

Guide: Developing a Theology of OCD

Christians living with OCD often struggle to discern between the voice of OCD and the voice of God. Because faith-themed OCD (or scrupulosity) interacts strongly with other OCD subtypes, this is often true across themes.

Developing a theology of OCD allows us to be **confident** in our decision to engage in response prevention as a part of OCD treatment. Here is an example of a theology of OCD:

I believe that OCD is a mental illness, and that it's one of the many illnesses introduced by the fall. I believe that everything has spiritual components, but I don't believe that mental illness is inherently more spiritual than physical illness.

I believe that God is all-knowing, and is therefore fully aware of OCD's mechanics. He does not ask me to perform compulsions (even when they're related to Him). He knows that my intrusive thoughts are symptoms of OCD and not something I willfully choose. Therefore, they are not sins. I know from Scripture that He draws near to me and comforts me in my suffering.

Here are some questions to consider to develop your own theology of OCD (or to support a client or loved one in doing so). It can be helpful to consider both science and Scripture as we answer these questions.

1. What is mental illness?
2. Is mental illness physical, spiritual, or a combination?
3. What does God know about OCD?
4. Do compulsions ever come from God?
5. Are involuntary symptoms of illnesses sinful?
6. How does God look upon me when I'm suffering?

My hope is that you'll feel empowered to keep your feet grounded in God's truth as you fight OCD, knowing that *He is on your side*.