

I MARRIED MY DAD

From the perspective of the
wife of a recovering sex addict

Sue J Love

<https://walkingwounded.blog/>

I Married My Dad

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I Married My Dad

About Us

January 14, 2018

Hello! My name is Sue J Love. I am the wife of a recovering sex (lust) addict. His name is Rick Love. Rick and I are making our story public now, in the hope that we can help others who are going through what we have been through together, and are still in the process of working through before God.

Thus, the Lord Jesus has led me to write this book, "*I Married My Dad*," which is a story of sexual (lust) addiction, abuse, lies, deception, rage, adultery, and wounded hearts. Yet, it is also a story of hope, healing, forgiveness, restoration, and deliverance.

It is my prayer, that as you read this, and as you identify with any of what we have gone through, and as you read what the Lord has taught me or Rick through it all, that you will, as well, find hope and healing through Jesus Christ, for by his stripes we are healed.

Opened Eyes

I came to this realization of Rick's sexual (lust) addiction not many years ago, even though my husband and I have been married for forty-five years. Early on I had no clue what I was getting into by marrying him. I loved him, and I thought he was the one for me. I knew he had issues. We both did, but I thought they were issues that would be worked out in our marriage. I did not realize what all he was involved in, or the fact that he brought sexual addiction into our marriage relationship.

Suffice it to say, this has been a rocky road for us, and it isn't over.

Although my husband just made a confession of Christ as Lord of his life on January 9, 2018, and he has stated that he has now given his life over to Jesus Christ, he has had a lifetime of lust (sex) addiction and of being under Satan's control. So, this is going to be a process of recovery and of undoing the damage which was done, of confessions of wrongdoing, and restitution, of forgiving others and himself, and of asking others for forgiveness. As well, it is going to be a process of healing his own damaged emotions due to his lifestyle of choice over, at least, the last fifty years.

The Breaking Point

I think the breaking point for me, in our marriage, although I had many, came in 2004. My husband was going for his ordination with our church denomination, and I was going for my consecration. We were going to be church planters through our

church denomination, for the second time. I thought we were both doing well spiritually, so I thought we were on this path together. But, it didn't take long to realize that he was still getting into pornography regularly, and not doing his assignments, while I was busy doing my homework assignments, and taking them very seriously.

The Lord finally led me to bow out of going for my consecration and to bow out of planting a church, too, which just angered my husband. He could not understand why I was quitting. But, this was "the straw that broke the camel's back," for me, after a long string of those straws, and over multiple years of dealing with his sexual addiction, and seeing no real change, although he kept promising change.

Backing Up

Yet, while I was training for my consecration, I attended a conference for those in ministry within our church denomination. My husband was supposed to attend, too, but he had hurt his back, and he couldn't go. So, I went without him to represent our little congregation of college-age adults.

We had been ministering to these young adults for 6 years out of our home, a total of 7.5 years, altogether, and now some of them wanted to make this ministry their church home. So, that is why we began this process of getting ready to become church planters.

Anyway... back to the conference... It was there that God laid another ministry on my heart – one I would never have thought of. He spoke to me through this scripture:

"Then the Lord replied:

*"Write down the revelation
and make it plain on tablets
so that a herald may run with it.
For the revelation awaits an appointed time;
it speaks of the end
and will not prove false.
Though it linger, wait for it;
it will certainly come
and will not delay."
(Habakkuk 2:2-3 NIV)*

What the Lord said to me through that passage of scripture was that I was to write down the revelation (what he taught me from his Word each day), and that I was to make it plain on tablets (on my computer, on MS Word), and that I was to give it to a herald (the internet) so that the herald (or the runner) could "Run With It."

I didn't quite have that completeness of understanding immediately. But, I understood that I was to write what he showed me, and that I was to put it on the internet. So, next I went in search for places on the internet where I could share what the Lord was teaching me. Then, by the summer of 2006, the Lord had me writing on the internet, nearly every day, all that he was teaching me through his Word, including how it was to be applied to the world, to the church, and to our individual lives today.

Over time, I added on a blog, and then I had my own website for a while, and then I started another blog. I ended up naming both of these first two blogs "Run With It." The first blog, <http://christsfreeservant.blogspot.com/>, began in 2008, and the second blog, <https://runwithit.blog/>, in 2014.

Things Got Bad

The college ministry continued another year and a half, and then it came to an end. My husband and I ceased doing ministry together from that moment on, other than he has helped give me technological assistance here and there, when I have needed it, and, at times, he was somewhat supportive, or he appeared to be.

When the college ministry closed its doors is when my writing ministry really took a forward leap, and God began having me write out my devotions each day and to place them on the internet, so that the "herald" could "Run With It."

And, this is also when things began to get so much worse between me and my husband, because the Lord was not only teaching me things through his Word, but he was revealing to me the things my husband was doing behind closed doors, and so I was now confronting my husband with his sins, which only angered him. And, that began cycles of conversations about his sins, which now turned into him showing obvious hatred and outbursts of anger toward me. At times, it got really ugly, too, as the hatred and bitterness towards me spewed out of his mouth, and as he stomped on my heart over and over again.

But, the Lord was with me through it all, and he carried me through it. My responses were not always gracious, as there were times when he would push me to the point of anger due to all the lies he kept spewing forth. I hate lies! God hates lies!! But, the Lord has been growing me through it all, and he has been teaching me better ways of responding and communicating.

And, I have been growing closer to my Lord, stronger in my faith, and even more determined than ever to live in holiness, in purity, and to keep fighting the good fight of faith until my Lord takes me home.

I Married My Dad

Forward

January 14, 2018

by Rick Love (husband to Sue J Love)

I would love to tell you about when I first met Susan Jane Thorn at college, who I fell in love with and who eventually became my wife. I would love to tell you how I was swept off my feet by her captivating heart, her gentleness towards others, her servant attitude, and her great beauty. I was.

I would also love to tell you I instantly saw her great value and treated her as God's precious daughter, that I rode in on my white horse and rescued her from the dragon father she was living with, and I married her, and that the last 45 years have been a great love story, where I have cherished her and protected her, but that isn't true... and that one day we will ride off into the sunset together, hand-in-hand, taken to heaven to share in the joy of being in the presence of Jesus Christ. We will.

[A Sex/Lust Addict](#)

Sue was all that I said and much more, but I was a selfish college guy with a sexual/lust addiction already raging in my heart, and I was thinking about myself when I lucked into finding her. I was a Charley Brown geeky guy who didn't wash his face very often and had a bunch of bad habits, so I didn't exactly have girls lining up to go out with me. Sue was a sweet, attractive, talented girl in the choir who had beautiful eyes and who smiled politely at me in the bass section, and somehow, I got up the nerve to ask her out, and for some reason she said, "Yes".

[Where it Started](#)

Early in my life I was exposed to a variety of sexual experiences that shaped my life and formed a set of ideas and expectations about females that were false and destructive. Additionally, I was exposed to pornography several times, and as a college guy, I had even greater access to porn and the many lies it delivers to you and your thinking deep inside your soul.

Also, in a previous dating relationship in high school, an aggressive girlfriend opened the door to more than a goodnight kiss on dates, so that fire was heated up in me, hoping to find satisfaction in the next girl. But Sue wasn't a next girl kind of girl – I could tell early on she was the one I wanted to marry, if I was able to win her heart.

Impact on Dating and Marriage

Nonetheless, the raging hormones and the sexual addiction hammered away at our relationship. This was against her wishes and pleadings, and was with my full knowledge that it was wrong and utterly selfish on my part. This set the stage for a long hellish nightmare for her, rather than a godly marriage.

You see, marriage didn't change my addiction and wasn't able to feed it adequately, and so I soon began to seek other ways to take care of myself when she wasn't able to meet my unreasonable expectations, regardless of the cost to her or the risk to our family.

Telling Her Story

Sue will tell you enough of her story of abuse and pain and abandonment in the first three chapters of this book to help you understand the depth of both her pain and my depravity, but it is just a subset of what she went through. Yet she stayed with me, tried to be a godly wife and mother, and tried to protect me and my reputation while she struggled through her own issues from a childhood that had devastated her and left her deeply wounded even before I showed up.

She truly walked as a woman of God would walk during our years together, other than a short time when I trapped her into my evil world – something she never would have done if I wasn't there, and for which I am particularly ashamed. Her walk of faith was real – there is no way she could have weathered either her childhood or her marriage apart from the love and grace God showed her, and the growth and maturity he built within her, especially while she was married to a selfish, lying, adulterous, abusive shell of a man – me.

My Excuse

I have no excuse for what I did. I made the choices, one at a time, to take care of me and to take advantage of her and others to get what I wanted. When I didn't get my way, I threw temper tantrums and was mean and a bully and pushed back and lied to protect my world and keep my addiction going. I deserve a special place in hell for what I did and how I treated her. But she continued to love me and forgive me and pray that God would one day get ahold of my heart and at least save me before I died and went to hell.

God is Sovereign

However, God is God, and he is able to take what is ugly and make it beautiful, he is able to make what is hopeless and redeem it for his glory. He has taken this humble and gentle daughter of his and given her brutal on-the-job training for life and marriage, and along the way healed her over and over and met her needs,

many times alone. She would do anything for him, including die for him, and God knows that.

Through the years he has trained Sue not only to personally face many of the deep hurts and scars other women are facing today, but to understand his own sorrow for their pain, his compassion for their despair, and his hatred for those sins committed against them.

She also understands what it is like to face strong temptations and the shame of sin, and she is compassionate towards those of us who have struggled for years. Her wisdom and advice are warm and loving, but also strong and necessary to set things on the right pathway and to bring about change. Her experiences give her a unique ability to understand and communicate God's words and his direction for change and restoration in people's lives.

[Blessed Beyond Measure](#)

I have been truly blessed to still have my wife around to help me after all she has gone through. Even when the light was barely flickering, she was standing in my corner, fighting for me and my redemption and real changes. I could not have made it without her. I realize that is because it was God who worked through her to love me and to be patient with me and to eventually bring me to my senses.

[Help for the Hurting](#)

I hope that many of you will find hope and encouragement and comfort from her wisdom and love as she shares her own heart through her pain and healing. I also hope that others who were like me might have their eyes opened to the destruction they are causing to their wives' hearts and to their marriages, and will find help for their addictive or cruel treatment of them. And for those who, like me, are aware of their sinful legacy and desire to climb out of the hell they are trapped in, I hope you will find help and encouragement and forgiveness and direction in these chapters in this book.

At this writing, our marriage has a long way to go. The damage I did seems insurmountable. Yet we are both hopeful because we know the God who is able to do all things well, and for our good. Our trust is in him, and I pray you will learn to get your comfort and love and trust in him as well.

Rick Love

Here is a link to my blog where I am recording my walk on this journey:

Rick Love's blog: [Searching My Heart](#)

I Married My Dad

Chapter One

When We Started

January 15, 2018

When Rick and I started to become friends, back in college, I really liked him. He was witty and charming, and tender and considerate. He opened doors for me, and he seemed like he was a really nice guy. We had good times together. We seemed to connect on so many levels. I enjoyed our conversations immensely. And, we both loved to sing! That was a big one for me. But, most important for me was that I needed to be certain that he was a believer in Jesus Christ.

We both went to church (of different church denominations), and he said he believed in Jesus. But, his church was more liberal than mine, so I was not sure exactly where he stood in relation to faith in Christ.

Then he began going with me to InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, on our college campus. The gospel of salvation from sin was presented to him there, and there he said that he prayed the sinner's prayer to receive Christ as his Savior.

During our dating years, though, he didn't seem interested in praying with me or in sharing his times of devotion with God with me, and that concerned me. So, I encouraged him that direction, but it was a continual struggle for him. But, I figured that would come in time.

When we would go out on a date, if we could afford it, or if he could afford it, for back then the guy usually picked up the tab, we would go bowling or we would go to movies. Movies were a big thing for us back then, especially drive-in movies. And, soon enough he was pushing me towards being sexual with him, in one form or another.

Backing up

Now, to back up a little here, I need to tell you that I was abused sexually by my dad. My dad was a big bully who abused those weaker than him. He physically abused my mom and me and my siblings, and he verbally and emotionally abused us all, as well. He was mean and hateful most of the time. He was scary, in fact, and most of us were afraid of him. My dad also raped me, probably beginning when I was five years old, but not violently, but via grooming, persuasion, and via the power he had over me and the fear I had of him. I was deathly afraid of my dad. And, the rape (sexual abuse) continued on and off for about ten years, until I reported him.

So, having someone try to get me to do sexual things with him was not a new thing for me, but it is not what I wanted. It is what I didn't want!

I wanted to follow Jesus Christ with my life, and Rick knew that. I told him about my dad, thus, to try to convince him to not treat me the same way, but that only encouraged him more. He had no clue what I had gone through. In his mind, he just decided that, since I had grown up on sex, that I must like it, and that I must want it like he did. Wrong! But, I was conditioned (vulnerable) that direction.

So, our dating years were like a roller coaster or like a teeter-totter. He would talk me into stuff (we never went all the way), and then I would feel guilty, and I would cry it out to God, and then I would tell Rick that we could not do that, and for a while he would back off, but then he worked me again, and eventually I gave in, and then we repeated the same thing all over again. And, then we got married. But, marriage was not what I had imagined it would be like.

Married Life Early On

Although Rick and I were best friends, and we were seemingly compatible in so many areas, it didn't take long before we realized that we were not compatible in bed.

As I learned, many years later, my husband had his own sexual dysfunctions which he brought into our marriage. He had been exposed to pornographic images early on in his life, via his dad, who to this day still does not see any problems with it at all, even after we told him how it had destroyed our marriage. Rick also learned from his father's example how to view and how to treat women, not as human beings, but as sex objects and as commodities, rather than as people with hearts and souls. His dad was and is still an extremely selfish person.

My husband, thus, had this idea that all his sexual fantasies would be fulfilled in his relationship with me, now that we were married. He thought that we would have sex five times a day, in fact.

My husband had no clue about intimacy, though, or sacrificial love, or compassion, or patience with me. His idea of intimacy was for him to just attack my body and get his release, and that was that. And, I felt raped every time. So, we talked about it, and he finally reached the conclusion that he had to put his needs aside, and he had to focus on my needs, and to work on meeting my needs, and that worked, at least for me. I was then able to enjoy sex with him, because he was being loving and kind, and he was thinking about how to meet my needs, and he wasn't just jumping my bones like I was a horse he was getting on to ride.

But, it didn't last. And, pretty soon, it was back to business as usual, just thinking about what he wanted, and about getting his release, and not considering my needs at all, or very little.

The Fallout

After Rick and I had been married two years, we had our first child. This only put more of a strain on our relationship, because now he had competition for my time and affections, and he was jealous of the time I had to now give to a newborn. Then a second child came 2 ½ years later.

Although I did not know about these things until many years later, it was at this time that Rick began expressing his sexual addiction in many different ways, via voyeurism, exposing himself, and extra-marital sexual affairs. I was clueless, though. I knew he was not living the Christian life, and that it was still a struggle to interest him in leading me spiritually or in having family devotions, but I had no idea all this other stuff was going on behind my back. I knew we had issues, but I mostly felt good about our marriage, and I still considered him my best friend.

