

Title: **Freedom from Bulimia: Case Study/Testimony**

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Greetings all,

Just posted a new document (included below) to the case studies/testimonies page of our web site.

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Freedom from Bulimia: Case Study/Testimony

(New 1/18/2002)

One of the people on our e-mail list (not one of our clients) recently wrote to us regarding her experience of receiving freedom from bulimia through Theophostic ministry. She has worked with us to put together a case study/testimony that she would like to share with the rest of you. We join with her in celebrating the wonderful healing that God has done in her life, through a professional counselor in her area, using Theophostic Ministry.

Just after Thanksgiving, 2000, I was healed (through Theophostic) by the Lord of a 21 year bondage to bulimia. I had been consumed with bulimia since the autumn of 1979. For 21 years – my entire adult life – my every waking moment was focused on looking for opportunities to binge and purge, planning the binges, binging, purging, cleaning up, covering up, over and over, ad nauseam (pun intended). I told a network of lies too intertwined to keep straight. Bulimia took over every aspect of my life; it permeated every corner of my mind. I went to great lengths (shoplifting, stealing from my husband and children, charging thousands of dollars on credit cards), whatever it took to be able to binge and purge. I felt incredible shame, especially because I was a Christian (although I regularly wondered if I had committed the unforgivable sin), my husband loved me, and I was a mother of six children. In my moments of clarity, I would look around me, see my husband, children, all the trappings of the “good life,” and wonder why I seemed willing to throw it all away, and to cause great pain to the people closest to me, in the pursuit of...I didn't know what exactly. I just knew I felt like I had to keep living this insane way – I didn't know how else to live.

For two decades I had sought help from every source I ever heard of. I had tapped into the best resources that the world and the church had to offer. I looked for answers from Freudian psychotherapy, hypnosis, cognitive therapy, behavior modification, endless self-help books (both secular and Christian), support groups, 12-step programs, six different anti-depressants, five 30-day stays at in-patient treatment centers (all specifically geared towards eating disorders), hundreds of prayer sessions (soaking,

prophetic, inner healing, confessional, intensive, deliverance...you name it), approximately 20 different counselors (pastoral as well as traditional therapy), and three years of counseling with my priest (who is also a psychologist). In each instance, I found “answers;” I was given a myriad of advice, directions, character-building exercises, and more information than I knew what to do with. I would embrace each program, soak up everything they gave me, and go back into my world, often with a sense of renewed hope, determined to make it work. But always, without exception, I would eventually find myself back in the “pig sty,” continuing in my old self-destructive pattern. I kept doing the very best I knew how to cooperate with each program, with each counselor; I would achieve varying periods of “recovery” (meaning I could abstain, with great effort, from binging and purging, but it was a constant mental battle), from a few days, to a year or more, but each “recovery” ended with a crash of defeat, perpetuating my shame, leaving me with a burden of hopelessness. Each therapist would grow frustrated with my lack of success – they were giving me the best they had, so it must be my fault that I kept failing. Their confrontations heaped shame on me: “You’re just not surrendered enough,” “You’re just not trying hard enough,” “You’re such a controlling person,” “I don’t know what more to do with you if you’re not going to cooperate,” “You obviously don’t want recovery badly enough.” Even two internationally recognized healing ministers, who have published many books on prayer for emotional healing, gave up, saying they just couldn’t help me.

I couldn’t shake the conviction that my life was based on very deep, very ingrained lies that I had believed since early in my life. I didn’t know what the lies were, but I knew they were in operation. I remember saying, “I don’t think I can get any better (or behave any better) until these lies are exposed and replaced with God’s Truth.” I continued in counseling, although I’d become so discouraged with my failures that I’d periodically quit, and even stay away from church (where I’d feel like a filthy hypocrite). I got my only “fellowship” through our local Christian radio station.

Then in the fall of 2000, I started hearing commercials for a counselor who was reporting to have witnessed miraculous healing results with her clients. My whole body would feel pulled toward the radio when I heard her describe some short testimonies of healing. I was aware of flickers of hope under the layers of discouragement and fear of trying and failing again. Out of loyalty to my priest, I asked for his permission to seek outside counseling. My priest asked me to first get a thorough physical (I was severely underweight from excessive purging, and quite exhausted). The physician, a Christian, referred me to a Christian therapist. I decided that I’d “try out” both the referral and the woman I’d heard on the radio, and choose. I saw the referred counselor three times before she announced: “Your case is one of the toughest I’ve seen; you need a long stay at an in-patient treatment center. You need to be prepared for a long, uphill 3-year battle, but you should be able to cope better after that.” When I told her that another counselor was supposedly having fast and thorough results from some kind of praying, she scoffed and told me that there weren’t any shortcuts. I was devastated. I’d already experienced five different 30-

day stays at treatment centers, all of which had only short-term “success.” I wasn’t willing to leave my six children (including an eight-month old nursing infant) for 30 days, with absolutely no guarantee of improvement. I cried all the way home, saying, “Lord, there’s got to be another way to be healed that won’t harm my children. I give up. It’s up to You.”

When I got home, my husband listened to my frustration, and encouraged me to call the counselor I’d heard on the radio and make an appointment. She answered the phone, listened to my pain, and made an appointment for two days later. I asked her what kind of praying she did, because I was sure I’d been exposed to every type of inner healing prayer in existence. She said, “I help you to come into the Lord’s presence, He brings you to where you’re believing a lie, and He replaces it with His Truth.” I heard bells go off in my head! This was exactly what I’d “felt” I needed more than a year before this. She then asked me to prepare and bring a list of all the reasons why I continued to binge and purge.

