

Eating Disorders have the highest mortality rate of any mental illness. One in 10 cases of anorexia result in death from physical complications or suicide.

Physical complications of anorexia and bulimia can include:

Malnutrition, electrolyte imbalances, gastrointestinal problems (especially constipation), hypotension (low blood pressure) and cardiac irregularities (irregular heartbeat, congestive heart failure, mitral valve prolapse), peripheral edema (fluid retention leading to swelling in extremities), metabolic abnormalities (including hypoglycemia, hypercholesterolemia, and high free fatty acids), yellowed skin (hypercarotenemia), cold intolerance due to abnormal temperature regulation, loss of bone density, decreased kidney functioning or kidney failure, amenorrhea (cessation of menstrual cycle), other endocrine dysfunction, including dexamethasone nonsuppression (linked to depression), infertility (while amenorrhea, and possibly indefinitely even after menses is restored), dry skin, hair loss, brittle hair, lanugo hair (a fine, downy growth of hair on trunk, face and arms), sleep disturbances, weakness, fatigue dehydration, dizziness, possible permanent impairment of colonic functioning, ulcers, dilation of intestines (leading to bloated appearance or feeling), perforation or tearing of the esophagus, changes in brain wave (EEG) functioning, dental erosion, calluses on finger or top of hand, swelling of the face, cheeks, parotid glands, broken capillaries on face and in eyes, and death.

“And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.”
James 5:15,16

Do you have an eating disorder?

- Do you feel out of control when you eat?
- Do you starve yourself?
- Do you feel in control when you don't eat?
- Do you have an intense fear of gaining weight?
- Do you believe you are fat even though others tell you different?
- Do you use diet pills or laxatives to control your weight?
- Do you feel guilt after eating?
- After eating, do you binge, and self-induce vomiting?
- Do you binge if you are feeling sad?
- Do you feel food and weight are the only things that you have control over?
- Do you tell yourself you're ugly, fat, worthless, etc?
- Do you avoid social gatherings or meals because of food?
- Are you ashamed of your eating habits?
- Do you think about food constantly?
- Do you exercise excessively to lose weight?
- Do you believe you will be happier if you lose weight?
- Do you get angry with people if they ask you about your eating habits?
- Are you secretive about what you eat or don't eat?
- Do you have a need to be perfect?
- Do you lie about your weight loss and make efforts to hide it from others?
- Do you constantly think about food, calories, and recipes?
- Do you think that you may have an eating disorder?

If you answered "yes" to four or more of those questions you might have an eating disorder or you might be developing one. Talk to an eating disorder specialist or your health care provider who may help lead you in the right direction to get you help.

Find healing and real intimacy in the Lord.

We are here to answer questions.

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Grace and Healing From Eating Disorders



***The LORD hears His people when
they call to Him for help.
He rescues them from all their
troubles.***

Psalm 34:17

Eating disorders often start when someone with risk factors begins a diet. Women who go on highly restrictive diets are 18 times more likely to develop an eating disorder. The risk factors for an eating disorder include (but are not limited to): perfectionism, low self-esteem, people-pleasing, family history of eating disorders, fear of growing up, depression, obsessive compulsive disorder, past physical or sexual abuse, preoccupation with thinness, control issues, all or nothing thinking, lack of trust in self and others, conflict avoidance, co-dependant, addictive personality, lack of healthy coping mechanisms, difficulty in expressing feelings, avoidance of emotions, and shame.

Do these thoughts sound familiar?

“I’m worthless.”

“Everything is my fault.”

“If people knew the real me, they’d hate me.”

“I am defective.”

“I’m no good.”

“I don’t deserve food/love/forgiveness.”

“I’m not acceptable.”

These are all thoughts of shame. Shame makes us feel that we are the problem. Shame is worse than guilt. With guilt, we can repent and ask for forgiveness; with shame, there is no cure to our problem.

Thankfully, through Jesus Christ and God’s grace, we can be healed from shame.

“I prayed to the LORD, and He answered me,
freeing me from all my fears.
Those who look to Him for help will be
radiant with joy; no shadow of shame
will darken their faces.”
Psalm 34:4,5

Causes of Shame

Shame comes about from abuse – physical, emotional, sexual, or spiritual. This shame causing abuse most often comes from somebody we love and trust, such as a parent, spouse, sibling, etc.

35% of those with eating disorders have suffered from sexual abuse
50% have experienced a major trauma

Emotional abuse is more than a parent constantly putting down a child; it can also be a parent ignoring the physical and emotional needs of their child, or even just not showing pride in their children. These messages all tell children that they are not deserving and not good enough.

Abuse causes us to feel worthless, unacceptable, deserving of the pain. It can even cause us to think we are to blame! Most of all, shame causes us to fear that we won’t ever be accepted.

But we are accepted!

Healing from Shame

God accepts and loves us as His children. He loves us not for ourselves, but in spite of ourselves. God loves us even though we are not perfect.

Because of God’s love for us, He extends His grace through the death and resurrection of His son Jesus Christ.

In order to receive this grace and acceptance, we must ask for and receive God’s gift of forgiveness. We must repent of our sins to prepare ourselves for faith, grace, and salvation.

But what does this have to do with shame? Or eating disorders?

Once you have put your faith in Jesus, repenting of your sins, you are ready, through grace, to be healed of your shame.

That shame is a remnant of sins against you. It is the cause of the thoughts that tell you to binge and purge or restrict your food. Of those who attempt recovery, 50% relapse. They may have regained physical health and restored their relationship with food, but they never overcame the haunting thoughts of shame.

Steps to prepare so that God may turn your shame into grace

(1) Realize the difference between guilt and shame

Guilt tells us when we need to repent and correct our actions. Guilt lets us know that we are still human beings with a conscience. Shame tells us that there is no hope—no action we take will make us better. Shame lets us know that we need healing.

(2) Name the shame

What events in your life have caused you shame?
What is behind the self-defeating thoughts?

(3) Read the Bible

The Bible is how we grow in our relationship with God. It allows us to learn of His plan and the gift of salvation. The Bible is how God communicates with His people.

(4) Be humble

Realize that you will never be perfect, but that you are accepted.

(5) Pray

Pray for healing from your shame. Pray that you will be made anew and freed from the shame that binds you.

“Grace overcomes shame, not by uncovering an overlooked cache of excellence in ourselves, but simply by accepting us, the whole of us, with no regard to our beauty or our ugliness, our virtue or our vices. We are accepted wholesale. Accepted with no possibility of being rejected. Accepted once and accepted forever. Accepted at the ultimate depth of our being”

-- Lewis B. Smedes, *Shame and Grace*