Then, he talked with me about wanting to go to Bible College, because he said he felt called to go into the pastoral ministry. Since I had no knowledge of his secret life, and I believed God was telling me to go with him, we packed up our little family and we moved to another state so he could go to school.

Even though he was now a Bible college student, that did not change his behavior. He still acted out his sexual addiction in various ways, but I was still clueless.

After a year of Bible college, he wanted to go to seminary, so we visited two seminaries, and while we were visiting the second one, I realized I was pregnant with our third child. The insurance we had purchased, we learned, was only going to pay for the doctor bill, but not for the hospital bill, so we went back home, because there was no way we could afford seminary at that time.

Another Move

Then, a year and a half later, he felt God was calling him to be a lay pastor, so we did some homework on that, and we found a church who would sponsor him, so we moved again, and he began ministering underneath the leadership of a pastor of a small church. That seemed to go well, for a time, and then that came to a halt.

In the meanwhile, I became pregnant with our fourth child. My uterus prolapsed three months into the pregnancy, so I had to stay off my feet the bulk of the pregnancy. We had to put our two youngest children in day care, and that just broke my heart having to send them off every day. But, while they were gone, and our oldest son was in school, I had lots of time to spend with God in prayer and in Bible study, and my relationship with the Lord really deepened during this time.

We had now been married eight years. And, Rick's relationship with God seemed to be taking a nose dive. He was staying up late at night playing some type of electronic game. This was before anyone had home computers, smart phones or I Pads. So, this was not an internet or a computer game. But, I could tell in his eyes,

and in his body language, that he was not doing well, and I was greatly concerned. If he was doing anything else, I have no knowledge of it.

But, something did happen at that time that opened my eyes. And, it was because of something he did, in acting out his sexual addiction, that I first began to see a similarity between him and my dad. But, at that time, I had no idea how much he was like my dad. That realization didn't come until many years later.

I Married My Dad

Chapter Two

Moving On

January 15, 2018

Eight more years had passed, and now Rick and I had been married sixteen years. He had been downsized with his employer two years prior to this. The job market had been saturated where we had been living. So, he found a job in another state, which is where we were now living. This was then our tenth residence in all the years we had been married to each other, thus far, and it was our seventh state, and the seventh city for us.

We had moved from a very large city to a very small city; from a multicultural city, to a 96% white and closed (to outsiders) southern community. And, we had moved away from a church family we loved, where we had good teaching, and good fellowship, to a church which was not very welcoming of outsiders.

In fact, one woman told me after Sunday School class one Sunday that I was not one of them. She said, "If you were one of us, then we would listen to what you have to say. But, you're not one of us, so we don't want to hear what you have to say." Wow! The people there were just not friendly at all!

So, I was feeling very isolated and lonely. My youngest child had just entered kindergarten, and we finally had a second vehicle, so I joined the YMCA and Newcomer's Club. Our kids were all now involved with scouts, so I was helping with that, too. But, I was not making any friends, and I had no Christian fellowship, and my husband Rick was now gone two weeks out of every four with his new job.

Struggling with Emotions

I had another complication, too. My uterus had prolapsed during my fourth pregnancy, so it was still prolapsed after our child was born. So, I chose to have a hysterectomy six months after the birth of our son. I still had my ovaries, so I was not supposed to go into menopause, but I did anyway. My emotions were going haywire, and I had hot flashes, and the whole bit.

I know that I saw a doctor at that time, and that he put me on some kind of tranquilizer, but that didn't help. It didn't solve my problems.

I cried a lot, and I prayed a lot, but I had no physical relief, and no emotional relief in the form of friendship or fellowship, either.

The Fall

Then, my husband Rick and I were helping out with a local volunteer organization. The man in charge was very nice to me. The three of us worked closely together. And, I found myself attracted to this man, but not sexually, not at first. I was lonely, hurting and vulnerable, and he treated me kindly, or so I thought. I was pretty naïve, and I was struggling with my emotions. I felt like I was falling in love with the guy. So, I went to my husband Rick. I asked for his help. I asked him to pray with me and to help me with this. I pleaded with him, in fact, to help me to not sin.

But, instead of helping me, Rick helped himself. Because of his sexual addiction, he saw an opportunity to feed his own flesh through this. So, he kept putting me with this guy, and leaving us alone together, and even after I told him about this, Rick invited the guy over to our house when he was at work, to use our computer, which we had just gotten (our first home computer). This guy and I both remarked to each other that it felt like my husband was throwing us together, and, he was.

I prayed and prayed. And, I wept. And, I resisted Satan. And, I fled the temptation. But, we remained with that volunteer organization, because of certain circumstances, and because my husband wanted me to fail, in reality. He wanted me to give in to my flesh and to have an affair with this man, probably to ease his own conscience, although he never had a conscience. None of this ever pricked his conscience, so it was more like he just wanted to bring me down with him. But, I had a hard time believing that he would actually do that, so I think I just denied it.

But, then this guy and I ended up being put in a situation where we worked closely together for a week, but not by my choosing. In fact, I was angry with the guy, for he had set this up. But, I didn't have the courage to run away from the situation, and by the end of the week, I had committed adultery, but not like normal adultery where a man or a woman cheats on her or his spouse, but more like I finally yielded to the pressure, both coming from my husband and this guy, and I gave in, and I sinned!

Afterwards, I was crushed in my spirit that I had just done that. I wept before the Lord for a long while. I didn't ever want to go there again. I was devastated, but even more devastated by the fact that my own husband had fed me to the lions, even after I cried out to him for help. And, you know the real irony of it all? By this time, we were church planters (first time around), and Rick was pastoring this small church plant. So we were pastor and pastor's wife. What hypocrisy!

I Was Undone!

What came next just totally undid me. I was working to get back on my feet, and to get back walking with the Lord in faithfulness again. I had journaled my experience, because I journaled regularly then my times with the Lord, and my thoughts. Well, my husband got a hold of it somehow. I don't know if maybe I let him read it. But,

he made a copy of it, and he turned it into a sexual fantasy for him to get off on. That just killed my heart. And, I didn't have anyone I could tell. I felt so ashamed.

The Aftereffect

We moved again, after living in that small southern town for three years, because my husband got transferred with his job. So, I was relieved that we didn't have to live in that city and state anymore.

The next city was much better, or so I thought. But, we brought our computer with us. The internet, like we know it today, still hadn't come out yet, but we could get on something that did connect us to people throughout the US, at least, and that was something totally new to us. I think it was called "Prodigy," which was a bare bones internet, I think.

He Pushed Me

My husband continued to push me in the direction I did not want to go, and which I had gone before, and I think something snapped in my mind, and I just gave up and gave in. I was so deeply wounded by Rick's actions towards me and how he was so willing to just farm me out to other men, that I finally just did what he wanted, because I felt so unloved and so dirty and worthless.

I was tired of fighting against him and against Satan, and I was so angry with my husband. I hoped that he would wake up, and that he would see what he was doing to me, but he didn't care, and I was too afraid to tell anyone else, and really, I had no one to tell but God. But, I was now running from God and shutting him out, because, in reality, I was angry with him, too. And, so I chose sin over my relationship with my Lord.

There were several more of these situations over a period of several years. But, then I finally told my husband "No," and that I was not going to do that again, and I got back on solid footing in my relationship with the Lord, and I began going in the direction I should go, even though Rick would still try to tempt me to fail, time and time again. Telling him "No" just angered him, though. For now he could no longer use me to feed his lust addiction.

And, since we had a computer, and there was access on there to any kind of pornography, by this time, he then went to the porn to get his fix. But, those were not the only things he did. Some of the other stuff I mentioned before continued, but I had no idea all of this was going on unless, during a time when I was not doing so well, he told me some of it, in hopes it would excite me like it did him. But, I blocked most of that out, and I completely forgot about it until he told me again, during a time when my mind was clear, and then it just undid me to hear all of it.

Much Later

Seven years had now passed since I told him "NO!" I had been walking with the Lord, and Rick and I were leading a ministry to college students in our home. My mom was now dying, and I went to be with her 500 miles away from where we were living. And, where I was staying, I was by myself. Being around my dad so much, and him acting just like he always did toward me was hurting me so much. Again, I cried and I prayed, and I even started reading a book, "Feel the Fear and Do it Anyway." And, it was helping.

But, before I drove those 500 miles to see my mom, my husband had set me up to get on classmates.com, I think it was, and I found some people I knew from high school, and I ended up talking with a guy I had once dated, and Rick encouraged me to look him up, and I was stupid, and I did, and then I had an affair with him, too, while my mom was in the hospital dying.

It took me many years to forgive myself for that. I still cry when I think about it. I was escaping my pain and suffering, and I was running from God instead of to God in my pain. No excuses! There are no excuses for willful sin against God. But, there are sometimes circumstances that play in to our wrong choices, and this was mine. I was very wounded by my dad and then by my husband, and they had both used me and my body for their own sexual addictions, and I caved to the pressure.

But, then I got my life back on track again. I went through a revival two years later, and it was then that I said my final "NO!" to my husband and to Satan. I closed the door on my past, and I yielded myself to the Lord to obey him from this moment forward, and two years after that is when the Lord called me to my present ministry. I was a very broken vessel, but he healed me, and he pulled me up out of that pit, and he set me free, never to go down that path again, by God's grace, in his strength, and in his power within me. All glory to God! Amen!

I Married My Dad

Chapter Three

What Came Next

January 6, 2018

We had now been married thirty-two years. And, I was walking in freedom! And, God was doing a marvelous work in my life and through my life. I was writing what God had given me to write, and I was posting it on the internet, so that a runner – a herald – could run with it. And, I was doing this daily.

Plus, God had now given me a new gift – the gift of writing songs. He would put a tune in my head, and I would write it down, and then he would give me the words to go with the tune, and then I recorded the song, and then I placed these songs on the internet. As of the last one, there are 173 of them, total. All glory to God!

Deeper and Deeper

But, my husband Rick just kept getting deeper and deeper into sin, into pornography, masturbation, and other ways in which he chose to act out his addiction, as I have already mentioned, and including he was involved in a homosexual relationship with another man over the course of our marriage.

The man was a close family friend. He and Rick were friends since they were teenagers, and the young man, at that time, had evidently groomed Rick to get involved with him in homosexual activities. So, this had actually been going on since before Rick and I were married, but I did not know.

We lived very far away from the man, so these sexual encounters were infrequent, yet they lasted throughout our married life. But, Rick kept promising me it would not happen again, but it did. And, again. And, again.

I finally had to put a stop to it, because Rick wouldn't. So, I wrote a letter to the man, maybe three years ago, and I told him we could no longer have any contact with him, and that he was to cut off all contact with us, too. And, I asked, that if he knew we were going to be in town, that he would stay away from going to any family members' homes, so that we did not end up in an awkward situation with him.

But, I protected my husband Rick's reputation through it all, and that of our friend, and I took the brunt of it, with people most likely thinking I was just being mean to our friend, and that I had just gotten mad at him about something, and thus I had cut off the friendship. And, I bore the blame for that, in order to not sully my husband's reputation, and so the family would not think badly of him. And, I also bore the brunt of my husband's anger against me for breaking off that relationship with our lifelong friend.

The Rage

When the Lord would teach me things from his Word, sometimes he would also reveal to me, oftentimes through dreams, what my husband Rick was doing when I wasn't looking. I would pray about it, and if I felt led to talk with Rick about it, I would go to him and present to him what the Lord was showing me. Much of the time he denied it, but some of the time he would confess, at least some of what he was doing, and sometimes I would catch him in the act, too.

Rick was a sex addict, a professional liar and deceiver, an actor, a chameleon, a manipulator, a user and an abuser. He didn't like it, first of all, that he could no longer talk me into compromising my faith and convictions, although he certainly tried. From our dating years, up to the time of this writing, he has been like Satan to me, in trying to talk me into sinning against God, or attacking me verbally to try to shame me or to make me feel bad for confronting him, or to try to make me feel like I was crazy, for how could I possibly think he would do such things, etc.

When he could no longer use me for his sex toy, and when I began confronting him and standing up to him when he sinned against me, and when he lied to me, then what came next was rage. The anger and hatred he had toward me, from when we were first married, and because I didn't meet up to his sexual expectations, and which had been building all these years, began to spill out of him like volcanic ash. And, if I dared confront him, no matter how gentle I was, then he would punish me. He would falsely accuse me of things, and he would make cutting remarks, and he would say things he knew would hurt me, in hopes that it would shut me up.

But, the Lord kept sending me back to him, time and time again. And, even many of the songs the Lord gave me to write were specific messages to my husband, that he was to forsake his lifestyle of sexual addiction and all that came with that package, and he was to turn to the Lord, and to follow him in obedience. It was the same message over and over and over again. And, I was the chosen messenger.

Balaam's Donkey

I often thought of myself like Balaam's donkey. The donkey could see the angel, and the donkey had sense to stop, but Balaam didn't see the angel, and so he kept beating the donkey. Only, in his case, when the donkey finally spoke, Balaam listened, at least for a time. But, Rick never listened, and he never stopped beating (verbally) the donkey (the messenger of God) sent to him to open his blinded eyes, so that he would turn from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that he might receive forgiveness of sins, and a place among those sanctified by faith in Jesus Christ (See: Ac 26:16-18).

Recycled Everything

For at least the past 13 years, Rick and I have been recycling the same conversations over and over again, and he has been continuing to sin sexually, to

commit adultery against me, to lie to me, to deceive me, to betray me, and then to attack me bitterly whenever I would try to “snatch him from the fire and save him.”

Many times he said he was sorry, but then he would go right back to the same old stuff. Many times he gave a show of working on recovery, but it never lasted. His heart really was not in it. And, within a short period of time, he was back to business as usual.

He just kept breaking my heart and stomping on it over and over again, and without conscience or concern for me or for what he was doing to me. And, he kept doing that, even though he would tell me, again and again, that he had turned his heart over to the Lord and that he was working on changing.

So, I kept praying about it, and the Lord kept telling me to trust HIM, to rest in HIM, to believe HIM, to keep loving my husband, and to keep telling Rick the truth he needs to hear, when I am prompted by the Holy Spirit, and when the Lord gives me something specific he wants me to say.

But, I kept facing my husband’s wrath, and his childish temper tantrums, and his false accusations and cutting remarks, and all the same excuses and justifications he had been giving me for many, many years, which do not hold water. And, this is where we are, as of January 6, 2018, after 45 years of marriage, still fighting the same old battles.

Playing Ignorant

But, it wasn’t just the cheating, the lying, the manipulations, the pushing me into and the tempting me to sin against my Lord, and the difficult and repetitive conversations, and the false promises that were always broken, and the continual stomping on my heart that was at play here.

And, it wasn’t just all the hate and the rage that I saw in his eyes regularly, and the hateful speech that spewed forth from his lips consistently, and the nasty and hateful things he would say to me, particularly when I confronted him with sin and when I attempted to share with him what God had laid on my heart to share.

But, it was that he lied about me to other people, or he would leave them with false impressions about me, which he would not correct, and he would get them to like him and to not like me. He would never defend me, rarely ever, but he would defend other people, and he would treat other people with kindness, and me with disdain. He would tell me he couldn’t remember whatever I said to him, but he could remember conversations with other people, especially with other women, and he knew how they were dressed, and the color of their eyes, and their body language, and how they walked, and what kind of vehicles they drove, etc.

