

*Advice from  
Someone Who  
Has Recovered*



*Scriptural  
Principles  
and  
Practical  
Suggestions*

*Laurie Glass*

# **Advice from Someone Who has Recovered**

By Laurie Glass

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This e-book is not a substitute for professional help. It is not for the diagnosis or treatment of an eating disorder.

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## **Introduction**

Much of the material in these chapters is quoted or adapted from the following resources by Laurie Glass:

[A Picture of His Grace: My Anorexia Recovery Story](#)

[Quotes for Eating Disorder Recovery](#)

[Christian Eating Disorder Recovery Course, Have Perseverance](#)

[Freedom from Eating Disorders Newsletter](#)

[Christian Eating Disorder Recovery Course, Let Go of Perfectionism](#)

[Christian Eating Disorder Recovery Course, See Yourself through God's Eyes Inside and Out](#)

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[Journaling in Eating Disorder Recovery](#)

[Christian Eating Disorder Recovery Course, Deal with Relapses](#)

[Inspiration for Eating Disorder Recovery](#)

## Realize You Don't Need to Be Afraid of Life without the Eating Disorder

*An eating disorder takes away, but freedom gives.*

If you feel afraid to recover, I understand. I went through it myself, and I know many others have felt the same. You are not alone; it's normal to feel this way. However, it's important to address this fear. Otherwise, it can sabotage your recovery efforts. Don't let it. This is a fear you can conquer.

Below is a bit of my own story that I hope will help you throw off this fear and leave it behind. It has no business getting in your way. You can move forward with confidence that life without an eating disorder is far better than life with one. You can begin to believe that freedom is nothing to fear.

I tried off and on to get past the eating disorder, but deep down, I still held onto it. I was afraid to face a life without anorexia. While the eating disorder led me down a path of self-destruction, it was also oddly comforting to me. I assumed it would leave a big hole behind, and I couldn't fathom what would fill that space. I finally realized, though, that anorexia was not a familiar friend, but a destructive enemy.

It took a very long time to genuinely want to recover, but once I did, I took some key steps and let God help me. I recovered in 2003. This is how I describe the difference between living with the eating disorder and living without it.

In time, God led me into a life of freedom from my eating disorder – a life where panic was replaced by peace, depression gave way to joy, and despair was squelched by hope. When I was weak, he was strong; when I felt afraid, he calmed my spirit; when I felt heavily burdened, he lightened my load. With him in charge, anorexia could no longer hold me in its grasp. I became a free woman, transformed by the truth.

As you can see, with the eating disorder out of the way, I experienced several wonderful things - joy, hope, peace, strength, and transformation. The eating disorder didn't leave a hole behind. The space it once occupied was filled with much greater things that the eating disorder never gave me. I was once afraid of a life without the eating disorder, but I found freedom was nothing to fear. I learned that, ultimately, an eating disorder takes away, but freedom gives.

This may all be difficult to take in right now, but I hope you'll give it some serious consideration. If need be, give yourself some time to let it sink in. You may have feared recovery for a long time. If so, that means it's going to take some time and effort to conquer that fear. For now, practice believing that recovery trumps life with an eating disorder until you can truly embrace it. Perhaps you'll be encouraged by reading recovery stories at [Freedom from Eating Disorders](#), as well as the many stories I have collected for you at [Pinterest](#).

You may find it hard to trust that recovery will work out as well for you as it did for the people in these stories. Please don't let that thought stand in the way of doing all you can to move forward. Besides, you won't truly know it for yourself until you try it for yourself.

Laurie Glass, [A Picture of His Grace: My Anorexia Recovery Story](#), 2015.

Laurie Glass, [Quotes for Eating Disorder Recovery](#), 2015.

