

This is my story about God's love and grace. About how I've been struggling with some weaknesses and some issues in my life for many years.

I've been a Christian for a very, very long time. It seems like these certain struggles don't seem to go away, and it seems that I seek out ways in which I, in my mind, disappoint God or sin against God. I know He loves me, but I have struggled for such a long time to just accept the fact that He loves me just as I am. I've tried very hard to be a better "Christian" and prayed many, many times in many different ways for deliverance from these particular struggles, and yet, I continue to fall into the same pattern again and again.

I was on a walk one day, and I just asked God why I continually sabotaged myself. Why did I sabotage my relationship with Him? And He very clearly spoke to my spirit that I purposely seek out ways to do things that would bring on His punishment, because I feel ultimately that's what I deserve . . . that I deserve His punishment, not His love. Therefore, I sabotage myself, because I know that I'll be getting what I deserve.

When He spoke those words to me, it was unbelievable! I just stopped in my tracks and realized that it's exactly what I've been doing; I seek out His punishment, because I'm unable to accept the fact that He just loves me. But now, after hearing Him reveal that, I know He does love me. He loves me exactly the way I am. He loves me where I'm at in my walk with Him, and now what I know for sure is that He wants the best for me. I realize that anything He asks me to do is not for His benefit, but it is for my own benefit, because He loves me so much that He wants the absolute best for me . . . and He's the One Who knows what is best for me.

So now when I struggle in my weaknesses, I just do my best to turn things over to Him, so that I don't get caught up in the cycle of condemnation that I've been in for many, many years. That cycle of condemnation will destroy you and will steal every ounce of joy out of your life - the gift of joy that belongs to you because you know God!

~ Melissa Keith