He would play dumb all the time with me, and act as though he didn’t know something, which he did know, or that he didn’t know how to do something, which he did, or he would claim he was hearing something or realizing something for the

first time, although he had heard it hundreds of times. Many times he would say to me that he was learning something for the first time, as though he had not heard it before, but it was the same stuff.

He would play tricks on me, too, and set me up for a fall, i.e. he would try to make me look bad in front of other people, because he continually tried to promote himself as the victim, and as the weak and helpless one, and as naïve and honest, etc., and the good guy. And, he was very good at being convincing, too, and many people bought into his lies and his manipulations, and some of them turned against me, because he had gotten them to side with him against me.

And, the more I realized the depth of Rick's character and all that is a part of it, the more I saw my dad in him, and in the things he did and said. He is so much like my dad, even the whole hypocrisy thing of claiming to be a Christian and then living like this our whole marriage, and treating me like he has and does and then he pontificates religious conversation as though it is a reality in his life, when it isn't, and hasn't been. He willingly admits most of this, and that he has been a fake and a phony, but then he keeps going on in his hypocrisy, and in the same behavior patterns which I have come to be very familiar with.

And, one day, as I sat across the room, and I looked at him, the realization of all this hit me at once. I acknowledged to myself that I had, indeed, married my dad. Everything I did not like about my dad, well most everything, has been part of my husband's character and behavior from before we were even married. I just didn't see it until years later, and I don't think I fully realized it to this degree until now, after 45 years of marriage to him.

I Married My Dad

Chapter Four

Healing and Restoration

Journal Entry 1/9/18, 11:01 p.m.

Wow! So, Rick (my husband) told me this morning that he gave his heart to the Lord, and that he made him Lord of his life. He acknowledged to me that he had never done that before. And, when I shared things with him this morning, he did not have the same old responses he used to have. He seemed genuinely sorrowful for all the things he had done to me, and for all the many ways in which he had hurt me. But, I didn't know if this was the real thing or not. And, I am still not 100% positive, but there are very good signs that we are moving in the right direction.

The Lord led me to share with Rick this afternoon what I had written in the book I was writing, so far, about our lives, and he seemed fine with that, too, and genuinely moved to tears concerning all the ways in which he had hurt me, and moved, as well, he said, by my kindness to him, too, in how I wrote our story, so far.

After I posted the devotion the Lord gave me to write today, which ended up being finished before bedtime, Rick reached over to me, and he was being very tender and gentle to me. I responded in like manner to his affection by wanting to be held by him. I had not felt that in a very long time.

We hugged for a long while out in the living room, and then we went back to the bedroom, and we hugged for another hour or two in bed. But, while he was holding me, then the flood gates opened wide and I cried like I had not cried in a very, very long time. I told him to keep holding me, and I grabbed his arms tight to hold them around me. And, then I cried hard and loud. There was so much pain deep inside me that I had not been able to cry out and to release, but as he held me in his arms, it all came out. I prayed that God would take all that pain and that he would fill me with his peace.

When the crying ceased, then the Lord said to me, "Forgetting those things which are behind..." I knew at that moment that he had healed me (released me) of all that pain that was trapped inside me and that had no way out before, because more and more pain just kept being added to it every day, and I had no way to cry it all out, though I tried many times.

So, before we got in bed together, the Lord Jesus had this song (below) playing in my mind. It is one of the ones he gave me to write, and it was written at another difficult juncture in my life when I needed this exact message in order for me to make the right choices and the right heart decisions regarding another relationship,

a friendship with someone. And, he used it in my life again this evening to encourage me to have the right heart response to my husband, and to not fear.

Jesus, Rescue Me

An Original Work / September 18, 2011

Based off of Romans 7:7-8:39

Jesus, rescue me today.
Listen while I bow and pray.
I need Your help to obey You;
Live for You always.
Meet me in my hour of need, Lord,
As I pray to You.
Help me walk in fellowship, Lord,
Living in Your truth.
Jesus, how I long for You to
Change my heart anew.

Father, God, my heart's desire
Is to live for You this hour
In Your Holy Spirit's power
Living in me now.
Teach me to walk in Your love, Lord,
Guiding me each day.
Help me to show love and kindness
To the lost, I pray.
Father, teach me to love others
As You love always.

Holy Spirit come in pow'r.
Revive our hearts in this hour.
Change our hearts to be like You, Lord;
Live for You each day.
Help us to forsake our sins, Lord,
As we humbly pray.
Teach us how to live for You, Lord,
Obey You always.
Holy Spirit come in power,
Revive us today.

<https://vimeo.com/126092919>

The Lord put several songs in my mind while we lay there holding each other in bed. One of them was this one:

My Prayer

An Original Work / May 30, 2011

"Fill me with Your Spirit;
help me to love others;
Let me know Your power;
be an overcomer.
Show me how to follow
Jesus Christ, my Savior;
Be His faithful servant
to obey Him always.

"Lead me with Your presence;
help me know the right way;
Teach me love and kindness,
generous compassion.
Give me grace and courage
to be Jesus' witness,
Teaching His salvation
to a world who needs Him."

Won't you come and follow
Jesus Christ, your Savior?
He died so you'd be
free of control of your sin;
Free to follow His ways
in complete surrender;
Living sacrifices -
let His grace transform you.

<https://vimeo.com/122052093>

All I know at this moment is that the Lord is giving us both a new start. I told my husband that tomorrow would be our one-day anniversary of our new life together. I truly felt that we were one in the Lord together for the first time ever in our 45 years of marriage. And, then the Lord put a few more songs in my head, and I began to sing them aloud, and then my husband joined me, and we sang them together, and I felt united with him in spirit really for the first time in our married lives. We honestly never had this before.

One of the songs was...

God Will Make a Way / Don Moen

God will make a way
Where there seems to be no way
He works in ways we cannot see
He will make a way for me

He will be my guide
Hold me closely to His side
With love and strength for each new day
He will make a way, He will make a way

And, ...

Just a Little Talk with Jesus

Cleavant Derricks

Verse 3:

I may have doubts and fears, my eyes be filled with tears
But Jesus is a friend who watches day and night
I go to Him in prayer, He knows my every care
And just a little talk with Jesus makes it right

We used to sing this last one together with two friends of ours when we were all in college.

Then, after the hugs, the tears, the singing, and the prayer together, which had also not happened in reality probably ever before, because we were never before united in love together, then the Lord got me up to pray and to write this all down in my journal, which I believe he is leading me to share with all of you tonight.

The Lord wants to heal broken hearts and he wants to deliver those in bondage from their sins, if they will just yield to him, and make him truly Lord of their lives. God is a miracle working God. I have been waiting for this miracle forever, but I know that my trust still has to be in God, and not in man, and that no matter what tomorrow holds for both of us, I must still move forward with where God is leading me, no matter what comes my way.

I Married My Dad

Chapter Five

Doubts and Fears

Journal Entry 1/13/18, 2:10 p.m.

Five days ago my husband professed to me that he had trusted Jesus Christ to be Lord of his life, and that he had given his life over to the Lord.

The following day I was battling fear in my mind and heart. What if this is not the real thing this time? What if this is another false confession? What if I just placed my heart out there once more to be stomped on? Satan was attacking me fiercely. I was battling doubts and fears, and for good reason, mind you. For, I had been down this road before many times. Rick had made many false confessions before, coupled with insincere tears. So, how could I be sure this one was real?

The thing of it is, I can't! I am hopeful. I am supportive. I am giving him the benefit of the doubt, but there are no guarantees, which is why I stated in my previous journal entry that I couldn't be 100% certain, and that I realized that my trust had to be in the Lord, not in man, for man may fail me, but God will never fail me.

So, as I battled these fears, and I was praying them through, the Lord Jesus brought this song to mind:

When I Am Afraid / An Original Work
October 17, 2016 / Based off Psalms 56-57

When I am afraid, Lord, I will trust in You.
Your Word, Lord, I praise. I yield my life to You.
Enemies pursue me, slandering Your Name.
Lord, have mercy. I trust in You. Hear my cry today.

Lord, I love Your Word. It comforts me today,
As I look to you, and bow my head and pray.
You are Christ, my Lord. You saved me from my sin,
That I may walk, Lord before You, purified within.

Steadfast is my heart, O God, I sing of You.
I will praise You, Lord. To You, I will be true.
Oh, how great Your love. Your faithfulness endure.
Be exalted, God of heaven. Glory be to You.

<https://vimeo.com/187821104>

That song kept playing through my mind throughout the day as I kept yielding to the Lord, giving my fears over to him, trusting him with my life, with my marriage

and with my husband, and letting the Lord fill me with his peace. And, the peace did come, too, and it has remained steadfast.

The next few days we were both sick with some kind of bug, maybe a type of flu. I was barely functional. I would get up and write and then go back to bed and sleep. My head was in a fog and I just felt really awful all over. So, I prayed that through, as well, and trusted the Lord to help me to write what he wanted me to say, even though I didn't feel I had much of a functioning brain at all. God is amazing though! Sometimes when I feel the worst he is able to do marvelous things through me, so that he definitely gets all the glory.

I started feeling somewhat better yesterday, and I am still improving today, but I am not fully functional yet, but I am walking by faith and not by sight.

Rick and I have been talking, and so far, so good. There are no obvious signs of a relapse, but there are also not outstanding signs of a genuine conversion at this point yet, at least not to me. I know that my husband has been under the power of Satan the whole time I have known him, and even before that. His lifestyle, throughout his life, is evidence of a life given over to Satan, and to the flesh, and to the rule of sin over his life. So, to me, if he now has given his life to Christ, and has made him Lord of his life, I expected a more dramatic change from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God than what I am seeing presently.

I had a devotion the Lord gave me to write earlier this morning. It was taken from 2 Peter 2. The description of these false teachers in this passage is nearly identical to the man I have known as my husband these past 45 years. There is a passage in Jude, too, that is very similar to this one. The Lord many times over the past 11 years, at least, has shown me my husband in the light of these two passages of scripture. And, from what I am reading of the lives of other women in similar circumstances as me, it describes many of their husbands, as well. And, it is not a pretty picture, especially since we are talking about men, most of whom profess to be Christians, and some of whom are pastors or in full-time Christian ministry.

Between 2011 and 2016 the Lord Jesus gave me 173 songs to write. Many of these songs I knew were messages to my husband. God often spoke to my husband through these songs, and he often realized they were for him, but most often they made him angry, because he knew they were speaking to him. One of those songs, the Lord has put in my mind again this morning. And, this is where many of us are right now, in this battle for truth, only the battle is for the lives of our husbands, that they would tell the truth, for the truth will set them free.

The Battle for Truth / An Original Work
May 18, 2013 / Based off Malachi 1-4

Truth is marching, truth is marching.

I love you. Honor me.
Tell the truth. You'll be free.
Sing My praise all your days.
I will give all you need.

Truth is marching, truth is marching.

Turn from sin; cleansed within.
Stand in awe of My Name.
Teach what's true. Walk in peace.
Follow Christ, in His ways.

Truth is marching, truth is marching.

Show to God faithfulness.
Do not be adult'rous.
Do not shed shallow tears.
Do not be insincere.

Truth is marching, truth is marching.

I have sent messengers,
Who have giv'n my address.
They call for repentance,
And they warn of judgment.

Truth is marching, truth is marching.

I, the Lord, do not change,
So return – blessings gain:
Healing comes; joyfulness;
Freedom from your distress.

<https://vimeo.com/117023801>

So, this is where we are, taking this one day at a time. I am trusting the Lord, he has given me his peace, he has taken my pain and suffering, and I am resting in him. I can't be sure that my husband has truly turned that corner, but I can't be sure he hasn't. So, I walk by faith and not by sight, one moment at a time, putting my complete faith and trust in the Lord, and not in man, not assuming anything, but just waiting on the Lord to do in both of our lives what needs to be done for us to be who he wants us to be.

I Married My Dad

Chapter Six

All for Good

January 16, 2018

And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. Rom. 8:28 NASB

If it had not been for the things I have gone through in my life, I would not be who I am today. God would not be using me in the way that he is in the lives of others, in spreading his gospel message throughout the world, and in comforting and encouraging the abused, the downtrodden, the lonely and the afflicted.

Because of the suffering I have gone through in my life, I have also learned God's heart. I felt and feel what God feels via me going through the kinds of sufferings that Jesus had to endure, and by suffering, at the hands of my beloved, what God has often endured from his bride, his people, the sheep of his pasture.

Whenever the Lord would have me write on passages of scripture, such as the major and minor prophets, or many of the New Testament books, where God's people were being addressed concerning their lack of love for God via their disobedience and rebellion, I knew what God felt, because I had experienced the same from my husband. So, that is why I often identified with Hosea.

Sovereignty of God

I know that my God is completely sovereign over all that he has made. I also know that he is fully loving, kind, merciful, compassionate and forgiving. But, for a good portion of my life, although I knew this in my head, I did not really believe it in my heart. For, what I went through in my life, first with my dad, and then with my husband, taught me that God was limited, that he could do nothing about my circumstances, and that Satan still had power over me.

So, following that time of moral failure in my own life, and the revival that my Lord took me through, he taught me several very significant things:

1. I was believing a lie that God was not completely sovereign over my life, and that Satan still had power over me, and that there was still a question as to who was going to win this battle for my life and my mind.
2. I still had unforgiveness in my heart, but the only name, at that time, that the Lord gave me was Jesus. Deep down inside me I had held it against Jesus that he did not protect me from it all. So, I had to let go of that hurt,

and forgive my Lord, although he had done me no wrong, and I had to accept God's absolute sovereignty over every aspect of my life.

3. I had been resisting Satan like an abused child resisting her dad's advances, with arms crossed over my face, hoping to not get hit, but knowing the hits were going to come anyway, so with a defeatist approach, that did lead me, at times, to give up and to give in.
4. Satan did NOT have any power over me, for Jesus already won that battle for me at the cross. I just had to live like I believed that, and I had to put on the armor of God daily with which to fight off Satan's evil attacks against me. I had to use the offensive weapons of the Word of God, and truth, whenever Satan would lie to me and tell me that I was helpless against him.

I can tell you now that believing these things in my heart and acting on them, accordingly, radically altered the direction of my life from that moment on.

This is not to say that I have not battled fear, for I have. This is not to say that I have not ever believed Satan's lies again. I have, at least for a time, until God opened my eyes to see the truth. And, then I rejected the lies, put on the truth, and moved forward.

I believe so many of us end up living defeated lives because we believe the lies and not the truth, in the depths of our souls, which is evident by what we do. We have to remember here that Satan is an angel of light, a deceiver, and so his lies are not always going to be obvious to us.

Mighty Conquerors

Just because people may treat us badly, abuse us, use us, betray us, cheat on us and lie to us, does not mean we have to succumb to those messages which say we are nothing, we are defeated, we are hopeless or we are helpless. For, if we are children of God, we are not any of those things! We are mighty conquerors through Christ Jesus who loves us, and who gave his life up for us! Amen!

So, we can walk in victory over sin, over Satan and over doubts and fears. Daily we can put on that armor of God with which to fight off Satan's evil attacks against us, and we can walk in victory, and not in defeat.

