

A Family Restored

On the final night of my Christmas vacation from college in 1990, I met my future husband, Hilton, at a nightclub. We talked at length that evening, and when I returned to school, he joined me there.

I was flunking out that semester, so when he returned home, I went with him. He was attending school on an athletic scholarship but later was dismissed for fighting.

Back at home, Hilton began selling drugs and fell into a deep depression. Within a few months, I became pregnant.

Racism Uprooted

My ancestral roots run straight down into the Mississippi mud. My great-grandfather, seven generations removed, was the first Protestant circuit-rider in the Mississippi territory, giving me a rich Christian heritage intermingled with a traditional Southern mind-set.

Unfortunately, my Christian heritage did not tip the scales when weighed against the embedded racial views of the Deep South. My family never spoke with hatred against black people, but they certainly felt that blacks needed to “stay in their place.”

When I was growing up, I was told that segregation was the way God meant it to be. It took many years for God to set me free.

A 40-Year Miracle

For years, my husband, Jerry, and I traveled as evangelists for the Church of God in Christ (COGIC). I've been blessed beyond measure, and I've seen God perform many miracles.

For 40 years I carried around a tumor in my abdomen. Although my doctors tried to persuade me to have surgery to remove it, I was praying and hoping that the Lord would dissolve it from my body. But God decided to heal me in His own way and His own time, for His glory.

On April 10, 2001, I was in great pain. I went into the hospital the next day, and the doctors scheduled me for surgery.

For God's Glory

When I was pregnant with my second child, I developed complications and was confined to bed. During that time, while watching a TV special on autism, I thought, Lord, I could never handle anything like that.

Later on, our son John was born. He was apparently healthy, but as he grew something seemed wrong. At 2-1/2 years old, he was diagnosed with infantile autism.

The doctors offered us no hope that John would recover. They said we should institutionalize him.

Believing for Protection

Some years ago I was impressed by the Lord to read Psalm 91 several times. I took great comfort in this passage and was moved to tell others about God's promises of safety.

I always utter a prayer when I get into my car, asking God to protect me and everyone on the road. Many times God has heard my prayers and delivered me in times of trouble.

One day, after praying for protection, I had traveled only a few miles when suddenly a deer jumped out of the woods right in my path. A second deer was right behind him.

The first deer cleared the hood of my car. The second one bumped his head on the side of the car and then turned back into the woods. I barely saw the first one, but in my rearview mirror, I distinctly saw the second one shake his head and turn back.

God protected me from disaster. For this I praise Him, and I imagine the deer are grateful too. When I examined my car, I saw there was not even a scratch on it. Praise God, for His mercies endure forever!

A Garden of Faith

Throughout my life, God has been merciful to me. I am thankful for the loving Christian home into which I was born 38 years ago.

My mother prayed over everything, and our family attended church each week. It was a wonderful childhood.

But while in college, I was introduced to marijuana and cocaine. I'd nearly finished my nursing program at Georgia State University, but I left school so I could work to support my drug habit.

A Passage Through Grief

During an eight-month period, multiple blows of grief battered my family. The first was related to our daughter, Shela.

My husband and I had adopted Shela when she was four months old. For all of her 19 years, she battled a neuromuscular disease that crippled her body and threatened her life.

Shela never weighed more than 55 pounds and was unable to walk, crawl or dress herself. Yet, despite her disability, she was a committed Christian who had graduated from high school with honors and successfully completed her freshman year in college.

The Father's Provision

During my daughter's sophomore year in college, we received a bill from a previous semester for \$850. At the time, I didn't have the money to pay it.

One day when I was at my office, I asked God what I should do concerning the balance. He told me to call the school and ask to make payment arrangements.

When I contacted the school, a woman in the finance office told me they didn't accept payment arrangements, but she would see what could be done. Then she returned to the phone, bewildered, and said that someone (she didn't know who) had paid the balance!

Comfort in Crisis

Times of crisis don't usually evoke cherished memories. However, it is just such a time in my life that calls up my fondest memory.

While I was growing up, my family went to church sporadically and believed in God. I believed that He existed, but other than that I never thought very much about Him.

Then in my late 20s a series of events drove me to a crisis point. My mom died suddenly, and 14 months later, I married and began a new life 900 miles away from family, friends and everything familiar to me.

God Can Use You, Too

When I was a little girl, I watched my dad get drunk and physically abuse my mom. One day He went so far as to bring another woman into our home.

At 4 years old, I was molested by a baby-sitter, and at 5, by a family member. The molestation continued until I was 12.

At first, I didn't tell anyone because the abuser said my mom would be angry with me and would not believe me. When I finally spoke up, that is exactly what happened.