## Break down Goals

*Sometimes the best way to accomplish the big things is through a series of small, steady victories.*

While it's important to have large, long-term goals in recovery, they can feel overwhelming. It's easy to charge toward meeting them, and then fall because it's too much at once. After going through discouragement like that, especially if you've made numerous attempts, it's easy to give up altogether. But that doesn't mean you can't meet those goals. You can! It may just require that you break them down into smaller, more manageable pieces. It's okay to take this process one step at a time. If you need to focus on an hour, or even a minute at a time, so be it. Sometimes the best way to accomplish the big things is through a series of small, steady victories. Below are some suggestions you can try:

1. Pray about your goals – for discernment in making them and for strength to achieve them.
2. Ask for help to set goals if need be. Perhaps it's overwhelming to you, or maybe you have such a high standard for yourself that you struggle to make realistic goals. Someone else can usually be more objective.
3. Have accountability to help you stay on track with your goals. Choose someone you trust who will check in with you and motivate you to continue forward.
4. List your larger, long-term goals.
5. Evaluate one long-term goal at a time, breaking it down into smaller, more manageable steps. For example, if you want to stop over-exercising or bingeing and purging, instead of saying you're going to stop today and never do it again, break it down into steps. You might delay or cut back on behaviors one step at a time. Perhaps you can delay for 10 minutes, then work up to 30 minutes, and keep going until you reach a half a day, a day, and so on. After you've broken down one goal, you can leave it at that for now or move onto the next one: whichever is comfortable for you.
6. Focus on the weekly, daily, or even hourly goals one at a time. Concentrate on the moment you're in, the meal you're eating, or the behavior you're resisting as it comes. Give yourself credit for every step forward.
7. Review both long-term and short-term goals as you feel comfortable and celebrate how far you've come. Let those successes propel you forward.
8. Examine the reasons you haven't met your short-term goals, if necessary. Then address the thoughts and feelings that arise. Resist berating yourself. Instead, devise a plan to move forward. For example, avoid a trigger if you can or plan ahead with what you can do instead of engaging in a food-related behavior.

9. Think of how you want to recognize the goals you achieve. Make the most of every success. Celebrate!

How about it? Do you think it's worth trying? I hope so. I found that breaking down goals is a valuable skill in recovery as well as other areas in life. I hope you'll find the same to be true for you.

Laurie Glass, [Christian Eating Disorder Recovery Course, Have Perseverance](#), 2015.



## Refrain from Black and White Thinking

*Gray gives you wiggle room to be human, change your mind, and make a mistake and learn from it.*

I've been connected with people struggling with eating disorders since I recovered in 2003. During that time, I've observed how common "all or nothing" or "black and white" thinking is among eating disorder sufferers. I've definitely had this mindset myself. For example, I saw things as either right or wrong, perfect or bad, ambitious or lazy, kind or mean, neat or sloppy, with nothing in between. So if I didn't meet my unrealistically high standard, I beat myself up for being inadequate, lazy, sloppy, or some other awful thing. I wasn't able to see the good in what I did if it didn't meet my very high expectations.

In recovery, this black and white thinking can be detrimental. Think about it. If you almost meet your dietary goals for the day and beat yourself up for it, how is that going to help you move forward? If you determine you're lazy or a quitter if you slip or relapse at some point, how will that propel you forward? The lies and negative thoughts associated with black and white thinking will fuel the eating disorder. But being able to see the gray gives you the opportunity to celebrate the effort you put into your recovery, the positive things you did, and the progress you've made. Even if you haven't reached your goals yet, you can have some positive thoughts to build on to motivate you to keep trying.

Black and white are striking and they have their place. For example, belief in biblical principles, commitment to family, and determination to seek God's help in recovery should be black and white issues. In that way, black and white can be beautiful, but gray can also be beautiful. Gray gives you wiggle room to be human, change your mind, and make a mistake and learn from it. In the process, gray also gives you an opportunity to recognize and experience more of God's grace, love, and mercy. If you beat yourself up over every little thing, you're missing out on some of the good things God has waiting for you. If you cut yourself a little slack, you can redirect your focus to seeking God's strength and experiencing more of him in the process.