If we are truly in Christ Jesus, through faith in him, we have everything we need in Christ to walk by faith and not by sight, to walk in freedom, and not in bondage, to be overcomers, rather than to be overcome by evil. We can resist Satan, flee temptation and draw near to God in full assurance of faith.

We can forgive those who have hurt us, and we can be free of the deep wounds in our hearts brought about by mistreatment, abuse, persecution, etc. And, we can love our enemies with the love of God, and be merciful to them, and be compassionate towards them in helping them to know Jesus Christ and the freedom

that is in him from bitterness, unforgiveness, sinful addictions, and fear of what others might do to us, etc.

And, a big part of this healing will come when we accept God's absolute sovereignty over our lives, and we submit to his will for our lives, and truly believe that he is going to work all things for good (for what is in our best interest) for us who love God, who are following in his footsteps, and who are called according to his purposes. We have to let go and let God if we are going to find true freedom in Christ Jesus and know his perfect peace, and to be able to have joy in our hearts even in the midst of some of the most difficult situations we will ever face.

I Married My Dad

Chapter Seven

Freedom in Christ

January 17, 2018

For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery. Galatians 5:1 ESV

Over the course of the forty-five years of my marriage to my husband, he was not free in Christ, although he claimed to be. He claimed to be a follower of Christ, or I would not have married him. But, looks can be deceiving. We can even fool ourselves, if we are not careful, into believing we are free in Christ, while we are still trapped in sin's deceitfulness.

And I, as well, didn't always live as though I was truly free in Christ, because I sometimes believed the lies instead of the truth. And, I yielded to the deception rather than believing the Word of God and living (walking) in the truth.

How Does It Look?

So, what should this freedom look like? Well, I can tell you that it does not mean sinless perfection, for, although we are in the process of being perfected in Christ Jesus, sanctified by his grace, growing in the knowledge of God - our Lord and our Savior - and walking according to the Spirit, and no longer according to the flesh, we can still fail. We can still have days when we give in to the flesh, and we don't immediately respond to life's circumstances in the power of the Spirit within us.

BUT... and I say a big BUT here, because many people these days have found a way to use lack of perfection as an excuse for continued and willful sin against God. And, they use God's grace to us as an excuse for willful sinful practices, excusing them away as having been covered by the blood of Christ, as though our sins no longer matter to God, or as though Jesus did not die to free us from our sinful addictions. He did!! "Not perfect" is NEVER an excuse for willful, continued sin.

Struggling

Many people today, as well, will use the term "struggling," with regard to where they are in relation to their present sinful behaviors, as though "struggling" is somehow acceptable to God. Now, hear me out here! I am not saying we have to be absolutely perfect or that God does not accept us, so please don't go there. What I am saying, and many people in the know will agree with me on this, is that "struggling" really means "giving in" on a somewhat consistent or regular basis, as

opposed to "battling," which means we are fighting off the enemy who is coming against us when he tempts us to sin against God. Do you see the difference?

God is not ok with us living in sin, bowing to our flesh, walking in sinful practices, and then excusing them away, or using his grace to erase the guilt and shame.

God's Grace

Do you know what God's grace to us is? It is not just freedom from the punishment of sin and the hope of heaven when we die, although a lot of folks would have you believe that. His grace to us, his gift of salvation to us, is freedom from the yoke of slavery to sin. Yes! Jesus died on that cross that we might die to sin and live to righteousness, not that we would carry on in our sinful behaviors without guilt.

Are you aware of what the Bible teaches with regard to God's grace? We read this in Titus 2:11-14 (NIV):

For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.

God's grace to us is not carte blanche to continue in sin and live much like we did before we professed him as Lord and as Savior of our lives. Otherwise, Jesus died for NOTHING! Do you see this? Am I passionate about this subject? You bet I am!!

I am very passionate about this subject because I, too, gave into the lies, and I yielded to my flesh, and I suppressed the truth in order to follow after the lies, so that I could do what my flesh wanted rather than do what the Spirit of God within me commanded. I am passionate about this subject because I have personally experienced the destruction that sin does to our individual lives, to our loved ones, and to marriages and families. It wreaks havoc!!

So, what is the purpose of God's grace to us? It is to instruct (teach, command) us to say "NO!!" to ungodliness and worldly (fleshly) passions (lusts), and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives while we await Christ's return.

I think this message should be printed on my tombstone, for this is the message God keeps giving me to give out over and over again, because we need to get this! And, we need to apply this to our lives. Do you want to be free? Then, you have to say "NO!" to sin, and you have to say "YES!" to God! Do I get an "Amen"?

Put off, Put on

If we are truly saved by God's grace, set free from slavery to sin, and walking in the light of his love and grace, then we have been crucified with Christ in death to sin, and we have been resurrected with Christ to newness of life, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness (See: Rom. 6:1-23; Eph. 4:17-24). The old has gone. The new has come. We are new creatures in Christ Jesus, so we don't live like we did before we believed in Jesus to be Lord of our lives.

But, this is just the beginning. Now we walk according to the Spirit, and we no longer walk according to the flesh. For, if we walk (conduct our lives) according to the flesh, we will DIE in our sins, not live with Christ for eternity. But, if by the Spirit we are putting to death the deeds of the flesh, we will live with Christ for eternity (See: Lu. 9:23-25; Rom. 8:1-17; 1 Jn. 1:5-9; Gal. 5:19-21).

This is critical that we get this, not just so that we can live in victory over sin's deceitfulness while we live on this earth, but because our eternity depends on it!

Again, this is not saying we will never fail (See: 1 Jn. 2:1-2), but it is saying that a saved life is one that is no longer under the power, influence and control of Satan, for Jesus set us free! We just have to walk in that belief, daily put on our armor of God with which to fight off Satan's evil schemes against us, resist Satan, flee temptation, and draw near to God in full assurance of faith.

And, we have to be proactive in our fight against sin, and not wait until we are tempted and then give in, because we didn't have our armor on, and we had no plan in place for resisting Satan and fleeing temptation. If we don't plan to succeed, we will plan to fail! It is a given!! We can't mess around with sin. If we play with fire, we are bound to get burned. It is just the reality of it all.

What to Do?

If we are going to walk in victory over sin, and over the fear of the "what ifs" in this life, or be healed of our broken and wounded hearts, then we need to first of all be yielded to Christ and submitted to his cross. If we still maintain control over our own lives, then all bets are off. We can't do this in our own strength!

We must be willing to do whatever God and his Word says we must do, and whatever the Spirit within us prompts us to do, although we must make certain it is the Holy Spirit speaking to us, and not other voices inside our heads.

The Bible is filled with messages to us on how we can live in victory over sin and how we can walk in purity, holiness, godliness and righteousness. And, it isn't that most Christians don't know this, but that they don't do what they know, in most cases. For, they are not willing to go the distance, and to make the necessary cuts and changes in their lives in order to walk in freedom from sin, but they hold on to what they know leads them into sin over and over again, and then act surprised when they fail time and time again.

So, the Bible says we have to throw off those sins which so easily entangle us and the weight that hinders our walks of faith, so that we can run with perseverance the race God has marked out for us to run. And, we must keep our eyes fixed on Jesus and not on our circumstances, if we want to live in victory (See: Heb. 12:1-2).

An Example

So, if your sin is lust, then you have to cut out of your life anything which is leading you into that sin. And, this means taking some serious cuts, if nothing else has worked for you.

We gave up our TV nine years ago because of all the junk that was on there. We stopped watching movies, too, because even some of the most seemingly benign ones had suggestive material in them. Even many "Christian" films do.

I can't watch anything of a romantic nature or anything with even a hint of lust in it and not be impacted by it, so I have given up movies altogether. It is just not worth the risk for me. I know where I have been and I don't ever want to go down that path again!

The internet is particularly a bad place for people with lust addiction. There is a whole world of evil on the internet, although it certainly has its good purposes, too, such as what we are able to do in writing out what God is teaching us to share with others. But, with the invention of laptop computers, tablets (like I Pads) and smart phones, now children through adults can have access to all the porn they could possibly want in the privacy of their own personal space, which can even be in a room full of people. And, so porn addiction has reached epidemic proportions.

So, is it worth it to have a smart phone, a tablet, a personal computer and/or private internet access if you can't control your ability to say "NO" to sin?

I'm just saying here that many people continue in sinful addictions because they are not willing to throw off the sin and the hindrances which lead them to entanglement. If we want to get serious about God, and about our relationships with him, and with our spouses, and if we want to live in victory over sin, then we have to take a hard look at our lives and we have to cut the cord, so to speak, so that we can walk in victory and in freedom. I tell you, freedom in Christ is the ONLY way to live!!

I Married My Dad

Chapter Eight

Resting in Him

January 17, 2018

Have you ever fallen and skinned your knee? Did it get bloody and did it sting, too? What did you do about it? You probably washed it with soapy water, and rinsed it with clear water, and then patted it dry, and then stopped the bleeding by holding a cloth on it for a minute or two. And then you probably put some type of antibiotic ointment on it and then covered it with a bandage, and then you waited for it to heal.

But, while you were waiting for it to heal, you probably were really careful to not reinjure it, and you most likely gave it extra special care, as well. But, the healing still took time, and during that time you had to keep it clean and covered, too.

Now, let me ask you another question. Have you ever had your heart wounded? It is not as simple to fix that as it is a scraped knee, is it? You can't just wash it with soapy water and hold something on it to stop the bleeding, and you can't just cover it with a bandage, either, and expect that it will heal in due time. In fact, it probably won't heal at all if all you do is cover it up, which is what many people do.

Now, let's go back to the illustration of the injured knee. What if, after you did all of that for your knee, that someone came along and hit it with a baseball bat, and that was followed by someone else taking a knife to it. And, what if, while the knee was trying to heal, that others kept coming along and hitting it or taking a stab at it, or what if they ripped off your bandage and tore some skin off your knee and then they threw salt on it or dirt or acid, and that this continued day in and day out, year after year after year. Would your knee ever have the chance to heal? Not likely. You would definitely be the walking wounded.

Well, women who have been abused by their sex addicted husbands are like that knee that has not much of a chance to heal because they keep getting injured over and over again. As soon as they are trying to work through and pray through one situation, they are hit with another, and then another.

It may be that they are discovering what their husbands are doing in the way of having extra-marital affairs, visiting massage parlors or going to prostitutes, sexting other women or men, having sexual relations with people of the same sex, exposing themselves, looking at pornography or at child pornography, sexually abusing small children (boys and girls), and the list goes on and on. And, the thing of it is, many of these men claim to be Christians, and some are even pastors.

But, it isn't just that, though. But, then their husbands blame them for it, they are mean, hateful and nasty, and they make cutting and unkind remarks, and they

treat their wives like they are dirt under their feet for them to walk all over. And they threaten them or they intimidate them into not telling anyone this is happening. Or, even if the wives get the courage to tell someone, they will often be treated badly by pastors or counselors or by other church people or by friends and family who will take the side of the abuser and who will treat the abused as though he or she is the bad one, thus only adding more injury to the wounds which are already being injured over and over again.

Help Needed!

Even if these women have a very strong faith in Jesus Christ, and they go to God in prayer and in his Word daily, to seek the Lord's counsel in these matters, that doesn't stop the hits from coming. In fact, the hits may even increase in severity, because God may be showing the wives what their husbands are doing, or he may be leading them to confront their husbands or to try to set reasonable boundaries for their marriage relationships, and thus they may face much opposition and even greater abuse from their husbands.

And, then if they have no support system in place, they may feel very isolated and alone and their husbands may convince them that they are the problem or that they are crazy for questioning their husbands' actions. These men are really good at knowing how to manipulate their wives and to say things to them in such a way as to get them to shut up and to give up and to leave them alone.

So, before they can even get one wound healed, another hit takes place, and then another, and then they have obligations to fulfill, small children to care for, jobs to go to, bills to pay, meals to cook, houses to clean, laundry to do, and food to buy, etc. And all the while they are carrying around within them all this hurt, and they feel like they can't tell anyone or they will be rejected even more, or hurt even deeper, and that does happen in many cases, too, so that is not an unreasonable fear.

They may not even be holding on to the pain on purpose, though some do. Some get bitter and they get even, and they stubbornly hold on to unforgiveness and refuse to let it go. But, others don't want to hold on to the pain, and they want to be healed, and they are crying it out to God, and they are praying, and seeking God's face, but it is a constant battle sometimes just to keep their heads above water and to not fall to pieces. Even Paul said this:

We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about the troubles we experienced in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired of life itself. Indeed, we felt we had received the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead. 2 Corinthians 1:8-9 NIV

Wow! That says it, doesn't it? That is what it is like for many, many women whose husbands are under the control of Satan and who are being ruled by the lusts of the flesh rather than submitting to the God many of them claim to know and to worship.

And, sometimes it builds up without us even realizing it, because we don't have the time to get it all out, to cry all the pain out to God, and to let him take it and to heal us, because the wounds just keep getting stabbed and hit and salt thrown on them. And, then one day the floodgates open up and it all just comes out, and then we can feel God's healing power at work in the wounds of our hearts, and his comfort and his love and care for us.

But, then more hits happen oftentimes, and so then what do we do? We can't let them pile up. We can't let the hits take us out and undo us. So, we have to make time for ourselves to get alone with God so we can work all this craziness out in our heads and be encouraged by the Lord, and comforted by his Word, and directed by his counsel as what to do, and how to respond, and to not internalize the pain but to keep giving it to God over and over and over again, letting him heal us, and guide us, and strengthen us and teach us what we need to learn through our pain.

Paul learned to not rely on himself but on God, and that is a good lesson to learn. We can't do this! No one can! Maybe there are some really strong people out there somewhere who can let these kinds of things just roll off them, but I am not one of those. I never have been. I bleed! And, it stings. And, I cry, and I pray, and I hold on to hope where there seems to be no hope sometimes. And, sometimes all I can say is "Help!" And, God comes to the rescue. And, he has just the right words I need to hear so that I will keep pressing on, and keep loving others with God's love, even at the risk of personal injury and of false accusations and even more abuse or betrayal or lies or cutting remarks or rejection, etc.

But, if we are going to stay with our husbands, and not all women do, but because the Lord encourages us to do so, and he says to trust him with them, and with our circumstances, then we have to make certain that we keep letting go of the pain and that we keep giving it over to God, and that we allow him to fill us with his peace, and joy, and strength, and comfort, and hope and encouragement. He will be there for us always. He will never abandon us. He is our anchor, and on him we can always depend. There is always hope when we look to our Lord and when we give our suffering over to him, and we submit to his will for our lives. Then, the peace comes, and then the joy comes, too, because we are now resting in him.

Jesus, I am Resting, Resting

Jean Sophia Pigott

Jesus, I am resting, resting,
In the joy of what Thou art;
I am finding out the greatness
Of Thy loving heart.
Thou hast bid me gaze upon Thee,
And Thy beauty fills my soul,
For by Thy transforming power,
Thou hast made me whole.

O, how great Thy loving kindness,
Vaster, broader than the sea!
O, how marvelous Thy goodness,
Lavished all on me!
Yes, I rest in Thee, Belovèd,
Know what wealth of grace is Thine,
Know Thy certainty of promise,
And have made it mine.

Simply trusting Thee, Lord Jesus,
I behold Thee as Thou art,
And Thy love, so pure, so changeless,
Satisfies my heart;
Satisfies its deepest longings,
Meets, supplies its every need,
Compasseth me round with blessings:
Thine is love indeed!

