[What to Expect from God in Recovery](https://integrityrestored.com/what-to-expect-from-god/)

By Peter C. Kleponis, Ph.D., SATP, CSAT

While working on developing his recovery program, I asked Mike about his relationship with God.  He admitted he was frustrated with God.  He has prayed fervently that God would deliver him from his addiction.  Unfortunately, he received little response.  He was still trapped in his pornography addiction.  I often meet people like Mike in my practice.  They have a deep faith in God; however, they feel abandoned by Him because they feel their prayers have gone unanswered.

The fact is that God never leaves a prayer unanswered. While he answers all prayers, it may not be in the way you expect.  The main problem is that while people pray for a cure for their addiction, God offers healing. To understand how God is involved in recovery one needs to understand the difference between a cure and a healing.

Cure vs. Healing

The end result of a cure and a healing is the same: restoration. However, a cure is immediate and a healing takes time. In scripture, we see many incidences where God cures. Jesus cured the blind man, the cripple and the lepers. He even brought Lazarus back from the dead. You may ask “why can’t God cure me too!?” God can certainly cure people and He does it every day. However, I believe that with addictions He prefers to offer healing more than cures.

So why does He prefer to heal rather than cure? The answer is a deeper relationship and transformation. God could certainly cure you, but what would that do for your relationship with him? Probably not much. You might say “Thank God. I appreciate it. I’ll come back when I need you.” With a healing, God uses our afflictions to draw us close to him. He says, “Come, let’s walk for a while. Let’s talk for a while. Let’s get to know one another.” In addition to finding freedom from addiction, the goal here is to develop a deeper, more intimate relationships with God. From this can come real transformation – a whole new life.

The Apostle Paul recognized the value of healing over cures in his life. In 2 Corinthians 12:7-10 we read:

 … Therefore, to keep me from being too elated, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me, to keep me from being too elated. Three times I appealed to the Lord about this, that it would leave me, but he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness.” So, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. Therefore I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities for the sake of Christ; for whenever I am weak, then I am strong.

Scripture doesn’t tell us what the “thorn” was; however, it was a weakness that kept Paul humble and close to Christ. I believe God also uses recovery from addiction to keep people humble and close to him. Here “grace” is synonymous with “healing.” This is where Paul experience transformation. This is God’s plan for recovery.

Drawing Closer to God

So in the recovery process, know that God is present and working to help you overcome your addiction. However, he is also going to use it to draw you closer to him.  He wants to develop a deep and intimate relationship with you. This is where he can truly transform you into a whole new creation. When you have achieved long-term sobriety and the wounds that lead you into addiction have been healed, you won’t be tempted to say “Thank God. I appreciate it. I’ll come back when I need you.” Instead, you’ll say “Let’s keep walking Lord. Let’s keep talking. I want to continue to grow in my relationship with you!  I want to continue the transformation you’ve begun in me!” For some people, this healing process takes a few months. For others, it can take years. Don’t be discouraged if your healing takes a long time. While you may continue to struggle, each day is an opportunity to draw closer to the Lord and to deepen your relationship with him. This is your transformation process.

Transformation

When Mike understood how God was healing him rather than curing him, he was able to see God working in his life more clearly. He realized that God did not abandon him. On the contrary, God was drawing Mike closer to him. With the help of a good spiritual director, Mike learned to trust God more. Through daily prayer and working the 12-steps, he came to understand the transformation God had in store for him. This helped Mike succeed in recovery and become the man God created him to be.