

Knowing This Truth Will Help You Abide in the Comfort of the Holy Spirit

As children, if we think we don't matter to the people who matter the most to us, it can set up a stronghold in us that says, "I don't matter to God." In turn, that can make us not trust the Holy Spirit who lives inside us.

I felt that way about my mother. She had an emotional illness, and I never really knew where I stood with her.

Because Mom didn't feel well, as the oldest I had a lot of responsibilities. I was needed and felt it. Dad regularly told me I was needed, as did my grandparents. I heard it from everywhere except the one place that really mattered; I didn't hear it from my mother.

Mom's fear of crowds made her steer clear of my school events. She didn't go to my mother-daughter Brownie tea, which was a very big deal to me and really made me feel I didn't matter to her.

Dismantling the Lie

This became a stronghold in my life. I didn't know how to deal with the feeling that I was an orphan even though I had a mother.

Retreating to my grandma's house on the weekends helped. At Grandma's, all my cares, worries and concerns faded away with the delicious foods she fed me. She also regularly gave me hugs and told me she loved me. The stronghold was still there, but it was drowned out by a growing dependence on comfort foods.

Even after I was married and had children, I had not dealt

with the lie, which had now become a firm stronghold. I had simply shelved it, thinking, "That happened when I was a kid. Mom was sick, so I can't blame her for what she did. I'm an adult now. She's changed. We'll let bygones be bygones."

Getting Help

All this time I was gaining weight, so I decided to go to a counselor to get some help. On my first visit I talked about weight gain. The first thing the counselor asked me was, "Tell me about your mother." I thought, "What does my mother have to do with my weight gain?"

When I finished talking, the counselor asked, "How do you feel about how your mother treated you?"

I said, "She couldn't help it. She was sick. She didn't know what she was doing."

The counselor gave me the assignment to fill in the blank: I'm angry at my mother because _____. I didn't think I was angry at Mom, but the exercise helped me see how wrong I was about that. I was very angry at her; I had just never admitted it.

Breaking the Stronghold

The first step toward forgiving anyone is to recognize they have done something that has made us angry. If we pretend we aren't angry about what happened, it only allows the stronghold to become more embedded so the truth will not permeate it.

For me the stronghold had become, "I don't matter to Mom, but I'm not angry about it because she was sick. I'm doing just fine eating everything I want to make the pain go away."

I hadn't dealt with the real issue, which was that I was angry and needed to forgive Mom. By this time, she had already moved to heaven, but I used the list I had made to forgive her.

I Did Matter to Mom

When my family and I were going through Mom's things, tucked away in a location in her buffet we found every article I had ever written for organizations, magazines and newspapers.

I didn't even realize she'd known about many of those articles. I asked Dad how she got them because I knew I hadn't sent them to her. He said he didn't know.

Then the truth hit me like a lightning bolt. I did matter to Mom. She was proud of me. She did love me. She had been collecting articles from the time I started my career. She was just silently supporting me.

Holy Spirit Comfort

When I realized this, it broke something else loose inside me. A mother's role involves comforting, guiding and encouraging her children. If our mothers have filled those roles well, we can better accept the role of the Holy Spirit as One who comforts, encourages and guides us.

Mom hadn't filled those roles well for me. Even though others filled in for her, I still keenly felt the absence of my mother. Knowing I mattered to her helped me understand that I matter to the Holy Spirit as well, which helped me accept the comfort of the Holy Spirit.

When I thought of comfort, I thought of food because that was one of Grandma's ways of comforting me. Now I had a different way to look at comfort: it is the abiding presence of the love, peace and power of the Holy Spirit leading me forward.
{eoa}

Teresa Shields Parker *is the author of six books and two study guides, including her number-one bestseller, Sweet Grace: How I Lost 250 Pounds and Stopped Trying to Earn God's Favor. Her sixth book, Sweet Surrender: Breaking Strongholds, is live on*

Amazon. She is 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 the Charisma Podcast Network. This article first appeared on . For more on this topic, go to episode 127 of Sweet Grace for Your Journey podcast, "I Matter to God,"

Read articles like this one and other Spirit-led content in our new platform, CHARISMA PLUS.