Ever lift Thy face upon me
As I work and wait for Thee;
Resting 'neath Thy smile, Lord Jesus,
Earth's dark shadows flee.
Brightness of my Father's glory,
Sunshine of my Father's face,
Keep me ever trusting, resting,
Fill me with Thy grace.

Jesus, I am resting, resting,
In the joy of what Thou art;
I am finding out the greatness
Of Thy loving heart.

I Married My Dad

Chapter Nine

Our Stories

January 18, 2018

Why do we tell our stories? I don't mean things we have made up. But, why do we tell about our lives, and our personal experiences, and about our pasts or things we are going through presently? What is the purpose of it all? Is there a purpose? And, is it a good thing?

Obviously this depends upon the person, and upon his or her motivation, and on the content of the story, and the direction he or she heads with the story. But, is it a bad thing to tell others about our lives and experiences and even about our sins, owning up to them, if the purpose is good, and if the end goal is to help others not to go down the same rabbit holes we went down, and if it is to point them in the right direction? - To God?

I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers and sisters, that our ancestors were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea. They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. They all ate the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ. Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them; their bodies were scattered in the wilderness.

Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did. Do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written: "The people sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in revelry." We should not commit sexual immorality, as some of them did—and in one day twenty-three thousand of them died. We should not test Christ, as some of them did—and were killed by snakes. And do not grumble, as some of them did—and were killed by the destroying angel.

These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the culmination of the ages has come. 1 Corinthians 10:1-11 NIV

As I was examining this question, the other day, which was in my mind, the Lord brought to mind verse 11 here, where it says "these things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us..."

And, there was my answer. I also thought about the Apostle Paul. He talked much about his own life. He spoke of his past, and of his past sins, and he often gave testimony as to where he once was, and of how Jesus Christ set him free. Although

he penned these words “forgetting what is behind...” he still shared his testimony, time and time again, which spoke of his past.

But, he didn't just share his testimony of his past sins, and how God rescued him from his body that was subject to death, and how he delivered him through Jesus Christ our Lord (Rom. 7:24-25). He shared many testimonies of the persecutions, the beatings, the imprisonments, the abuse, the false accusations, the attempts on his life to kill him, of how he was stoned and left for dead, and of people abandoning him, and of specific people trying to discredit him, his ministry and the gospel. So, why did he do this?

As well, why do we have all the history we have recorded for us in the Bible of God's people's failures, their sins, their rebellions against God, their idolatry, their spiritual adultery, their wickedness, their false worship of God, their hypocrisy, their false professions of faith, their “lip service” only, and their rituals, traditions, tolerances, and the like? Because... they are recorded for us, and they are written down for us as warnings, and as examples *to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did.*

And, this is why it is important for us to be transparent about these types of things from our own experiences, too, not to sensationalize, and not to gossip, or to put someone else down, or to shock people, or to get people to feel sorry for us, or just to talk about ourselves, as though that is our goal. And, absolutely we must exercise much godly wisdom in this, and make sure of our motivations, and that what we say is to help, and not to hurt.

But, God gave us our stories for a reason. He took us through the things he has taken us through in our lives also for a purpose, and it is not just for us to learn from them, but so that we can comfort others with the comfort we received from God when we were going through similar circumstances (See: 2 Corinthians 1:1-14). It is so we can be compassionate to others who are suffering, too, and especially towards those who are suffering in like manner as we have suffered.

Because of the things I have been through in my life, I am able to empathize with others who are going through the same types of things, and I am able to comfort them with the comfort (encouragement, counsel, instructions) that I received from God, and am still receiving from God, from when I have gone through or am going through what they are all having to endure, too.

But, it is one thing just to preach the truth of scripture to people, and to tell them what God's word says they must do in their circumstances, and it is another thing to be able to come alongside them and to say, “I know. I have been there, or I am there.” We can relate to them, and they can relate to us, because they know that we know what we are talking about. It isn't just theory for us. We have been in those trenches, and God has delivered us out of them, and so we have a message of hope and healing for them that is not just theology, but that is from our own lives and experiences.

Therefore, my dear friends, flee from idolatry. I speak to sensible people; judge for yourselves what I say. Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all share the one loaf.

Consider the people of Israel: Do not those who eat the sacrifices participate in the altar? Do I mean then that food sacrificed to an idol is anything, or that an idol is anything? No, but the sacrifices of pagans are offered to demons, not to God, and I do not want you to be participants with demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons too; you cannot have a part in both the Lord's table and the table of demons. Are we trying to arouse the Lord's jealousy? Are we stronger than he? 1 Corinthians 10:14-22 NIV

So, when I say to someone "Don't do this!" "Don't go there!" "Flee from these things!" I am saying this, not just as someone who has read and who has believed the Word of God, and what it teaches, but I speak from experience. I have been there. I have been idolatrous. I have been an adulteress. I have been worldly, and I have compromised my faith, and I have strayed from my Lord, and from my pure devotion to him, so I know what I am talking about. I know what it is like to be living a lie and to not be walking in the truth that I know, and I know how much that destroyed me.

I also know what it is like to be betrayed, cheated on, lied to, persecuted, abandoned, rejected, mistreated, abused, taken advantage of, used, misjudged, and falsely accused, and the like. So, I can empathize with God – with God the Father, and with Jesus Christ, and with the Holy Spirit in how God's people have treated them, and with the Lord's jealousy for his people, and with the Apostle Paul and with his godly jealousy for God's people. So, when I write about such things, I can feel how God feels, and how Paul felt, because I have experienced that, too. And, that is a good thing!

When we read the scriptures, do we not identify with the characters in the stories, or at least some of them, and to some degree? When we read about the things they did and said, whether good or bad, don't we learn from their lives and their experiences? We learn what not to do, because from their stories we can see personally how that ended, and what it resulted in, and who all was hurt by it, and the damage that was done through it, and it touches our lives probably more than instructions on "do's" and "don'ts."

But, we also learn what to do, and we see how doing the right things resulted in God's blessings on their lives, and his Spirit using them in mighty ways, and of their ability to withstand temptation and to not give in, or to withstand persecution and opposition and to not give way to it and to not back down. And, it encourages us, does it not? And, doesn't that often have more of an impact on us than just reading instructions?

Why? Because we are able to relate, and we can see that we are not alone, but that others have gone through what we are going through, and we can see the bad directions they have taken, which serve as warnings to us, and we can see the good (godly) directions their lives have gone, too, and that can help inspire us to also live godly and holy lives, pleasing to God.

So, it is good for us to share our stories, providing the purpose is good, and that we are doing so with love, compassion, concern, and hearts for God and for his people and for the people of this world who are lost in their sins, and in order to share with them the way to salvation, and to healing, and to deliverance, for this has to be our goal, or it is for naught.

We've a Story to Tell to the Nations

H. Ernest Nichol

We've a story to tell to the nations,
that shall turn their hearts to the right,
a story of truth and mercy,
a story of peace and light,
a story of peace and light.

We've a song to be sung to the nations,
that shall lift their hearts to the Lord,
a song that shall conquer evil
and shatter the spear and sword,
and shatter the spear and sword.

We've a message to give to the nations,
that the Lord who reigneth above
has sent us His Son to save us,
and show us that God is love,
and show us that God is love.

We've a Savior to show to the nations,
who the path of sorrow has trod,
that all of the world's great peoples
may come to the truth of God,
may come to the truth of God.

For the darkness shall turn to dawning,
and the dawning to noonday bright,
and Christ's great kingdom shall come on earth,
the kingdom of love and light.

Thursday, January 18, 2018, 11:11 a.m. – Thank you, Jesus, for this teaching from your Word. May we always be willing to share the hope that is in us because of what you did for us in delivering us from sin and death.

I Married My Dad

Chapter Ten

What is Our Hope?

January 19, 2018

So, what is our hope? And, on what is it based? Is it based in man? No! It can't be, because men (and women) will fail us, because they are human. They may promise much, but not deliver. So, we must put our hope in Jesus Christ, not in humans, no matter who they are.

We cannot rest our hope in counselors, advisors, pastors, moderators, mentors, friends, neighbors, church members, family members and/or spouses. This is not to say that none of these are trustworthy, but that we are all flesh and blood, and thus we cannot rest our hope in anything that is of man.

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile. For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed—a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith." Rom. 1:16-17 NIV

Our only hope in this life is found in Jesus Christ, our Lord and our Savior. Anything less than that is no hope at all.

Jesus Christ, God the Son, came to earth, took on human flesh, and was tempted in like manner as we are, yet without sin. He healed the sick and afflicted, raised the dead, cast out demons, comforted the sorrowful, fed the hungry, brought hope to the downcast, and preached repentance and obedience for the forgiveness of sins and for eternal life with God in heaven.

Although he was fully God, yet fully man, and he was the fulfillment of prophecy of scripture regarding the Messiah who was to come, he was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Most of the Jews hated him, particularly the leaders in God's temple, so they had him killed because they would not believe in him. This was because they didn't like the things he did and said, and because they were jealous of him and resented his interference in their lives.

But, this was the will of God that Jesus Christ should suffer and die on a cross, although he was sinless, because he became our sacrificial Lamb to take away the sins of the world. He became sin for us on that cross, thus putting sin to death with him, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness.

By faith in him, and in what he did for us on that cross, and in his resurrection from the dead, we die with him to sin, and we are raised with him to newness of life,

created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. This is what it means to be “born again.” The old man (flesh) is put to death, and a new man (person), of the Spirit of God, is born from above. The Holy Spirit now comes to live inside this person and to lead him or her in the way of righteousness and holiness.

Not All Believe

The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness, since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse. Rom. 1:18-20 NIV

Yet, not everyone has faith. Even among those who profess faith in Jesus Christ, many do not possess God-given faith, which is divinely persuaded as to God’s holiness and righteousness and as to his divine will for our lives. They have never truly been “born again” of the Spirit of God. Thus, they mouth empty words filled with empty promises and insincere devotion to God, because they are still enslaved to their flesh, and unwilling to let it go. Even though they have known the way of truth, they follow after the lie instead, because that is what feeds their flesh. So, they are without excuse.

For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like a mortal human being and birds and animals and reptiles. Rom. 1:21-23 NIV

God has revealed himself to all humankind through his created works, so that all are without excuse. But, what about those who have known the way of holiness, and who have studied the scriptures, and who have professed faith in Jesus Christ, and yet they, too, are the godless and the wicked, who suppress the truth by their wickedness? They fall into the same category. For, it doesn’t matter what we profess. What matters is what we live.

Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. They exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen. Rom. 1:24-25 NIV

If men and women, who have known the truth, resist the truth, and choose to follow after the lie instead, God will not force his will upon them. He will leave them to their own devices. He will let them go do whatever it is they have decided in their flesh to do.

Sexual perversion and addiction have reached epidemic proportions, at least here in the USA. With the invention of the internet, which certainly has good purposes, and with the introduction of the home computer, then tablets (like I Pads), and now smart phones, any person can get into a vast array of sexual impurity right at their fingertips, and in the privacy of their own personal space, even if they are in a room full of people, because of the privacy afforded to them by the smart phone, with no real accountability to anyone for what they are viewing or participating in.

What just kills my heart is how many of these internet devices are being handed to children, oftentimes with no supervision, and without any type of protections for them on the devices that would prevent them from going where no one ought to go. But, even a lot of these protections which are put in place can be worked around, and children are much smarter at finding things on these devices than many of us adults. If they don't know a work-around, probably they have friends who do. And, many of these children, too, left to their own devices, are getting into sexting and some of them maybe into child pornography, too.

Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural sexual relations for unnatural ones. In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed shameful acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their error. Rom. 1:26-27 NIV

When people get addicted to pornography, it often takes them down a path into much sexual perversion, including homosexual relations, and other seductive forms of sexual distortion and impurity. But, it isn't the pornography, per se, which leads them down that path. This is a heart issue, and it is a lust issue. Because they are following after the lusts of their flesh, and not after the Spirit of God, they will always be wanting more and more of that which will never satisfy. This often leads people into what is unnatural, because the natural no longer gratifies them. They are, in essence, going after broken cisterns, which do not hold water.

Furthermore, just as they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, so God gave them over to a depraved mind, so that they do what ought not to be done. They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; they have no understanding, no fidelity, no love, no mercy. Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such

things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them. Rom. 1:28-32 NIV

The further down this rabbit hole that people travel into sexual sin, the more wicked their minds become, for they have to protect their addictions. Thus, they not only lie about what they are doing, but they plot evil against others, and use others to their advantage in order to keep feeding their lust addiction. They will stomp on the hearts of their spouses, use and abuse their children, take from whomever they can, and will create all kinds of ways to do evil in order to feed their wicked and godless minds and hearts. They have no clue how to love others because they are devoid of love. They are totally consumed with self, and that is all that really matters to them, although they pretend that is not the case, sometimes.

Back to Hope

So, what is our only hope in all of this craziness, wickedness, depravity, and pain? Our only hope is Jesus Christ and what he did for us on that cross when he took our pain and our suffering and our sins upon himself, that by his stripes we may be healed. He is our only hope in this sin-sick world of ours.

So, when humans have failed us, mistreated us, betrayed, abused and persecuted us, we must turn to the Lord Jesus for him to heal our wounded hearts. We have to cry it all out to him, and ask him to fill us with his peace and his joy even in the midst of our pain and suffering.

He is also the only hope for those who have wandered away from God, who have denied the truth by their lifestyles, and who have gone after broken cisterns which do not hold water, and which will never satisfy. He died to deliver you out of your slavery (addiction) to sin. You just have to let go of your sin, let the Spirit of God put it to death in your life, and yield to God, and allow the Holy Spirit to give you all that you need to resist Satan, flee temptation, and draw near to God.

God's grace to us is not a free license to continue in sin without guilt, and without remorse. His grace, which brings salvation, instructs us to say "NO!" to ungodliness and worldly (fleshly) passions (lusts) and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives while we await our Lord's return (See: Tit. 2:11-14).

Friday, January 19, 2018, 2:57 p.m. – Thank you, Jesus! May we find our only hope for this life in you, for you alone can fill our emptiness and make us whole! Amen!

Cornerstone

Hillsong

My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness
I dare not trust the sweetest frame
But wholly trust in Jesus' name...

When He shall come with trumpet sound,
Oh, may I then in Him be found;
Dressed in His righteousness alone,
Faultless stand before the throne.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QvLxZEU02uI>

I Married My Dad

Chapter Eleven

Leap for Joy?

January 20, 2018

Let's have a show of hands. How many of us, when we go through tough trials, immediately count it all joy? How many of us delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, and in difficulties? How many of us, when people hate us, when they exclude us and insult us and reject our names as evil, because of Jesus Christ, rejoice in that day and leap for joy?

And, yet, this is what we are told in scripture that we must do, and it is modeled for us, too, in the Bible (See: Jas. 1:2; 2 Co. 12:10; Lu. 6:22-24; Job 1:21).

Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. Jas. 1:2-4 ESV

But, this doesn't mean that we will feel no pain, or that we won't suffer, or grieve, or that we won't struggle before God with what has just happened to us. We may have to cry it all out to God first, in our pain, and with tears streaming down our faces, before we are able to undertake what has just been handed to us, and before we are able to consider it a joy to share in the fellowship of Christ's sufferings, becoming like him in his death.

