



I STRUGGLE WITH  
ANOREXIA

Name Withheld

*It wasn't enough to know I needed to change. I needed to want to change, and I needed to turn to the Lord to do it.*

All my life I strove for perfection: I strove to be the angel child, the straight-A student, the exceptional friend, family member, and athlete. But things didn't work out the way I'd hoped, and I started to feel like I was losing control over my life.

So I turned to something I could control: how much I ate. I began to look in the mirror and feel unhappy with what I saw—an imperfect girl. The only way to make her perfect was to be skinny. I began to weigh myself daily. I ate less and less. I turned down foods I loved. And still I was not happy.

My parents noticed my frequent gloomy attitude, and they noticed I was not eating very much. When they realized that something was not normal, they took me to my pediatrician. Sure enough, my weight was down an unhealthy amount. I was diagnosed with the eating disorder anorexia. I was put on an anxiety medication and treated by three specialty doctors. I was to the point that they almost put me in the hospital to save my life. I was walking the line of life and death. At the time I didn't realize how bad things were. I didn't even know what anorexia was: an emotional disorder characterized by an obsessive desire to lose weight by refusing to eat.

**I DIDN'T WANT TO CHANGE. I DIDN'T WANT TO PUT ON WEIGHT.**

I got mad. I did not see what the problem was and why everyone was so worried. Wasn't that what I was supposed to be doing—staying healthy and being skinny? My family decided to fast and pray for me. This made me frustrated. I didn't think people should fast and pray for me, because I thought I was healthy, happy, and content with how I looked.

My parents and siblings told me over and over, "You need to change. You need to seek a desire to change." I didn't want to change. I didn't want to put on weight, and I couldn't see why they wanted me to, either.

Countless times they would tell me, "Turn to the Lord. Tell Him you want to change and ask Him to help you change." I would pray for these things, but it was an empty cry. I didn't want help but went along with it to make my parents and doctors happy.

I had been receiving treatment for my eating disorder for about a year and a half when my sister, who was serving a mission at the time, said, "You need to change." I had been told that over and over again and was kind of sick of hearing it, so I just said in frustration, "How? How do you want me to change?"

From the time I was diagnosed with anorexia, I had read my scriptures every night, had not missed morning or night prayer, and had gone to church. I said to my sister, "I have asked God to change me, and I am still here. He isn't listening." I felt frustrated, but I knew

giving up my scripture study and daily prayers would do nothing to help the situation.

My kind sister thought for a moment and then said, "You need to *want* to change. Go to God, and talk to Him like you would to me, and tell Him you are ready to change." What she said hit me like a ton of bricks. I went to my Heavenly Father, a little nervous but honest and earnest, and just said, "OK, here I am. Help me to change. Please help me to find a desire to change."

Things did not get better immediately, but I had a slight change of heart. Ever so slightly, I began to want to be healthier, to eat, and to be free from this illness. Little by little, things improved.

I still fight daily to eat, but it is so much better because I turned to the Lord for help. I did not do this by myself and could not have done it by myself.

Heavenly Father and His Only Begotten Son, Jesus Christ, did not leave me comfortless. The Savior is aware of every little pain and agony I feel and have felt. Not only is He aware of them, but He has also felt them (see Alma 7:11–13). He knows how we are suffering. He knows we want to give up, and He gives us the extra boost to keep us going.

## I BEGAN TO WANT TO BE HEALTHIER, TO EAT, AND BE FREE FROM THIS ILLNESS.

There were countless times when I would wonder, "When will it go away? Why me?" I wanted to give up. Later I realized that Heavenly Father has a plan, and I need to trust in His plan. His plan is perfect, although I do not always see it in that way. I also know that the Lord blessed me with amazing parents, doctors, family, and friends throughout this process.

Truly, God knew I would need all the help and support I could get, and each person was inspired of God to help me. God does not leave us to fend for ourselves no matter the situation. He is there, and He wants us to turn to Him, to be saved through His Son's amazing Atonement. I know that God loves His children and that He has prepared a way for us to return to Him no matter the gravity of our trial or sin. **NE**