I challenge you to catch yourself when you engage in black and white or all or nothing thinking. I think it will serve you well in your recovery as well as other areas of your life.

To start, you can try this exercise:

1. Catch yourself when you're engaging in all or nothing thinking. Make two columns on a page in your journal. In the left column, record your all or nothing thoughts.
2. When you recognize an all or nothing thought, try to find some middle ground. When something you've done doesn't quite meet the standard you had in mind, instead of thinking it's horrible, realize it's actually pretty close to the way you wanted it and celebrate that. Give yourself credit for what's right and don't berate yourself for ways you can improve. Record your new thoughts in the right column.

3. Review your journal so you can remind yourself of healthier, more balanced thoughts.

It will take time and practice to make this change, but you'll be better off for it. During this process, like in any area of recovery, try to offer yourself the same grace you'd offer to someone else who is trying but struggling.

Laurie Glass, [Freedom from Eating Disorders Newsletter](#), 2016.

Laurie Glass, [Christian Eating Disorder Recovery Course, Let Go of Perfectionism](#), 2015.

## See Your Identity in Christ

*As you focus on how the Lord sees you and what you mean to him, perhaps you can begin to see that you're worthy of freedom.*

In the years I've been walking with those who have eating disorders, I've felt so sad knowing how little so many of them think of themselves. They don't think they're worthy of help. They cut themselves down regularly and can't see their positive traits. Perhaps this is you, too. Maybe you struggle to see anything good about yourself. It could be that you've placed your identity in your shortcomings, mistakes, or eating disorder. Also, perhaps you haven't grasped God's love for you. Please take this material seriously and ask the Lord to help you see your true identity. He made you, and he loves you. Please try to place your identity in what he says about you and speak kindly of yourself as his creation. I hope the following paragraphs will help you adjust how you see yourself.

It's common to place identity in things such as appearance, abilities, or roles. Maybe you've done this yourself. The problem is that these things can change. When that change occurs, identity is shaken. For example, you may have felt good about yourself in the past – when you earned high grades, had a special boyfriend or girlfriend, hadn't experienced the effects of aging, or hadn't yet suffered loss of appearance or performance at the hand of a devastating illness or injury. Perhaps you were proud of the type of work you once did, but now feel worthless after a job change. Maybe you felt fulfilled in a particular role in the family, but now you feel you no longer have a purpose. These are just some examples that show the dangers of placing your identity in things that can change.

One of the scariest places you may interpret your identity is in your eating disorder. Under its control, you may feel it's a part of you. But it is not! It may feel like it is, but that doesn't make it true. You are not your eating disorder; your eating disorder is not you! When you recover, you won't cease to be you because you no longer engage in food-related behaviors. Your identity isn't based on what you do; it's based on who you are.

When you place your identity in Christ, you have a solid foundation. You're focused on God's view of you rather than your own distorted one. Not only is he unchanging, but his love for you will never cease. You can find assurance of his unchanging nature in this praise-filled affirmation in Hebrews, *"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever"* (Hebrews 13:8).

In the Old Testament, David communicated God's intimate knowledge of his children. David celebrated great successes and suffered great failures as he struggled through his life experiences. As a writer of songs, he penned the prayer, *"O Lord, you have searched me and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways"* (Psalm 139:1-3). The Lord made you, knows all there is to know about you, and accepts you. Furthermore, your human friends may come and go, but Jesus will never abandon you. His acceptance is unconditional and everlasting. It's natural to seek the acceptance and approval of others, but

that places your identity in something that can change. It isn't what others think of you, but what the Lord thinks of you that matters most.

God is for you; he is on your side. He longs to work in your heart and life. He created you for a reason; he alone knows the plan for your life. He longs to help you, heal you, and equip you so you can fulfill his purpose for your life. As you focus on how he sees you and what you mean to him, perhaps you can begin to see that you're worthy of freedom. In addition, you'll put aside your own ideas and expectations and replace them with his plan. Keep in mind that God made you as you are so he can use you as he's planned.