Examples for Us

Job had just lost pretty much everything, his possessions, his livelihood, his servants and his children. His first response was to grieve this loss and to call on God and to worship the Lord. Then, and then only was he able to take this attitude:

"The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."

Paul, to keep him from becoming conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations God had given to him, was given a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass him. This, he said, was "to keep me from becoming conceited."

Then, he said, "Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. But he said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.'"

And, then only was Paul able to state that he delighted (took pleasure in or was content in) insults, persecutions and difficulties.

So, it isn't that we must immediately respond to our trials with "Yay!" "Yippee!" We may have to grieve them first, call on God, and/or plead for deliverance from them. But, then we must resolve to accept the sovereignty of God over our lives, and that God works all things for good for those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

During these difficult times, we must learn to rejoice in the Lord and to be thankful that we are considered worthy to suffer for the sake of the name of Jesus, because God truly does have our best interest at heart, and he has allowed these things to come into our lives for a purpose.

Thus, we need to commit our ways to him, sing praises to him, give thanks to him, and ask him to teach us what he wants us to learn through our hardships. This is so that we might mature in him, learn patience and compassion, be forgiving, be conformed to Christ's likeness, and learn to put our dependency in God alone.

Needing Wisdom

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways. Jas. 1:5-8 ESV

When we are going through these troubled times in our lives, we must call on God for wisdom to know what to do, how to respond, what to think, and how to act, i.e. concerning what actions we must now take. And, then, when he answers us, we must follow his counsel.

I believe it is perfectly ok to make certain first that we have heard him correctly, and that we didn't misunderstand his counsel to us, and also to make certain that it was indeed God speaking to us, and not our own emotions. But, when he assures us of his counsel, and that this was indeed him speaking, then we need to take it to the bank.

We can't keep going back and forth like on a teeter-totter questioning God and his instructions to us. We can't let other people's opinions cause us to waver in unbelief, too. If we have been assured of God's counsel, then we need to stay the course, and do what he says to do, and believe him and trust him with the results, even if we can't immediately see the fruit of what we believe he has said to do.

God works behind the scenes, and we are not always going to see what he is doing, but we must not let lack of evidence of him working to doubt that he is working.

Tempted with Evil

*Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God," for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one. But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death. Jas. 1:13-15
ESV*

Although God is completely sovereign over all that he has made, and Jesus Christ is the head over every power and authority, and all angels, authorities and powers are in submission to him, God is NOT the author of evil.

Before God created anything or anyone he knew what the result would be, and he allowed for it, but it was for his purposes. He created the being who then became Satan, who was an angel in heaven, but who rebelled against God, along with a third of all the angels. And, God knew this rebellion would take place, but he created this angel anyway.

And, even after this angel rebelled against God, and was thrown out of heaven, God allowed him to still exist, knowing full well that he would tempt humans, and they would sin against God, and that God would then curse them all, and that, as a result, all humans would be born into sin.

In fact, he created humans, knowing full well that they would disobey him, and that he would have to toss them out of the garden in which he had placed them.

So, God made us, knowing that all this would take place, but he had a plan in place, even from the very beginning, for how he was going to save us and deliver us from slavery to sin. God always existed in three persons – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – and God had planned that his Son, Jesus Christ, would be our sacrificial Lamb to die on a cross for our sins.

So, although God is not the author of evil, he allowed evil to exist, and he still allows it, and he uses it for his purposes in our lives. He never said we would have carefree lives full of eternal bliss and that we would never experience heartache, trials, persecutions, and abuse, etc. In fact, he said we would. But, he has a plan in place to use these situations in our lives for our good, if we will but yield our lives over to him, and follow his lead, and do what he says.

Steadfast under Trial

*Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him. Jas. 1:12
ESV*

So, instead of trying to escape or run from or resist God in what he is allowing in our lives, we must take our pain and our suffering to him in prayer, lay it down at his feet, and then submit our hearts and lives to him.

We must pray for wisdom and guidance, too, and then do what he says to do. We must forgive our persecutors, and do good to those who do evil to us. We must not get even, for it is God's to avenge, not ours. But, "good" is not soft on sin. "Good" has to do with what is in the best interest of others, i.e. regarding what they truly "need," not what they want.

So, remaining steadfast under trial does not mean we merely grit our teeth and endure what has been laid in our laps and that we say and do nothing. No! What it means is that we trust our lives into God's hands, and then we do what God shows us we must do. We speak the truth in love, and we put on that armor of God with which to fight off Satan's evil schemes against us, and we securely fasten into place that belt of truth with which to fight off Satan's lies.

God may even use us to be a voice for the abused or to speak out against all these injustices. We just need to ask him what his plan is for our lives through it all, and then do what he says.

Saturday, January 20, 2018, 9:01 a.m. – Thank you, Jesus, for how much you love us, and for dying for us, that we might be free from slavery to sin, and that by your stripes we might be healed of our wounded hearts, too.

Believe Him

An Original Work / July 15, 2013

My heart cries: Lord, won't You hear me
Seeking You for the answers
To my heartache and questions
I have concerning my life?
Speak, Lord, to me right now.

"Oh, dear one, why don't you trust Me
With your life's circumstances?
Give your all on the altar
In submission of your will
To My purpose for you.

"Surrender your life completely
To your Lord and your Savior.
He has all things planned for you
For His glory and honor.
He'll work all things for good.

"Believe Him. He will fulfill all
Of His promises to you
For your life and your future.
Trust Him. Rest in His love.
He'll give you peace from above."

<https://vimeo.com/115945593>

I Married My Dad

Chapter Twelve

Walking Wounded

January 8, 2018

This phrase, "*the walking wounded*" came into my mind within the past few days, and it has stayed with me. I had some idea of what it meant, but not entirely, so I Googled it to find its meaning. And, I found these definitions:

- "*People who have been injured in a battle or major accident but who are still able to walk*" (Google).
- "*People who are injured, especially in a psychological or spiritual way, but still functional*" (Dictionary.com).
- "*Injured persons who are of a relatively low priority*" (wikipedia.com).

I believe what the Lord wants me to see today, or us to see, is that "the walking wounded" are defined by all three of these definitions.

The Lord Jesus led me to read **2 Corinthians 1** (Select vv. ESV).

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. For as we share abundantly in Christ's sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too. If we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation; and if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which you experience when you patiently endure the same sufferings that we suffer. Our hope for you is unshaken, for we know that as you share in our sufferings, you will also share in our comfort.

All of us will face difficulties in this life, some of them fairly minor, and others of them could be quite major. Some people will seemingly face only minor troubles, while others of us may have had deeply traumatic experiences in our lives, and maybe throughout our lives, too. And, we may even be going through some very hard times right now.

Some of us, too, may have questions concerning these troublesome times, either asking why they are happening to us and/or what we are supposed to do about them, or how we are to respond to them.

Bringing it Home

As I have mentioned before, I am the spouse of a sex (lust) addict. I did not know this for a long time, with regard to how deeply this was rooted in my husband's life, and concerning how long this had been going on, and to what extent this had taken him in his lustful pursuits. We were married eight years before I had my first glimpse of this. And, it was devastating to me then. And, that was thirty-seven years ago. So, this has been a long haul.

Prior to marrying my husband, I had come from an abusive home environment. My dad was an abuser – physically, mentally/emotionally and sexually. I was scared to death of my dad. He was the epitome of Satan to me. And, I did not find much refuge in my mom, either, for she was rather distant from me emotionally, although we had a friendly relationship.

So, when I had the first sign of the extent of my husband's sexual addiction, it really took me back, because I saw my father in him, and that just tore me to pieces. But, no one reached out to me, although some people did know about this. But, I felt like I couldn't really tell anyone, and that I had to keep the pain to myself, but I cried it out to God.

Then, more revelations came, and with each one my heart was stabbed. I was crushed in spirit, and I cried my pain and suffering out to the Lord. If I did try to tell anyone, they didn't understand, and they were of no help to me. But, I was conditioned to keep it to myself and to not tell anyone, and to protect my husband's reputation, even sometimes to the sacrifice of my own. But, I always cried it out to the Lord. Sometimes all I could say was "help!" And, my Lord always came to the rescue.

And, my husband and I are not out of the woods yet, in this area. We are still on this journey.

How to Survive

So, how did I manage all these years? And, did I always? I will say first of all that I didn't always manage the pain of it all well, and I didn't always run to God, but sometimes I ran from him, instead. But, he always brought me back around. All glory to God. I praise him for his marvelous grace to me!

But, when I did manage it, it was only by God's grace, and in his strength, wisdom, and power that I was able to even get out of bed sometimes to face another day. Some days it all just felt so utterly hopeless. And, when I would get to that point of hopelessness, the Lord would remind me of all his promises in scripture, and of his amazing grace, and of his power to do the impossible, and of how very much he loved me and was there for me.

But, not only did he give me the grace to endure, and to keep pressing on, and to keep loving my sexually addicted and adulterous and abusive husband, but he

showed me his heart, i.e. God's heart in all of this. He let me see how he feels when we, his people, live in idolatry and spiritual adultery against him, and when we cheat on our relationships with him, and rob him of the love and affection that is due him, and when we go after "other lovers" of fame, fortune, entertainment, possessions, careers, etc.

So, in a way, this was God's gift to me. I know, you may not agree with that, especially if you are in the same boat as me. But, through what I have had to suffer I have learned so much about God and his love and grace, and about his sovereignty and justice, too, and I have felt what he feels, and he has given me the passion that he has for his people. I don't think I would have had that, had I not gone through these things, and so much more.

Through my sufferings, I have also learned compassion for those who are hurting, i.e. for the walking wounded, who are often overlooked, because their wounds are not visible to the public, or because people think we should just "suck it up" and move on, as though these things do not deeply impact us. They deeply impact God, so why wouldn't they impact us greatly, too?

The Lord has gifted me with insight into others' pain and suffering, so I can truly empathize with them in their pain, and he has also gifted me with much depth of understanding and wisdom in understanding this "beast," and how it works, so that I can work through it myself, and so that I can comfort and encourage and counsel others who are going through what I have gone through. Had I not suffered as I have, I doubt that I would know that pain.

For we do not want you to be unaware, brothers, of the affliction we experienced in Asia. For we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself. Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death. But that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead. He delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will deliver us again. You also must help us by prayer, so that many will give thanks on our behalf for the blessing granted us through the prayers of many.

The "walking wounded" are not only people whose wounds do not always visibly show, and so they are overlooked or disregarded or considered a low priority, but they are those who have suffered enormously in this battle for their husbands' lives, and for their marriages, and because they decided to stand on what is right and to fight off Satan's evil attacks with the armor of God. So, although wounded, they are survivors! They are overcomers who have learned to put their faith, their hope, and their security in Christ.

Through all the lies, the deceptions, the betrayals, the adultery, the affairs, the pornography, the cutting remarks, the snide comments, and the temper tantrums, and all the many ways their husbands have acted out their sexual (lustful) addictions, they have learned to draw their strength from the Lord. They have

learned that they cannot survive this in their own strength, and that they don't have the courage to keep moving forward, in their own flesh.

They have learned, too, that their total dependency has to be in God, and in God alone, for he is the ONLY ONE who will never fail them. He is the only one totally trustworthy, who will never let them down. And, this strengthened them in their walks of faith, and it drew them closer to God, and through it all, God purified their hearts and made them into sweet vessels he could use for his purposes and for his glory.

For, although they are wounded, they are walking in the power and strength and wisdom of God, and God is using them to minister his love and grace into the lives of others who are wounded, too.

Not all the wounded, though, have yet learned to put their dependency totally in the Lord, so this is an encouragement here to cry out your pain to the Lord, to let him heal your wounded hearts, and then to let him make you into who he wants you to be, to be used of him in the lives of others, as you learn to rely totally on him, and not on yourselves. Then, although you still may be in this battle, you can have peace, and you can get up each day and have purpose and meaning for your life, and you can overcome in the power, strength and wisdom of the Lord, as you yield your life to HIM.

Monday, January 8, 2018, 7:23 p.m. – Thank you, Jesus, for this teaching from your word, and for what you have taught me today through it. Amen!

Oh, to Be Like Thee, Blessed Redeemer

Thomas O. Chisholm / W. J. Kirkpatrick

Oh, to be like Thee! blessèd Redeemer,
This is my constant longing and prayer;
Gladly I'll forfeit all of earth's treasures,
Jesus, Thy perfect likeness to wear.

Oh, to be like Thee! full of compassion,
Loving, forgiving, tender and kind,
Helping the helpless, cheering the fainting,
Seeking the wandering sinner to find.

O to be like Thee! lowly in spirit,
Holy and harmless, patient and brave;
Meekly enduring cruel reproaches,
Willing to suffer others to save.

O to be like Thee! while I am pleading,
Pour out Thy Spirit, fill with Thy love;
Make me a temple meet for Thy dwelling,
Fit me for life and Heaven above.

Oh, to be like Thee! Oh, to be like Thee,
Blessèd Redeemer, pure as Thou art;
Come in Thy sweetness, come in Thy fullness;
Stamp Thine own image deep on my heart.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KrYhiK2nQBg>

I Married My Dad

Chapter Thirteen

Drop the Masks

December 18, 2017

We all experience trials in this life, at least to some extent. Some people seem to have more than their fair share of them, though, while others appear to be relatively trouble free. But, appearances can be deceiving. We don't really know what goes on in other people's lives unless we know them well, and we can see for ourselves what they are going through, or unless they tell us. So, we should never be quick to judge others.

A lot of us have been trained to keep those things to ourselves, and to not share them, which may be wise, in some cases, but then how can people pray for us? How will we be ministered to and encouraged in our suffering by others? How will they know that they are not alone in their suffering? How will they be encouraged in their own walks of faith when they go through hard times if they think no one else has walked where they are walking?

Yet, when we do share, we should do so prayerfully and as led by the Spirit of God. It should not be to gossip, to have a pity party, to put others down, to puff ourselves up, or just to vent. Our goal should always have eternal values and God's kingdom work in mind, as well as love for God and others.

The Lord Jesus led me to read **Philippians 1** (Select vv. ESV).

I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. Vv. 3-6

When Paul penned these words, he was in prison, but not for committing a crime, but for preaching the gospel of our salvation and Jesus Christ, our Savior. And, he had been in there a long while, too. But, instead of griping and complaining, blasting his persecutors, or venting of his unfair treatment, he wrote this letter to encourage his fellow believers in Christ in Philippi, who had encouraged him in his sufferings and had supported him in his ministry.

But, what if Paul had kept his suffering a secret, and he didn't let anyone know? The church would have missed this opportunity to share with him in his suffering and to encourage and support him. And, he would have missed out on their encouragement and support, too. Through this sharing of mutual love and support, they bonded, they united in heart and mind, and they were all strengthened in their

faith, and in their purpose, and in their commitments (resolve) to obey the Lord and to keep on in his service.

Making it Personal

I am thirteen days away from turning 68 years old. I was born in the last six hours of 1949, at 6:10 p.m. When I grew up, we were taught not to talk about our sufferings, although that didn't stop some people from gossiping or griping and complaining. But, we were to keep certain things hidden.

