

Post-traumatic Stress Disorder

According to the National Institute of Mental Health, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is an anxiety disorder that some people acquire after seeing or living through a dangerous event. The prophet Isaiah in the Bible makes a firm declaration for those who suffer from PTSD: *“Do not fear, for I am with you; Do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.” Isaiah 41:10.* Christians that have experienced a crisis or traumatic episode in life, and have not addressed the issue that caused the trauma may suffer from PTSD, possibly months or years after the event. Some of the stress factors that can cause PTSD, even in a believer’s life, may well be military combat events during wartime, domestic/family violence, sexual and/or physical abuse as a child, exposure to death or threatened death situations, the death of a love one, any kind of accidents, disasters, and other serious events that has a tremendous impact in the way we handle life and its many transitions.

What’s clear about PTSD is that everyone tackles this disorder in different ways. But what is sure if left untreated, PTSD can spiritually and emotionally cripple a person for life. As Christians, we know and believe that God is more than able to provide divine healing in distressing times of life. Yet, it is important for the PTSD sufferer, not only to seek spiritual intervention through prayer and the Word, but also seek out therapeutic (professional) intervention as well. But the good news is that there is hope in God to address PTSD as we seek and submit to the power and healing ministry of the Holy Spirit! A prime example of one of possibly many biblical characters is, of course, Job. *Job 3:25-26 reads, “What I always feared has happened to me. What I dreaded has come true. I have no peace, no quietness. I have no rest; only trouble comes.”* But because Job never abandoned his God, the Lord favored Job with emotional healing; resulting in living a full life. The choice is either to live with PTSD or trust God; while at the same time seeking the necessary help that leads to a healing road to recovery.

David in the Bible is also one who went through his own traumatic experiences where he could have given up. David recognized God as his healer and provider in his deepest times of crisis. Listen to David's cry: *"From the ends of the earth, I cry to you for help when my heart is overwhelmed. Lead me to the towering rock of safety, for you are my safe refuge, a fortress where my enemies cannot reach me."* Psalm 61:2. A "safe refuge" is where you would seek spiritual and emotional restoration and not allow PTSD to dictate the course of your life. Seek involvement in a healing community, such as citylife church to address this most difficult disorder that can have a negative effect in your life if not addressed promptly and properly. *"The righteous cry, and the Lord hears and delivers them out of all their troubles. The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves those we are crushed in spirit. Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivers him out of them all. He keeps all his bones, not one of them is broken."* Psalm 43:17-20.

Be free in your mental health well being and do not fear the healing process as it can only help you be a complete person by the grace of God as He offers mental comfort to all: *"God is our merciful Father and the source of all comfort. He comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort others. When they are troubled, we will be able to give them the same comfort God has given us. For the more we suffer for Christ, the more God will shower us with his comfort through Christ."* 2 Corinthians 1:3-5. Remember, you want to be a survivor and not a victim of PTSD.



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