Consider the message of love and concern for you as an individual in the following verses:

*"Yet the Lord longs to be gracious to you; he rises to show you compassion. For the Lord is a God of justice. Blessed are all who wait for him" (Isaiah 30:18)!*

*"This is what the Lord says – he who made you, who formed you in the womb, and who will help you..." (Isaiah 44:2).*

*"See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands; your walls are ever before me" (Isaiah 49:16).*

*"And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered" (Matthew 10:30)."*

For more verses on this topic, as well as 29 other topics, see [Bible Verses for Eating Disorder Recovery](#).

Now I would like to leave you with an exercise that I hope will help you. On the following two pages, you'll find Psalm 139 with blanks where you can insert your name or appropriate pronouns. I encourage you to take your time and soak in this exercise. Let it speak to you as you focus on this powerful psalm which demonstrates how much you mean to the Lord.

Psalm 139

- 1 O LORD, you have searched \_\_\_\_\_  
and you know \_\_\_\_\_.
- 2 You know when \_\_\_\_\_ sits and when \_\_\_\_\_ rises;  
you perceive \_\_\_\_\_ thoughts from afar.
- 3 You discern \_\_\_\_\_ going out and \_\_\_\_\_ lying down;  
you are familiar with all of \_\_\_\_\_ ways.
- 4 Before a word is on \_\_\_\_\_ tongue  
you know it completely, O LORD.
- 5 You hem \_\_\_\_\_ in—behind and before;  
you have laid your hand upon \_\_\_\_\_.
- 6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for \_\_\_\_\_,  
too lofty for \_\_\_\_\_ to attain.
- 7 Where can \_\_\_\_\_ go from your Spirit?  
Where can \_\_\_\_\_ flee from your presence?
- 8 If \_\_\_\_\_ goes up to the heavens, you are there;  
if \_\_\_\_\_ makes \_\_\_\_\_ bed in the depths, you are there.
- 9 If \_\_\_\_\_ rises on the wings of the dawn,  
if \_\_\_\_\_ settles on the far side of the sea,  
10 even there your hand will guide \_\_\_\_\_,  
your right hand will hold \_\_\_\_\_ fast.
- 11 If \_\_\_\_\_ says, "Surely the darkness will hide me  
and the light become night around me,"  
12 even the darkness will not be dark to you;  
the night will shine like the day,  
for darkness is as light to you.
- 13 For you created \_\_\_\_\_ inmost being;  
you knit \_\_\_\_\_ together in \_\_\_\_\_ mother's womb.
- 14 \_\_\_\_\_ praises you because \_\_\_\_\_ is fearfully and  
wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, \_\_\_\_\_ knows that full well.
- 15 \_\_\_\_\_ frame was not hidden from you  
when \_\_\_\_\_ was made in the secret place.  
When \_\_\_\_\_ was woven together in the depths of the earth,  
16 your eyes saw \_\_\_\_\_ unformed body.  
All the days ordained for \_\_\_\_\_  
were written in your book  
before one of them came to be.
- 17 How precious to \_\_\_\_\_ are your thoughts, O God!  
How vast is the sum of them!
- 18 Were I to count them,  
they would outnumber the grains of sand.  
When \_\_\_\_\_ awakes,  
\_\_\_\_\_ is still with you.

- 19 *If only you would slay the wicked, O God!*  
*Away from \_\_\_\_\_, you bloodthirsty men!*
- 20 *They speak of you with evil intent;*  
*your adversaries misuse your name.*
- 21 *Do I not hate those who hate you, O LORD,*  
*and abhor those who rise up against you?*
- 22 *I have nothing but hatred for them;*  
*I count them my enemies.*
- 23 *Search \_\_\_\_\_, O God, and know \_\_\_\_\_ heart;*  
*test \_\_\_\_\_ and know \_\_\_\_\_ anxious thoughts.*
- 24 *See if there is any offensive way in \_\_\_\_\_,*  
*and lead \_\_\_\_\_ in the way everlasting.*

Laurie Glass, [Christian Eating Disorder Recovery Course, See Yourself through God's Eyes Inside and Out](#), 2015.