Nonetheless, my aunt set up an appointment for me and one of my sisters to talk to the pastor about our father's abuse of our mother, i.e. that he was beating her nearly to death. The pastor's response, though, was that he could do nothing unless our mother pressed charges. Wow!

My aunt did not know about the abuse of us kids. She didn't know about the physical, sexual and mental abuse that some of us went through, but I knew, because I was one of the ones suffering. But, I would never have had the courage to go to the pastor if it were not for my aunt.

So, here I was, and the pastor was going to do nothing, so I told him about the sexual abuse. I told him this began when we were toddlers or at least by kindergarten age. But, even then he said, "But did he force you?" He was clueless!

My dad went into a mental hospital for 1.5 years. My mom never talked with us about it. I doubt she talked to anyone else about it, either. She even took us girls to visit our dad in the mental hospital, and she did tell us we had to forgive him. No one else talked with us about it, either. It was just shoved under a rug. And, it had devastating effects on my life because I had no one to help me through it or to encourage me.

[But, God took me through a healing process in later years, and he took that pain from me, and he filled me with his love and grace. Praise his name!]

And, then my dad was sent back home, still with no one talking with us about it. And, that frightened me. And, he did try to resume the sexual abuse, but this time I had the courage to tell my mom, and it stopped, but the mental abuse only got worse.

To make a long story short, I learned to not tell people about what was going on in my life. And, even if I did get the courage to tell someone, most did not understand. They had no clue how to help me. So, when I went through other difficult times in my life, I learned to stuff that, too, and that is not healthy. Venting is not healthy, either, though it may give us some relief, because it has as its goal just to let off steam, but with no resolve to change anything, and it often does a lot of damage to others.

So, we need to have a healthy way and a biblical and godly way to share with other believers our sufferings so that they can help strengthen and encourage us, but also so that we can encourage them in their suffering with the encouragement we have received from God (2 Co. 1:1-11). Yet, we need to do this under the guidance and direction of the Holy Spirit, in love, in kindness, in gentleness, and with the ultimate goal of ministering God's grace and mercy into the lives of others, and not just to please ourselves.

It is right for me to feel this way about you all, because I hold you in my heart, for you are all partakers with me of grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. For God is my witness, how I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus. Vv. 7-8

When we do share our sufferings with others, this is when we learn who our true friends are, i.e. those who will stand beside us, even if they don't know what to do, and who will pray for us, and not reject us because what we just shared with them was uncomfortable for them to hear. Friends like that, though, seem few and far between. Most people will just walk away.

So many people just want to put on masks and pretend "I'm ok, you're ok," even if they are not ok. And, that isn't healthy, either. I remember that Chuck Swindoll wrote a book about that many years ago titled, "Dropping your Guard." If you have never read it, I would highly recommend it. It was an excellent read. Evidently, he has an updated version out now.

The point of this, though, is, that if we are to have genuine fellowship with one another, in the Spirit, and if we, the body of Christ, are to grow together in love, one for the other, we have to "drop our guards," and not wear masks, though we must exercise wisdom and discernment with this, too. We can go from shoving it all inside us to the opposite extreme where all we do is complain and want people to commiserate with us, and that is not healthy, either. We have to find the right balance in this.

And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God. Vv. 9-11

Always, before we open our mouths and blurt out our hurts, we should pray, asking the Lord for wisdom and direction, and we should examine our own hearts to see if our purpose in sharing is godly, with the goal in mind of our own spiritual maturity, or with the goal in mind of leading others to spiritual maturity in Christ, that they may walk in his holiness and righteousness. Our purpose in sharing should be to

increase one another's love for God and our love for one another, otherwise it can be destructive to the body of Christ.

I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel, so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard and to all the rest that my imprisonment is for Christ. And most of the brothers, having become confident in the Lord by my imprisonment, are much more bold to speak the word without fear. Vv. 12-14

I love this! Our purpose in sharing our sufferings with others, should, as well, be for the advancement of the gospel of Christ. This should be the intended outcome. And, what is the gospel? It is that Jesus died that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. And, this should always be what we teach, that our Lord gave his life up for us so that we might be free of our chains. So many people are in chains, by their own choice, because of wrong choices, but also because they keep their sins a secret.

So, if we want hope and healing for ourselves or for others, we need to have the courage to tell someone, or to share with the body of Christ what we are going through. But, we also need to be prepared for rejection, because too many want to keep things on a surface level, i.e. happy, happy, and they will not want to share in the fellowship of our sufferings, as we share in the fellowship of the sufferings of Christ.

But, that should not keep us from giving testimony to God's saving grace and mercy in our lives, because we never know how God is going to use what we share in the lives of others, if not now, maybe some time down the road when they are ready for it. So, be courageous, be bold, be humble, be sensitive, be discerning and wise, and be submissive to your Lord in doing what he wants you to do for your own healing, and for the healing of others.

Monday, December 18, 2017, 5:55 a.m. – Thank you, Jesus, for these encouraging words you gave to my heart today. I love you and I praise you!

Songs in the Night

An Original Work / December 18, 2013

"About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them." Acts 16:25 NIV '84

Lord, I praise You forevermore.
You, my Savior, I now adore.
Hope in heaven awaiting me,
Because You died at Calvary.

I have been forgiven,
And I'm bound for heaven.
Jesus set me free from
All my sin, I say.
I will praise Him always!

Lord, I love You for all You've done:
Overcame death, my vict'ry won!
Jesus saved me, and now I'm free!
I rejoice in His love for me.

I will walk in vict'ry!
My sin is but hist'ry!
I am free to please Him
With my life today.
I will love Him always!

Lord, I thank You for giving me
A new life bought at Calvary.
Loving Jesus, I meet with Him.
Tender mercies now flow within.

Lord, I am so thankful;
Through my Lord, I'm able
To sit at His table;
Fellowship with Him.
I will thank Him always!

<https://vimeo.com/112342407>

I Married My Dad

Chapter Fourteen

Call on Him

January 11, 2018

Our God, the One and Only True God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – is absolutely amazing! His grace is amazing! He loves us so much that he, Jesus Christ, God the Son, died on a cross for our sins. He died that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. He died, not just to free us from the punishment of sin, but to free us from our addictions to sin and the suffering caused by sin. By his stripes (his wounds) we are healed! Amen!

The Lord Jesus led me to read **Psalm 118** (Select vv. ESV).

*Oh give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;
for his steadfast love endures forever!*

I am so thankful for God's love to me. His love is perfect. It has no angle to it. There is no manipulation in his love. He doesn't say one thing and then do another. He is not like us. His motivations are always perfect. His love is also not here today and gone tomorrow, depending on us, and on what we do. He loves us despite what we do, because he is love. He loves us in the good, bad and the ugly. Now, he is not always pleased with us, and sometimes he has to correct or discipline us, like a loving father, but his love remains always, and is steadfast, enduring, and never changing.

*Out of my distress I called on the Lord;
the Lord answered me and set me free.
The Lord is on my side; I will not fear.
What can man do to me?
The Lord is on my side as my helper;
I shall look in triumph on those who hate me.*

We are all born sinners. We are separate from God because of that sin. And, we all come up short of attaining his divine approval on our lives, too. So, God the Father sent his Son Jesus Christ, to the earth, to take on human flesh, and to die on a cross. He who knew no sin became sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God. So, through faith in him, our sins are put to death that we might live to him and to his righteousness.

But, it doesn't end there. This is just the beginning of our faith journey. Now that we are in Christ Jesus, by faith in him, it doesn't mean it will be smooth sailing from that point forward. And, it definitely does not mean we are done with suffering because of sin's deceitfulness, either. But, it does mean that sin should no longer have mastery over our lives, because Jesus set us free. We should now be walking according to the Spirit, and no longer according to our sinful flesh – all in the power and working of the Spirit within us.

Yet, in our walks of faith, empowered by the Spirit, we are still going to face opposition from enemies, particularly Satan who is our arch enemy. We will be tempted to sin again. Satan will lie to us. He will try to deceive us. He will try to make us afraid and he will attempt to get us to doubt God. And, other humans will betray, hate, reject, mistreat and persecute us, too. And, so we will now have those fresh wounds to deal with and to take to the Lord.

But, there is hope! We can be encouraged because Jesus died that awful death on a cross, not just to free us from slavery to sin, but to free us from the wounds caused by sin, either by our own sins or by the sins of others against us. And, he also died to free us from fear of our enemy, or enemies, and what they might do to us, too.

So, we don't have to be afraid. We don't have to walk in the fear of getting hurt again, either. This is not to say we won't get hurt, but that we can give our pain to God and let him heal us, and let him fill us with his peace and joy, and we can not only survive, but we can thrive! We can live in victory over sin and over the pain caused by sin. We can let go and let God. It may be a battle some days, but Jesus won this battle for us! We just have to trust him with our lives, daily take up our spiritual armor, resist Satan, flee temptation, and walk in the Spirit so we don't yield to our flesh.

*It is better to take refuge in the Lord
than to trust in man.*

*It is better to take refuge in the Lord
than to trust in princes.*

The Lord Jesus gave us the body of Christ in order that we might encourage one another, build one another up in our walks of faith, pray for one another, and speak truth to one another in love, etc. So, the Lord's will is that we function in our walks of faith, not alone, but that we walk alongside each other, and that we help one another to be strong in the Lord and to not give way to the wiles of the devil.

But, all of us are still human. And, as humans, we can fail each other. We can sin against one another, and we can be hurt by others, too. So, our trust should not be in humans, but in God. Our refuge should not be largely in humans, but in the Lord. For only God will never fail us. Only God will not lead us the wrong way, nor will he let us down or sin against us. Only he knows us inside and out. Only he can bring true healing to our lives, and give us the counsel we truly need.

So, we need to rest in Him, believe Him, trust Him with our lives, call on Him, cry out our pain to him, and let him deliver us, and to fill us with his perfect peace. He will strengthen, help, counsel, guide and empower us to walk in freedom from sin and to walk in freedom from the fear of what others might do to us, too.

*The Lord is my strength and my song;
he has become my salvation.
Glad songs of salvation
are in the tents of the righteous:
"The right hand of the Lord does valiantly,
the right hand of the Lord exalts,
the right hand of the Lord does valiantly!"*

No matter what comes our way, our God is our all sufficiency to help us in time of need. He is our deliverer! He is our strength and he is our song. In fact, one of the greatest antidotes to caving in to the attacks of Satan, which come against our minds, our hearts, and our bodies, is to sing songs of praise to our Lord, and to do so out loud, too. It is amazing how much healing can come through singing.

We absolutely have to go to our Lord with every heartache, every pain, every temptation, every trouble, and every difficulty in our lives so that we do not cave to the pressure to give in or to give up, and so we continue to walk in victory. We have to lean on him. He is the only one who can rescue us from Satan's evil attacks against our minds, hearts and bodies, too. And, he will give strength, and he will empower us to walk by faith and not by sight; in freedom, and not in fear; in victory, and not in defeat.

So, we trust him, we rest in him, and we believe him, and then we obey him and we walk in his truth, and that is where we will find true peace and joy.

Thursday, January 11, 2018, 5:53 a.m. – Thank you, Jesus, for this teaching from your Word. Heal our hearts, I pray. Amen!

Near the Cross

Fanny J. Crosby / William H. Doane

Jesus, keep me near the cross;
There a precious fountain,
Free to all, a healing stream,
Flows from Calvary's mountain.

Near the cross! O Lamb of God,
Bring its scenes before me;
Help me walk from day to day
With its shadow o'er me.

In the cross, in the cross,
Be my glory ever,
Till my raptured soul shall find
Rest beyond the river.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BasJqHsCIo4>

I Married My Dad

Chapter Fifteen

My Jonah Story

November 17, 2017

The Lord Jesus led me to read **Psalm 119:105-112** ESV.

Back in the early 1980s, when my children were still quite young, and I was a young mother of four, I had a situation in a church with the leadership misjudging me, and honestly, not being very nice about it, either. The pastor said to me, "Would you say that you have been crucified with Christ?" I said, "Yes." He said, "Well I say that you haven't."

Wow! That hit me like a ton of bricks. My heart was broken. It was crushed, in fact. So, what did I do? I ran! I mean, what else could I do? He had sealed my fate, and there was no other way around it, right? I felt I had no other recourse. So, I just played the game "I'm ok." "You're ok." And, then everything was fine. They were happy with me, but I wasn't happy with me.

*Your word is a lamp to my feet
and a light to my path.
I have sworn an oath and confirmed it,
to keep your righteous rules.*

Then, one day I was reading the story of Jonah to my children, and God spoke so clearly to my heart that that was me, that I was running from God, not for the same reasons Jonah ran, mind you, but still I was running from the situation. So, he told me to get back in there and to fight this thing through.

And, then I said, "But God, you don't understand!" The thing of it is, I really believed that. I believed God had no power over my situation, but that this pastor did, and that there was nothing I could do to change it. I was doomed!

But, the Lord kept encouraging me to get in there and to fight this thing through, so I went and talked with a good friend of mine, who was also the wife of one of the church elders. I told her my situation, and she told me that I came across too much like I "had it all together." So, she tried to help me identify where that was coming from. But, I kept saying, "No, that isn't it." It wasn't until she said, "I know what it is. It is a spirit of fear," that I knew this was it. So, we prayed for God to deliver me, and he did.

*I am severely afflicted;
give me life, O Lord, according to your word!
Accept my freewill offerings of praise, O Lord,
and teach me your rules.*

But, what came next was something I would not have ever imagined. I had been severely abused by my dad in my childhood, but I was told I just needed to stuff my pain, basically, i.e. to forget it. I had no one I could talk with about it, so I thought I was doing the right thing by just trying to forget it. But, I wasn't forgetting it. I was just hiding the hurt deep inside me.

So, when God delivered me from this spirit of fear, all these memories and hurts began to come to the surface, and I began to weep out loud to God. I didn't know what to do with what I was feeling, and my friend didn't know either, so she suggested I talk with the pastor. "Oh, no, I couldn't do that", I said. "He hates me." So, she talked with him for me, with permission from me, and she told him what my deal was, i.e. about my childhood.

*I hold my life in my hand continually,
but I do not forget your law.
The wicked have laid a snare for me,
but I do not stray from your precepts.*

Well, this same pastor who had been so cruel to me now called me on the phone. He told me he was sorry. He told me that, as my pastor, he is supposed to be a spiritual father to me, but that he hadn't been a very good one, and he asked me to forgive him and to give him a second chance. And, so I did. I did cry, though, when he told me that. I couldn't hold back the tears. No man had ever said such words to me, that I recalled.

So, I told him about all these memories that were surfacing, and I asked him what to do with them. He told me to cry them out to God, and then to just release them to God and let him have them, rather than to stuff them back inside, so that is what I did, and God began to heal me.

Then, this pastor gave me an assignment within the church to observe another woman in the church teaching a class, and to see what I could learn from her. I submitted to his request, did what he said, and then he and I met a few times to talk about what I was learning, and to see how things were progressing with me and with my healing process.

Just think of it, if I had hung in there with the whole Jonah thing, I would have totally missed out on all that, and so would have this pastor.

Well, to make a long story short, the Lord took me through a long healing process, because there was so much damage done to my heart and emotions and mind, but this pastor was there to help me through the beginning stages of it, anyway, until we moved away from there, and through it all we actually developed a friendship. Weird, huh?