I came up with a two-page list, which I brought with me to my first appointment. None of it was revelational to me, but it was amazing to see all of these “reasons” together. The counselor then asked me, “Which of these seems to be the strongest, most compelling reason to keep you in this pattern?” I replied: “If I don’t binge and purge, the terrible deprivation I feel may destroy me.” She then prayed that no spirits would interfere with what the Holy Spirit wanted to do during our time together, binding them in the name of Jesus. I closed my eyes. She asked me to focus on the thought that if I didn’t binge and purge, the deprivation would destroy me; she asked me to allow the feelings to grow, and to describe what I was experiencing mentally, emotionally, and even physically. I felt panicky, fearful, desperate, anxious, helpless, even terrified; my stomach felt as if it were in knots, my face frowned up, and I clasped my hands tightly together. She asked me to continue to focus on my discomfort while she asked Jesus to show me when and where this panicky-fearful-anxious feeling first came to me. She asked me to remember that all evil spirits had been bound, and that I could trust that God wanted to speak to me; to just report any thought, feeling, sensation, impression, words or ideas that occurred to me, and to trust Him to interpret. I waited in silence as she prayed; at first I had nothing to report, except that the anxiety was still strong.

After a few moments, I had a distinct impression of a small embryo, floating in warm darkness; somehow I knew that the embryo was me. I reported what I saw/sensed to the counselor. She asked what feelings I was experiencing. I said I had a fear of impending doom, as if something really bad was going to happen to me, and somehow I had to do something about it, only I couldn’t because I was so helpless and couldn’t be heard. I felt as if I was horribly empty, starving, deprived of something very necessary. I reported all this to the counselor; she asked the Lord to show me the lie imbedded in the “memory.” Suddenly I felt the embryo/myself vowing, “When I am able to help myself, I’m going to make sure that I am never deprived again!” The vow had two lies

hidden behind it: “If I don't binge and purge, the terrible deprivation I feel may destroy me” and “It's up to *me* to make sure that I'm never feeling deprived.” Perhaps another, deeper lie was there as well: “God will not be there for me – I have to take care of myself.” She had me renounce the vow, and then asked Jesus to show me His truth. Again, I waited in silence for a few moments. I then had the impression that I (still an embryo), was leaning up against someone, with large, strong arms encircling the area around me. Then I felt and saw the arms gently pushing the amniotic fluid toward me (much as a mother does during her baby's first bath, to help the child be unafraid of the water). Several times, the arms gently pushed the waves of water toward me, like a rocking sensation, then the arms wrapped around me in a gentle, yet firm, embrace. I knew instinctively that this was Jesus. Then I “heard” Him say, “I am the one who will keep you from deprivation. You do not have to take care of yourself; I will take care of you.” Suddenly, all the anxiety, fear, emptiness, etc. left, leaving an assurance of peace. I reported all of this, and the counselor asked me to say aloud the lies. I repeated the lies, and realized that the statements which had felt very true minutes before now felt ridiculously false.

I left that appointment feeling different, in a way I couldn't explain, and I didn't want to analyze it. I felt as if I were being carried. I had been bingeing and purging out of control for weeks, months and years before this day. The next day, I awoke, still feeling carried. Temptations occasionally fluttered nearby, but the power of them was greatly diminished – I felt as tempted to binge/purge as I felt to park my car in a handicapped space; they might both *occur* to me, but they *felt* ridiculous and wrong, very easy to dismiss. I continued with counseling appointments for the next few weeks; each time, the Lord revealed more lies, gently and simply replacing them with His truth. Day after day, I found myself not bingeing and purging, and not even thinking about it; I didn't even feel the slightest desire to do so. As more and more lies were replaced with truth (at a spirit level, not just a head level), my faith grew, slowly and surely. I immediately felt a strong desire to go back to church. My hunger for God, His Word and His people grew in a way that amazed me. I wanted to read the Bible, to pray, to worship, to praise. My mind felt transformed, and I was able to discern easily. I wanted to be closer to my husband and children, to actually have life between meals! I could put others first, I made amends for my wrongs, asking forgiveness of my husband, children, parents, sisters, others I'd harmed over the years.

Three weeks into this “new thing,” my husband Mark and I sat down with our children to openly speak about what life had been like with a raging bulimic mother, and what was happening to me (they'd already noticed and commented on a difference in me). When I asked if they had any questions, my eldest daughter asked, “Mom, what do we do if we find you bingeing again?” I was about to say something along the lines of, “Tell your father,” when I heard the following words come out of my mouth, “I don't ever have to do that again. I'm free.” Mark did a double-take, and I said, “What did I just say?” At that moment, I knew that I knew that Jesus had completely and permanently set me free from the bondage of bulimia. I also knew that He would be faithful to

continue to set me free from other lies that affect me, and that He would renew my mind for the rest of my life. I was thrilled, excited, blessed beyond belief! After all the years of suffering, of others suffering because of me, of countless people praying on my behalf, of living a life consumed by sin, I was free.

I have now been completely free from bulimia since December of 2000: the behavior, the thoughts and the feelings associated with it. I've gained and maintained an appropriately healthy weight (I've even enjoyed a healthy pregnancy). I eat when I'm hungry. I am free to enjoy foods that I'd "blacklisted" before – foods that were sure to trigger a binge response before my healing. I thoroughly enjoy each meal or snack, but I am free to stop once I am satisfied, and I can move on to other activities without longing for more food than I need. I've had no temptations to binge or purge; if the memory of the behavior rises, it "feels" absurd, and unattached to me. It's no longer my identity. When Jesus showed up in the memory, the sense I had was that He is the One who fulfills my areas of deprivation, not me. Bulimia then withered up as a poor substitute for what He could do for me. I have absolutely no fear of relapse – my healing isn't dependent upon me – He who freed me is keeping me free, with no effort on my behalf!