Laurie Glass, [Journey to Freedom from Eating Disorders](#), 2010.

## Let Go of Guilt and Shame

*Choose to believe his promises about forgiveness instead of what your personal feelings or false beliefs are telling you.*

I used to feel buried in guilt and shame. This is so common among people with eating disorders: not only over the eating disorder itself, but also in other areas. I want to offer you some encouragement and suggestions, but first I will share with you how the Lord once spoke to me. I don't remember my specific prayer about the eating disorder, but I remember feeling ashamed. The Lord knew that, and he spoke to me: "You have nothing to be ashamed of." Wow! That was so contrary to how I felt. It gave me a measure of relief in that moment. I hope that reading this gives you a measure of relief, too.

If you've lived under the weight of guilt and shame, you've likely felt heavy remorse, regret, and self-loathing when you wished you could undo something you'd done. If you couldn't undo it, it may have seemed you were doomed to remain buried under guilt and shame indefinitely.

BUT there is good news. You do NOT have to continue under the weight of guilt and shame. While there are no easy answers to such deep feelings, there ARE things you can do, and beliefs you can change, in order to rise up out of this heaviness.

Before I go any further, I want to mention that guilt and shame aren't quite the same thing, but they're often felt together. Guilt occurs when you feel responsible for an action that you regret. Shame, in a way, goes deeper: it occurs when you feel disappointed or deeply embarrassed, not only about something you've done, but about something inside of you.

Below are some common beliefs people carry related to guilt and shame. I hope the accompanying insights will speak to you and help you let go of guilt and shame.

*I don't believe God can forgive me for this.*

Your deep-seated guilt and shame can cause you to lose sight of the truth. Because you feel these feelings so deeply, you focus on what you've done and how you feel about yourself for doing it. When you sense this happening, try to refocus your attention from yourself to the Lord. Concentrate on his attributes. For example, you can bask in his love, meditate on Scriptures about his forgiveness, and focus on his grace.

Your guilt and shame may cause you to lose sight of the truth, but they cannot change the truth. God's forgiveness and cleansing remain the same. He will always be there to love and forgive you no matter how guilty or ashamed you feel. You can go to him at any time to accept his forgiveness. Choose to believe his promises about forgiveness instead of what your personal feelings or false beliefs are telling you. Those thoughts and emotions are like putting God in a box, making him less than who he is. His love and forgiveness are incredibly vast, and they cannot be diminished by anything you've done.

When you think God can't forgive you, you can try to change that thought to something like this: Even if I FEEL what I've done is unforgivable, that doesn't mean it IS unforgivable. I don't see any Scripture that lists offenses he will and will not forgive. Saying I don't believe he'll forgive me is doubting His Word is true. It also means I'm limiting his love, grace, and mercy. I can get my eyes off myself and onto the Lord and what he offers. Here are some Scriptures to help me do that.

*"Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord" (Acts 3:19).*

*"Come now, let us settle the matter," says the LORD. 'Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool'" (Isaiah 1:18).*

*"In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace" (Ephesians 1:7).*

*I can't forgive myself.*

Please read this carefully and let it sink in. If you're concerned about forgiving yourself, you can breathe a sigh of relief. You don't have to forgive yourself! There's no scriptural support for this. To say that God has forgiven you but that you can't forgive yourself is like saying Christ's work on the cross wasn't enough: that you have to do more in addition to what Christ did in order to be forgiven. This isn't true. So, instead of trying to muster up some forgiveness for yourself, realize it's something you don't need to do. Focus on the cross instead of on your sin, accept the forgiveness that has been yours for the taking all along, and move forward.