*Your testimonies are my heritage forever,
for they are the joy of my heart.
I incline my heart to perform your statutes
forever, to the end.*

Anyway, when we run from things God has allowed in our lives, for his purposes, we miss out on all the blessings he has for us through them, and so do many other people for whom the Lord wants to do marvelous things in their lives, too.

For example, this pastor finally admitted to me that he was threatened by me because when I shared during group Bible study discussion, I spoke with too much authority for a young woman. He told me, at one time, that I should wait until I had gray hairs on my head, and then people would listen to me. But, now he was admitting to me that he had misjudged me; that they, the elders had misjudged me. Now he could truly see my heart.

So, instead of running, we need to see what God wants to do through our circumstances, and believe that he is completely sovereign, and that he does truly understand what we are going through, and that he has a plan.

But, to be perfectly honest, that is not the last time I ran from God. You would think that I would have learned my lesson, and I did for a long while. But, there were other times in my life when the pressures of life got me down, and instead of running to God, I ran from him, again.

Some of those situations had to do with other pastors or church leaders misjudging or mistreating me. There were many of them, in fact, more than one could possibly imagine would happen to just one person. Some of these situations had to do with other people abusing, betraying and/or using me for their advantage. So, God had to heal me of those heartaches, too. I had to learn to trust fully in his sovereignty, and to rest in his promises, to rely fully on his grace to help me in my time of need, and to keep pressing on, in his strength, in being the woman of God he created me to be.

Praise the Lord, I stopped running from God quite a few years ago. Now I run INTO his arms, which is the ONLY place to be ever!

Friday, November 17, 2017, 9:45 a.m. – Thank you, Jesus, for how you spoke your words to my heart this morning, and thank you for putting this song in my mind when I awoke. I praise you, and I thank you. Love, Sue

Jesus, I am Resting, Resting

Jean Sophia Pigott

Jesus, I am resting, resting,
In the joy of what Thou art;
I am finding out the greatness
Of Thy loving heart.
Thou hast bid me gaze upon Thee,
And Thy beauty fills my soul,
For by Thy transforming power,
Thou hast made me whole.

O, how great Thy loving kindness,
Vaster, broader than the sea!
O, how marvelous Thy goodness,
Lavished all on me!
Yes, I rest in Thee, Belovèd,
Know what wealth of grace is Thine,
Know Thy certainty of promise,
And have made it mine.

Simply trusting Thee, Lord Jesus,
I behold Thee as Thou art,
And Thy love, so pure, so changeless,
Satisfies my heart;
Satisfies its deepest longings,
Meets, supplies its every need,
Compasseth me round with blessings:
Thine is love indeed!

Ever lift Thy face upon me
As I work and wait for Thee;
Resting 'neath Thy smile, Lord Jesus,
Earth's dark shadows flee.
Brightness of my Father's glory,
Sunshine of my Father's face,
Keep me ever trusting, resting,
Fill me with Thy grace.

Jesus, I am resting, resting,
In the joy of what Thou art;
I am finding out the greatness
Of Thy loving heart.

I Married My Dad

Chapter Sixteen

Free Indeed

January 15, 2018

Do you ever feel like what you have done is so bad that you could never be forgiven? Are you afraid to tell the truth for fear you will be rejected? Or, out of fear of other consequences? Do you remain in sinful addiction because you have given up hope of ever changing?

The Lord Jesus led me to read **John 8** (Select vv. ESV).

But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. Early in the morning he came again to the temple. All the people came to him, and he sat down and taught them. The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery, and placing her in the midst they said to him, "Teacher, this woman has been caught in the act of adultery. Now in the Law, Moses commanded us to stone such women. So what do you say?" This they said to test him, that they might have some charge to bring against him.

Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground. And as they continued to ask him, he stood up and said to them, "Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her." And once more he bent down and wrote on the ground. But when they heard it, they went away one by one, beginning with the older ones, and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him. Jesus stood up and said to her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" She said, "No one, Lord." And Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you; go, and from now on sin no more." Vv. 1-11

When you are following the Lord Jesus Christ with your life, and you are teaching the truth, you should expect that there will be people who will oppose you and who will even try to trip you up. And, don't be surprised if some of those people are within the church, and even from among the church leadership. So, we need to be watchful and be on our guard, and be ready to respond to such opposition in the power and wisdom of the Holy Spirit. For, He will give us the words to say, if we will listen to him.

The religious leaders within the temple of God were Jesus' strongest opponents, and they often did things to try to trip Jesus up and to show to others that he was not who he said he was or that he was in error in some way. So, their bringing this woman before Jesus had nothing really to do with following the law and maintaining righteousness. They used that woman to get at Jesus, and Jesus knew that. He had their number.

So, he bent down to write something in the ground with his finger. Many people have speculated as to what he wrote. Not one of us really knows. I have a sense that he wrote something revealing about each one who was accusing this woman, perhaps not by name, but by sin, and in a way that they recognized that he was talking about them.

This makes sense to me, because next he said, "Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her." So, I think there was something Jesus wrote in the ground that convinced them that they were not without sin, because these Pharisees were very self-righteous, and I don't believe Jesus' verbal statement would have been enough to convince them to throw down their stones and leave. I believe, therefore, that what he wrote was incriminating to them, and they knew it.

Sometimes we have to be humbled, and we have to be faced with the reality of our own sins, before we put down our stones we want to throw at others because we believe they are such horrible sinners while we are not. But, the Bible says there is none righteous, no not one, not of ourselves, anyway. And, it says that all have sinned and have come up short of the glory of God. It also says that it is only by God's grace that any of us are saved, and that this is not of ourselves, lest any of us should boast, but it is a gift of God.

I don't have to look very far into my past to see some of the horrible things I did. And, when I think about the grace of God, and his patience with me while I wandered from my pure devotion to him, for a time, how can I not show that same grace and love to others that he showed me?

Now, grace is not an excuse for sin, nor does it ignore the sin and pretend it doesn't exist. Jesus didn't stop with, "neither do I condemn you." He said, "Go and sin no more." His forgiveness of our sins is not freedom to continue in sin. His forgiveness is so we will "go and sin no more." This is why he died, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness," not that we would remain in our sinful addictions, still in bondage, and still under the control of Satan. His message of grace is one of freedom from slavery to sin, not just freedom from the punishment of sin.

Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." V. 12

If you want to be a Jesus follower, you can no longer walk (in lifestyle) in sin. You cannot be one who makes a practice of sin. In fact, the Bible teaches that if we say we have fellowship with God, but we walk (conduct our lives) in darkness (in sin), that we are liars. It says, too, that if we walk according to the flesh, that we will die in our sins, but if, by the Spirit, we are putting to death the deeds of the flesh, then we will live. And, it says that if we make sin our practice, that we don't have the

hope of eternal life with God, but a fearful expectation of judgment. We need to take this seriously!

So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." Vv. 31-32

What does it mean to abide? It means to stay, to remain, and to endure. It also means to stand, to take, and to accept without objection. We have to be in the Word daily, drinking it into our minds and hearts, listening to our Savior speak, and then we must follow in obedience to what it says.

All scripture is given by inspiration of God (is God-breathed) and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the person of God might be complete, fully equipped for good works (See: 2 Tim. 3:16-17). But, not all scripture is applicable, in its strictest sense, to the church today, so we must always read the OT in light of NT teachings and our new covenant relationship with God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

I note this, because I want to point out that we, as believers in Jesus, are not under all the Old Testament laws, like stoning people for committing adultery, but we are under the law of grace. But, grace is not soft on sin. God's grace instructs us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly (fleshly) passions (lusts), and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives while we await Christ's return (Tit. 2:11-14).

So, how does the truth set us free? We have to be in the Word, learning what it teaches us, and then we have to obey the truth and tell the truth and it will set us free, because obedience is what frees us from our bondage. Thus, we no longer walk in darkness, but we now walk in the Light.

Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin. The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever. So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed." Vv. 34-36

If you are still holding on to sinful practices, you are not walking in freedom. If these sinful practices are what you live by, then you are still a slave to sin. And, if you are a slave to sin, then you are not alive in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

BUT, if Jesus has set you free, meaning you have died with him to sin, and you are living with him to righteousness, not necessarily in sinless perfection, but sin is no longer your master, and Jesus is truly your Lord, then you are free indeed, but not just from the punishment of sin, but from the control of sin.

Again, Jesus didn't just tell the woman that he did not condemn her, but he told her to go and sin no more. That is true freedom! Not just forgiveness, but deliverance from our sinful addictions. Then, we are free indeed!

Monday, January 15, 2018, 2:22 a.m. – Thank you, Jesus, for the freedom that is ours in Christ Jesus, our Lord, because you have set us free!

My Prayer

An Original Work / May 30, 2011

"Fill me with Your Spirit;
help me to love others;
Let me know Your power;
be an overcomer.
Show me how to follow
Jesus Christ, my Savior;
Be His faithful servant
to obey Him always.

"Lead me with Your presence;
help me know the right way;
Teach me love and kindness,
generous compassion.
Give me grace and courage
to be Jesus' witness,
Teaching His salvation
to a world who needs Him."

Won't you come and follow
Jesus Christ, your Savior?
He died so you'd be
free of control of your sin;
Free to follow His ways
in complete surrender;
Living sacrifices –
let His grace transform you.

<https://vimeo.com/122052093>

I Married My Dad

Chapter Seventeen

On Your Behalf

January 22, 2018

For this reason I, Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles— assuming that you have heard of the stewardship of God's grace that was given to me for you, how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I have written briefly. When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit. This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel. Eph. 3:1-6 ESV

All of us who are believers in Jesus Christ have been given gifts of the Holy Spirit, and we have each been given specific assignments by God, which we are to fulfill. But, we don't all have the same gifts, and we don't all have the same assignments.

For example, back in 2004, the Lord Jesus called me to write down what he teaches me through his word, and to place it on the internet, so that the internet (the herald) could Run With It (See: Hab. 2:2-3). He called me to be a messenger, primarily to the church here in America, I believe, to expose lies and deceptions, to teach what is biblical truth, and to confront sinful practices, idolatry, and spiritual adultery within the church, as well as to call for repentance and obedience to Christ, and to his Word (1).

And, then, in 2011, he gave me another gift, the gift of writing songs. He would put the tunes in my head, which I would then record, and then I would pray for words, and then he poured the words into my mind. Then, I recorded the words with the tunes, and I would sing the songs, too, so that people could hear what they sounded like. The last one he gave me to write was in 2016, but that does not mean he won't give me more. And, he often uses these songs with the devotions he gives me to write each day, so they go hand-in-hand (2).

Then, just a few weeks ago, he led me to write a book about my life, most specifically regarding the years I have been married to my husband, but also including a little bit of my life prior to my marriage of 45 years. It is a story of abuse, betrayal, adultery, faithfulness, a Christian walk, Christian service, obedience, and commitment, and it is also a story of hope, healing, deliverance, grace, mercy, compassion, forgiveness and restoration (3).

Yet, whether writing out my devotions, or writing a song, or writing a book, the gift the Lord has given me and the assignment he has given me is writing, and it is

writing his messages, and these writings are for you and for me, to encourage us, to light a fire under us, to spur us on to love and good deeds, to give us hope, and so that we may know there is healing for our wounded hearts and deliverance from our sinful conditions through Jesus Christ, our Lord and our Savior. By his stripes we are healed. Amen!

Of this gospel I was made a minister according to the gift of God's grace, which was given me by the working of his power. To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God, who created all things, so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. This was according to the eternal purpose that he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through our faith in him. So I ask you not to lose heart over what I am suffering for you, which is your glory. Eph. 3:7-13 ESV

When I read here about Paul being the “very least” of all the saints, but yet he was given this grace to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ, it brought this passage of scripture to mind:

For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. 1 Co. 1:26-29 ESV

I can definitely relate! I grew up in a poor family, abused by my father and emotionally neglected by my mother. I was not regarded as worth much to anyone, I don't think. I didn't think I was very smart or that I had the ability to learn much. I really struggled to learn much of anything. And, then I married a man much like my dad who was sexually addicted from even before I met him, although I did not know that when I married him. And, we have had a difficult marriage because of his addiction, so I have gone through much hardship, pain and suffering from my husband, too.

In the church I also was not regarded as much. One pastor was threatened by the wisdom God was giving me, and he told me, in my early 30s, to wait until I had gray hairs on my head, and then people would listen to me. And, here I am 68 years old, and I still have most of my black hair. And, then there were other church leaders who were abusive, disregarding of and dismissal of me, who were all too anxious to just throw me to the curb rather than to be bothered with me. One of them told me that he was warned against people like me – people with strong

convictions – and that he was to encourage me to go someplace else where I would be a “better fit,” he said, and he even offered to help me find such a place.

Yet, God had use of me, for this calling on my life was what he had prepared for me from before the creation of the world. And, he allowed me to go through all of that abuse, rejection, and persecution throughout my life to prepare me for this ministry, for what he was going to have me write about. I can write passionately about a lot of these subjects because I have lived in these situations on one end or another. So, I can speak from experience, and from a heart that has lived it, feels it, and cares deeply about it.

Yet, I struggled with this calling, even before 2004, and this present ministry, when I knew this was God’s calling on my life, because I kept getting rejected over and over and over again, because I was a woman. But, then the Lord spoke to me through Luke 7:36-50, regarding the woman who wet Jesus’ feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head and kissed his feet and anointed them with the ointment. A Pharisee criticized the woman and looked down on her, but Jesus honored her with his words.

Then turning toward the woman he said to Simon, “Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave me no water for my feet, but she has wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not ceased to kiss my feet. You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. Therefore I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven—for she loved much. But he who is forgiven little, loves little.” Vv. 44-47

What the Lord said to me at that moment is that he called me, a despised woman, rejected of men, to this ministry, because the men, who were supposed to be doing this, were not doing it. And, now he is paralleling for me the three things she did for him that they did not do, but should have done, with the three assignments the Lord Jesus gave me listed above in this writing and linked to below. Wow! Glory to God! All praise to Him!

For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Eph. 3:14-19 ESV

Amen, Amen and Amen! Oh, the riches of his grace to you and to me!

*Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think,
according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in
Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen. Eph. 3:20-21 ESV*

Abide With Me / Henry F. Lyte / William H. Monk

Abide with me; fast falls the eventide;
The darkness deepens; Lord with me abide.
When other helpers fail and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless, O abide with me.

Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day;
Earth's joys grow dim; its glories pass away;
Change and decay in all around I see;
O Thou who changest not, abide with me.

I need Thy presence every passing hour.
What but Thy grace can foil the tempter's power?
Who, like Thyself, my guide and stay can be?
Through cloud and sunshine, Lord, abide with me.

I fear no foe, with Thee at hand to bless;
Ills have no weight, and tears no bitterness.
Where is death's sting? Where, grave, thy victory?
I triumph still, if Thou abide with me.

Hold Thou Thy cross before my closing eyes;
Shine through the gloom and point me to the skies.
Heaven's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee;
In life, in death, O Lord, abide with me.

Monday, January 22, 2018, 2:16 a.m. – Thank you, Jesus, for this testimony of
your love and grace in my life, the life of your servant and witness Sue.

- (1) [Run With It: Blog](#)
- (2) [Original Works Songs](#)
- (3) [I Married My Dad: Book](#)