

No longer alone

Learning to rely on the body of Christ

Words by Ulla Mia

I spent years at war with my heart and mind. Anxiety lived like a free renter in my mind while depression overtook my heart. This has made it so hard for me to draw near to God. He offers peace, but I left no room for such a thing.

It seemed impossible to trust in a God who says “peace be with you” when my mind zoomed in on every reason to *not* feel peace. Catastrophes in the world, pain around me, or the imperfections within myself—the list goes on. To make everything harder, my depression and anxiety led to an eating disorder that made me feel ashamed and trapped.

One of the lessons I’ve had the hardest time learning is that it’s okay to allow others to help me. I much preferred to travel life alone. It was as if I thought depending on others was a sign of weakness or sin.

But God had other things to tell me about my worth and the peace He can offer. One day, I realized I was getting nowhere trying to break the bondage holding me back from all the joy God had for me. I reached out to my church, and was blessed by two of the most amazing mentors I could have prayed for! They’re also two blessed friends.

One mentor taught me about free will and choice—that God granted us both, and it is up to us whether we surrender to Him and trust Him. However, it’s a work in progress; fully releasing ourselves to His will takes time and practice. My mentor taught me we can train ourselves to be aware of our daily choices and see if what we’re doing is pleasing to God or not. We will mess up, but there’s grace for that!

My other mentor taught me God knows where we are at in our mess. He is right

here with us and He knows what our struggles are. He asks that we give Him the chance to show He is trustworthy. He’s walking with us on our journeys toward peace. And He’s here for the long haul.

I’ve learned that on the days where I have no peace I can just be honest and tell Him that. He’s okay with it. Peace stills fear and anxiety, but we must be open to receive it. Look up to Heaven and ask God into these places. Time with God builds relationship, and in relationship with the Lord, there is peace.

Here’s what I found as I put both my mentors’ words into practice. I have so many moments where my anxiety is lulled into peace because I talk to God honestly about the struggle. So often, He hushes my anxiety; almost without realizing it, I go from panicking to dancing! Another amazing result of trusting God and leaning on others in my church has been gaining freedom from my eating disorder. I still struggle with body image from time to time, but I’ve healed so much.

Opening my heart to receive peace has been such a journey. I still struggle with anxiety to this day. But, looking back to even just one year ago, I see how far God has brought me. If He can do this for me, He can do it for anyone.

Obviously, since the pandemic relationships have looked very different. Even so, I still have people I know I can call up when I need guidance or encouragement. It gives me so much peace knowing that even if I feel I’m falling apart, there are people who can remind me of the love of God, help me grow in my faith, and love me through the worst of times.

It’s so important to turn to others when we feel alone and need wisdom. That’s why God invites us to be part of his Church. It’s here where we can learn from those who are wiser than we are. In turn, we can share with others the understanding we’ve gleaned and the love we’ve received. That idea blesses my heart. I pray for the day I can give to someone else all I’ve been given.

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