is designed to meet each individual's unique needs. Individuals are able to work with a Christian therapist, participate in groups and incorporate Christian principles and prayer into one-on-one

counseling sessions. Allowing God to be an active part of your treatment opens the door to including Him in the recovery process.

Here are a few suggestions for bringing God into your recovery.

- Know that, if you are struggling in recovery, it does not mean that you do not have faith (or do not have enough faith) in God. Faith does require action, and that is having confidence in what is hoped for (Heb. 11:1). Having faith in God does not preclude your part in recovery. Jesus required something of every person He healed (Mark 2:9-11; 9:23, 24).
- Remember, God's love for you is not contingent upon how well you do in recovery but will help you through recovery. He is not disappointed in you. No matter what, His love for you will never change (Jer. 31:3).
- Believe that you can walk in recovery, even if there is a relapse. If believing this seems unimaginable, ask God to help you with your unbelief (Mark 9:23, 24). You can do all things through Christ who gives you strength (Phil. 4:13).
- Walk in His grace and mercy. The same grace and mercy that drew you into a relationship with God are yours for recovery (Lam. 3:23). Recovery will not be without struggles and your heavenly Father has promised to see you through.
- Stay connected to others of faith by attending church and/or a bible studies group, as well as seeking out eating disorder support groups or recovery programs. Even Moses needed people to hold up his hands to win the battle (Ex. 17:10-12).

As with most things, recovery is a process that unfolds over

time. Trust God, He knows (Prov. 3:5, 6). He is just a prayer away. He will work all things out for your good (Rom. 8:28). You were fearfully and wonderfully made by the Creator (Ps. 139:13, 14) and it is His desire that you have a hope and a future (Jer. 29:11).

**Christian-based programming is available at The Renfrew Centers of Atlanta, Charlotte, Coconut Creek, Dallas, Nashville and Orlando.*

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The Renfrew Center, the pioneer in eating disorder treatment and research, has treated more than 75,000 women with eating disorders and other behavioral health issues and trained more than 35,000 professionals. It has facilities in California, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Tennessee and Texas. For additional information about The Renfrew Center or any of its programs and services, please call 1-800-RENFREW or visit