

# How the Holy Spirit Can Restore Your True Sanity

Most of my life I tried to avoid one thing—being crazy or insane. When I was growing up my mother had emotional issues and saw a psychiatrist regularly. She was on medication which only seemed to make her mood swings worse. She had high highs, and low lows.

When I asked my dad what was wrong with her, he would only say, ‘She’s sick.” I knew she wasn’t sick like with a stomach ache. So, I didn’t quite understand until she had to go into the hospital and was on the psychiatric floor. My grandma told me it was because she had some emotional issues she had to work through.

All I knew is that was where the people who were considered crazy or insane went. I never wanted to be insane if that was what was wrong with Mom.

## Looking for Peace

From the time I was eight, I stood in for my mother. If she didn’t fix supper, I would. If she didn’t change my sister’s diaper, I would. If she didn’t wash the clothes, dry them and put them away, I would. I felt it was my duty as the oldest sibling. My dad and my grandma both praised me for helping out. It felt like the one thing I could do for my family.

During my mother’s illness episodes, I wanted peace and calm. It was hard for me as a kid and there were times my mother and I went toe-to-toe. What she would yell at me about wouldn’t make sense.

Contrast this when the times I’d get to stay at my grandma’s house. There everything seemed perfect, completely idyllic. I’d help her with all her chores. We’d bake cookies and cakes

and pies. At grandma's, there was no limit to what I could eat.

## **Food and Sanity**

It made a whole lot of sense to me to equate food with sanity. Grandma wasn't the least bit crazy and she cooked delicious foods all the time. Grandma's way of doing life was sane, and my mother's way was insane.

The things we learn as children stay with us throughout our lives and guide our emotions until we figure out what we've really been doing to ourselves is anything but sane. This is a core reason that all of my adult years up until 2009 were spent in super, morbid obesity.

There is no way I could elevate food to the status I did and not gain a tremendous amount of weight. It was like there was the eight-year-old little girl inside me directing my emotions, especially where food was concerned.

## **Restoration to True Sanity**

Finally, there came the time when I finally understood I was slowly killing myself eating the way I was and I started on my lifestyle transformation journey. I was in a group with others who had life-controlling issues like food and alcohol. We were going through the 12 steps of Alcoholics Anonymous and applying them to our situations.

I got stuck at step two. It simply says, "I came to believe that a Power greater than myself can restore me to sanity."

I couldn't go there because if I did I would be admitting that I was insane! God finally helped me face the fact that I was using food to try to normalize my emotions. The more I ate the more I could anesthetize any pain and therefore keep my emotions at the non-disruptive level. I would eat in order to not feel anything.

## **Sugar Was My Drug of Choice**

I was using food to medicate my emotions. Sugar especially would anesthetize my emotions so I didn't have to feel them. It gave me a high that feels very euphoric but it would wear off very quickly then I would want more. Sugar was my drug of choice.

It started out as something I saw as good that would help me through life. Then, it quickly took control of my life. But it was insane to allow myself to gain up to 430 pounds. It was even more insane than what my mother went through because I did it to myself.

Mom had a chemical imbalance and later with spiritual counseling, changing psychiatrists, cutting down on her meds, getting some good hobbies, visiting with friends she trusted on a regular basis and hanging on to Jesus as tight as she could, she was able to be a wonderful grandma to her grandchildren. There was no chemical imbalance in me. I just loved the foods my grandma fed me and was rebelling against my mother's actions.

## **Emotions Make Life Great**

Eventually, I admitted I needed to be restored to sanity and that it might even be ok to not be at even keel all the time. Life is full of emotions. That's what makes life so great. It's ok to cry if I am sad or deeply moved. It's ok to laugh out loud. It's ok to put my arms around someone who needs a hug. It's ok to talk about my emotions and admit when I am frustrated. It's especially ok to love someone and tell them that.

All of my life I had been longing for a feeling of calmness. I felt that at grandma's, but not around my mother. There was always tension.

Psalm 27:3 (MSG) gives us a hint about how we can attain that

feeling. It tells us that when we are besieged, we can be as calm as a baby.

Why? because God is leading us. When we truly understand and have surrendered to the Holy Spirit's power which is greater than ours, He can and will restore us to sanity. {eo}

**Teresa Shields Parker** is the author of six books and two study guides, including her No. 1 bestseller, *Sweet Grace: How I Lost 250 Pounds*. Her sixth book, *Sweet Surrender: Breaking Strongholds*, is live on Amazon. She blogs at [www.tshields.com](#). She is also a Christian weight loss coach (check out her coaching group at [Overcomers Academy](#)) and speaker. Don't miss her podcast, *Sweet Grace for Your Journey*, available on CPN. This article first appeared on [www.tshields.com](#). For more on this subject, listen to *Sweet Grace for Your Journey* podcast episode 142: *Food Keeps Me Sane* by going to [www.tshields.com](#).