When you get stuck on the thought that you can't forgive yourself, you can try to change that thought to something like this:

God is big enough, loving enough, merciful enough, and so much more, to offer me all the forgiveness I need. Christ's sacrifice on the cross did all that needs to be done. There is no action I can take that will add to that. I don't need to forgive myself. I need only to accept his forgiveness.

*I feel shame because of what has happened to me.*

Please pay close attention to this and take it to heart: you might feel shame, not for something you've done, but for something that's been done to you. You may have experienced mistreatment, bullying, or abuse. If this is the case, please know you don't deserve to feel ashamed. That individual decided to do something awful to someone; you did not. It wasn't your fault. You don't have to degrade or condemn yourself because of what happened to you. You don't have to blame yourself for the bad decisions someone else made. What happened to you doesn't make you less of a person, and it doesn't make you bad, dirty, damaged or unlovable. What occurred was a reflection on the other person, not you; it was someone else's



choice, not yours. Again, you don't deserve to feel ashamed. Read this paragraph, over and over if you need to, for its words to change your perspective and touch your emotions.

When you think you deserve to feel shame for what has happened to you, you can try to change that thought to something like this:

God wants better for me. I can let him reassure me that I didn't deserve what happened, it wasn't my fault, and I don't deserve to feel ashamed. Instead, I can move forward knowing he loves me, doesn't hold what happened against me, and can heal me of this shame. One way to help myself is to focus on soothing Scriptures as I open my heart to his healing. I can start with these.

*"You are my hiding place, you will protect me from trouble and surround me with songs of deliverance" (Psalm 32:7).*

*"He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds" (Psalm 147:3).*

*"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles" (2 Corinthians 1:3-4a).*

Whether it's guilt and shame about your eating disorder or something else, I hope you'll be able to let it go. Don't let it weigh you down anymore. You can ask for God's help, rise above those debilitating thoughts and feelings, and move forward in your recovery. It will be a process for sure, but think of what it could be like with that weight off your shoulders.

Laurie Glass, [Christian Eating Disorder Recovery Course, Let Go of Guilt](#), 2015.

Laurie Glass, [Christian Eating Disorder Recovery Course, Let Go of Shame](#), 2015.

## Find Healthy Ways to Process Emotions

*It may very well be painful to allow your feelings to surface, but they will ultimately cause you even more pain if you don't.*

While it may not seem evident, your perspective about emotions as well as how you deal with them can be a vital area to address in your recovery. Our thoughts affect our emotions, and our emotions affect our behaviors. It may be tricky to see the connection, but it's there. For example, you might eat when you feel sad, restrict your food intake when you want to feel in control, or purge when you feel guilty. There are numerous possibilities.

It's important to evaluate and, if necessary, adjust your perspective about emotions. For example, if you think it's best to ignore or stuff your feelings, emotions are irrelevant, or your feelings make you weak, I encourage you to consider a change in attitude toward emotions. Here are a few key things to remember about feelings:

1. You were made in God's image, and that includes your emotions.
2. If you bury your feelings, understand they may come out in other ways. For example, do you ever wonder why you overreact to something? It might be because you have unresolved feelings that were triggered by feelings over a new situation.
3. It may very well be painful to allow your feelings to surface, but they will ultimately cause you even more pain if you don't.
4. Try not to judge your feelings. Instead, learn to identify them and release them in healthy ways.

Here are some suggestions to help you explore and express your emotions.

1. Talk to someone you trust.
2. Write in a journal.
3. Compose stories, essays, poems, or songs.
4. Write out your prayers.
5. Play an instrument or sing.
6. Draw, color, paint, sculpt, sew, do a craft project, or something else creative.
7. Search for Scriptures that contain emotional expression and recite them as prayers if they reflect what's in your heart. Here are a few to start.

