

Why You Need More Than a Diet to 'Fix' You

I love the show *Extreme Weight Loss*. That's where the host chooses one extremely large person to lose half their weight in a year. He surprises them at in public and says. "I choose you for the transformation of your life!"

I feel like I've been on that show, only it was God who surprised me by saying, "The invitation for the transformation of your life has always been there. It's always been your choice as to whether or not you are ready to surrender to the process."

Losing nearly two-thirds of my body weight didn't take me a year. It's taken me years to get that weight off. Even though I've lost 250 pounds, I have still not fully arrived at where I want to be. There's always more to work on. We will never get it perfect. I will continually be arriving until the day I reach heaven.

When I started my weight-loss journey, losing weight was all I wanted. At 430 pounds, I thought if I lost weight all my problems would be solved. Far from it. Weight loss was the outward sign of many faulty ways of thinking that stemmed from emotional issues, which led to spiritual disconnects.

Entire Remodel

What I began to understand was a diet or changing my eating alone would not fix me. I had to have an entire remodel. I had to allow God to tear my house down and start over beginning with restoring my very foundation.

I knew transformation was possible because God says we can be transformed by renewing our minds. "Present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy, and acceptable to God, which is your

reasonable service of worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God" (Rom. 12:1-2).

Those verses mean several things to me. First, transformation is just a thought away. It begins with allowing God to renew my mind. Then, transformation begins by me learning how to fix my attention completely on God and what He wants.

Transformation Begins With Surrender

This last thing, though, is the toughest. Transformation begins with surrender. What does it mean to offer my body to God as a living sacrifice? It means I have to surrender everything I am to all that God is.

This is not surrendering to defeat like waving the white flag because we've lost the battle. It's just the opposite. It is surrendering so we can enjoy the victory only God can bring. It is surrender of our selfish desires to whatever God desires.

For many I have coached, surrender of the foods they love to God is the most difficult part of this journey, but that is really where transformation begins. Without surrender there is no transformation.

True Surrender

When we surrender something we love, something we think we can't live without, that's when God knows we mean business. That's because God knows what the true desires of our hearts are. He knows if we have placed certain foods as more important to us than He is to us.

There were many times I told God I would do anything to get rid of the mountain of weight on my body. Then in the next few minutes, I would go back to stuffing my face with foods I knew

were not healthy for me. I had chosen those earthly desires over Him.

For transformation to be genuine, surrender has to begin with a small but intentional step, so God knows we mean business. We have to show God we are on board with His process of transformation.

We have to give up something, one small thing, but make that commitment be not just for a short time, but for the rest of our lives. Habit change is not an all-or-nothing proposition. Still, we have to start somewhere. We have to actually put feet to our faith.

Change Your Mind

We stop a bad habit, but not some huge, all-encompassing bad habit. Just one small bad habit. Maybe a trigger food, the thing we always run to when we are stressed. Whatever we choose, we surrender it completely to God and ask Him to help me take our thoughts captive where that food is concerned.

We don't focus on the bad habit. We put firm boundaries around it. Then, we begin a good habit, one we know we must incorporate in our lives before we can get healthy. This is what we focus on. This is what we work diligently on. It takes our minds off that food that had become our go-to source.

This is how we work with God to change our minds. Remember, transformation is just a thought away. It begins by focusing on God, who starts changing us from the inside. Then it begins to show on the outside as we surrender more of the foods we think we can't live without by focusing on the other things God wants for us, those things that will move us forward.

Then, the good habits we choose to begin become our godly way of living rather than conforming to pattern of this world.

Slow and Steady Process

Weight loss is just one way we gauge transformation. Many I coach are amazed at the change that happens when they even start to surrender their desires to God. They begin to see that the only real way to lose weight and keep it off is to daily surrender to God.

It's not about a quick way to lose weight. It's about eventually changing everything in order to be all that God desires us to be.

It is a slow, steady process that we work on with the support of others on the journey, another who has been there and can help lead us and God Himself who stands us in the place of our destiny.

God Has Chosen You

I want you to know that God has already chosen you for the transformation of your life. All He's waiting for is for you to surrender everything, even the foods you think you can't live without, to Him.

It's not a difficult decision. It's candy, cookies, cake, fast food and not eating all you can eat at all-you-can-eat buffets *or* the transformation of your life.

It's an easy decision. You know the right answer. God has chosen you. Now, the choice is yours. {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 .

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