*“My soul is in deep anguish. How long, Lord, how long? Turn, Lord, and deliver me; save me because of your unfailing love” (Psalm 6:3-4).*

*“Turn to me and be gracious to me, for I am lonely and afflicted. The troubles of my heart have multiplied: free me from my anguish” (Psalm 25:16-18).*

*“Be merciful to me, Lord, for I am in distress; my eyes grow weak with sorrow, my soul and body with grief. My life is consumed by anguish and my years by groaning; my strength fails because of my affliction, and my bones grow weak” (Psalm 31:9-10).*

Don't try all the suggestions at once. Try one and see how it goes. Then try another until you find the avenues that are the best fit for you.

Below are some journaling questions you can use to help you explore your perspective about emotions.

1. Do I believe my emotions make me a bad or weak person in any way? If so, where did I get that belief? How can I change that belief?
2. Am I afraid to allow myself to feel? If so, why?
3. Do I realize that when I shut off negative feelings, I also deny myself of positive feelings? What are some positive emotions I'd like to feel?

\*Note: While it's beneficial to process thoughts and feelings through journaling and other avenues, if it gets to be too uncomfortable for you, pray, take a break, or try a simpler question. Be sure you have someone to talk to if you feel overwhelmed. As thoughts and feelings come to light, it may seem like things get worse before they get better. Ultimately, it's better to get things out, but it's okay to go about it in steps, and it's important that you have someone to talk to if it starts to feel like too much. This is a challenging process, and it will take time to work through pent up feelings and untangle troublesome thoughts. Be gentle with yourself and give yourself the time you need.

Laurie Glass, [Christian Eating Disorder Recovery Course, Learn to Deal with Emotions](#), 2015.

Laurie Glass, [Journaling in Eating Disorder Recovery](#), 2015.

## Learn from Relapses and Maintain Resolve

*Trust that while your resolve to recover might wane, God's desire for you to recover will never waver.*

There will be ups and downs, twists and turns, victories and slips, in the recovery process. This is normal. Try to be gentle with yourself and give yourself time to get help, work through the underlying issues that fuel the eating disorder, and stop harmful food-related behaviors. While you're in this process, I hope you'll keep some key things in mind.

First, I think it's important to consider adjusting your perspective about slips and relapses. Here are some things to remember on this topic.

1. A setback doesn't define your recovery. Try your best not to give it that kind of power. Reverting back to old behaviors doesn't mean you'll never break free, you've lost whatever ground you've gained, or you've failed. No! Every step forward you took to that point is still evidence of your hard work and your growth. Apply what you learn from the relapse to help you emerge from it even stronger than before.
2. There will always be things that will trip you up and lure you to the eating disorder. Sometimes these triggers will get the best of you, but that doesn't mean that you can't learn from those experiences and stand up against them in the future.
3. Give yourself permission to have a less than perfect recovery experience. It's okay to struggle, and even fall, sometimes.
4. Ask God for discernment as to why these things draw you to food-related behaviors. Talk to someone you trust or write in a journal to explore what thoughts and feelings are associated with these triggers. Then deal with them the best you can. Perhaps you'll recognize a lie you need to replace with the truth or some hidden emotions you need to release.
5. Pray for help to stand up to what draws you in. You don't have to give in to any of these things. Look to the Lord for direction and strength when you feel lured into food-related behaviors. *"But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it" (1 Corinthians 10:13b).*

It's best if you can accept that slips and relapses are going to happen. They don't mean you can't recover. I spent a long time in relapse myself, and I didn't want to recover. That didn't mean I couldn't change my mind, work on recovery, ultimately recover, and trust God in the process. I was able to do all of these things. Please remember that a relapse doesn't have to knock you down and keep you there. You can choose to get back up, learn from the experience, and head toward freedom. Furthermore, you don't always have to feel strong. When you feel weak and beat up, remember 2 Corinthians 12:9-10. *"But He said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore I will boast all the more gladly*

*about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong."* When you feel weary, find your strength in him.

Next, I want to encourage you to celebrate your victories and retain motivation to recover. Here are some practical suggestions you can try.

1. Identify what inspires you. Maybe it's prayer, worship, and Bible study. Perhaps it's poetry or other inspirational writings such as devotionals or recovery stories. Be creative and implement what inspires you in your recovery.
2. Dream of what your life would be like without the eating disorder. That may be difficult to imagine, and it might even be scary, but think about the ways in which the eating disorder interferes with your life. Then, picture those areas of your life without it holding you back. Trust that God has a better life waiting for you. Think of Hebrews 11:1. *"Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see."* Even if you don't know what's ahead, believe that in the absence of the eating disorder, the future has to be better, whatever it may hold.
3. Maintain a list of your steps forward in recovery. Remember to include when you get back up after a slip or a relapse. Use this list to remind you of the times you've said no to a behavior and yes to a healthy choice. You've done it before, and you can do it again.
4. Trust that while your resolve to recover might wane, God's desire for you to recover will never waver. Let him be your rock. When you feel all over the place, take steps forward and steps back, fight and then give up, remember that he is rock solid. Look to him when you need strength to steady yourself. There's no one more reliable. Find and meditate on verses that speak of his solid, steady, and secure presence. Here are some to begin your list.

*"The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge. He is my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold" (Psalm 18:2).*

*"Hear my cry, O God; listen to my prayer. From the ends of the earth I call to you, I call as my heart grows faint; lead me to the rock that is higher than I. For you have been my refuge, a strong tower against the foe. I long to dwell in your tent forever and take refuge in the shelter of your wings" (Psalm 61:1-4).*

*"The Lord is a refuge for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble. Those who know your name will trust in you, for you, Lord, have never forsaken those who seek you" (Psalm 9:9-10).*

*"Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom" (Isaiah 40:28).*

I know it's hard to keep going sometimes. Whether it's something I've suggested here or whether this list has sparked some ideas of your own, I hope you'll find whatever is a good fit for you. Also, I hope the following poem will encourage you.

### **Persevere**

When you think it's impossible to take another step, slide your foot forward.  
When you can't fight another day, draw your sword one more time.  
When you feel you can't get any lower, look up.  
When you don't have the strength to keep pushing forward, ask someone to lead you.  
When you think you can't journal anymore, write one more word.  
When you question if you can hang on any longer, reset your grip.  
When you feel too tired to keep on, battle for one minute longer.  
When you can't fashion your concerns into prayers, ask the Intercessor to pray for you.  
When you stumble in the darkness, ask someone to hold up the light for you.  
When you conclude it's too hard to let yourself feel, shed one more tear.  
When you doubt you will find your way, believe for one more minute that you will.  
When you reach your destination, celebrate that you persevered.

I want to leave you with one last thought. It's the first quote I wrote after I recovered in 2003.

Freedom is worth every day of fighting, every weary moment, and every tear shed on the healing journey.

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## About the Author

Laurie Glass has a Master's Degree in Christian Counseling. She recovered from anorexia in 2003 and has supported others with eating disorders ever since. She understands the ups and downs of the recovery process. Based on what she has learned and experienced, she is passionate about creating resources to help others find freedom from their own eating disorders.

In addition to the resources on her website, she has also had several poems and articles published in both print and online publications. In addition, she was quoted in the April 2012 issue of *Women's Health Magazine* in an article entitled "The Scary Rise of Adult Eating Disorders."

To find out more about Laurie and what she has to offer, visit [Freedom from Eating Disorders](#). There's a lot there, so Laurie encourages people to visit often and find what speaks to them for the day. If you haven't already, be sure to sign up for her [free newsletter](#).

For encouragement and inspiration for your recovery, you can connect with Laurie on [Facebook](#) and follow her on [Pinterest](#). You can also subscribe to her [YouTube](#) or [GodTube](#) channel.