

Did You Know...

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Delivered From Abuse

In October 1995, I was 34 years old and on my third marriage. While I was recovering from a major operation, my husband viciously attacked me. After choking and hitting me, he pushed me into the walls and threw me across the room.

Although I did not want another failed relationship, I was concerned for my son, who was 16, and my 11-year-old daughter. I kept wondering, What am I doing wrong?

We had dated for five years, but we separated after four months of marriage. I decided I couldn't take the arguing, his adulterous relationships and now the physical abuse.

God's Grace is Real

When I was 4 years old, my mother was stricken with meningitis. I can recall the night an ambulance careened around the corner and took her away to a hospital.

My father returned in the morning, looking extremely weary. I heard him on the phone telling someone that her fever was 107, and I wondered what that meant. Fear seemed to have wrapped around him as though it were choking him.

I expected everything to return to the way things were before her illness, but when Mom arrived home from the hospital, things were not the same. Meningitis had left her suffering with terrible migraine headaches, seizures and memory loss.

I'm More than a Survivor

Ever since I can remember, life has been a struggle for me. Everything in my life was negative, including the image I had of God.

I didn't understand why I felt so unloved and unworthy to be loved. I had received Christ as my Savior when I was 14, but no matter how hard I tried, all my efforts were met with condemnation and ridicule.

It wasn't until I was 28 years old and struggling to find the courage to leave an abusive husband that I stepped into a counselor's office and began my journey into freedom. The memories flooded my mind, and I wept bitterly as I told the counselor of my abusive marriage and the rape and molestation I had endured as a child.

A Tribute to Ms. Ann

My mother and I had some pretty rough times while I was growing up. Looking just like her didn't help. Everyone constantly compared us, from our clothing to the way we carried ourselves to our personalities. No wonder we clashed so much.

Years later, my husband and I found out we were pregnant with our first child. I prayed and prayed during the weeks leading up to the ultrasound that I would have a boy. My husband wanted a girl because, as he put it, there was "way too much

testosterone in his family.”

My desire for a boy was deeply rooted in pain and anguish. We waded with each other up to the day of the ultrasound.

God Has a Plan

When I was a child, severe medical problems cropped up as a result of congenital issues. For three years, my parents and my doctors were hopelessly baffled as I endured horrendous pain.

While facing the taunts of a world that couldn't understand what was happening, I tried to function as a normal child and keep up with school. Unfortunately, the education system wanted to put me in a special needs school. Others thought I was just trying to seek attention.

A month before my 16th birthday, I laid in bed one night in sheer agony. I weighed 68 pounds, and my skin was translucent and grey. Trying hard not to be heard by my family, I cried to God: “Please take me home with You. I don't want to live any more. No one believes me or can help me. Just take me home!”

Trusting God With My Life

Learning to trust God can seem impossible during the difficult times in our lives. I know because I have been there.

I have heard many stories of broken marriages being healed and restored by the power of God. My story is different. When my own marriage was in trouble, I hoped and prayed for reconciliation. But that never happened, and the marriage ended in divorce.

For a long time, I was in total despair. I carried feelings of guilt, shame and failure for not being able to save my marriage. Many times the hurt was almost unbearable. My sorrow seemed to drown out any encouraging words from family and friends.

Greatly Blessed

I've had to overcome a lot of adversity. I've had to walk through many valleys and climb many mountains.

I was a mother at the age of 16. I gave birth to my son, Dwight (a gift from God), on the last day of 11th grade. I was determined to return for my senior year, and I graduated from Winter Park High School near the top of my class.

That fall I enrolled at the local community college, and for 1-1/2 years, I worked two jobs, went to school and raised my son. Around that time I realized that I had a gift and passion for hairstyling. My Grandmother Ruth owned a salon and she inspired me. She became my mentor and encourager.

A Word of Peace

Six years ago, I stood holding my infant son, Nathaniel, trying to sort out what I was hearing. Our family doctor said that the plates in our son's skull did not seem to be closing properly, and he needed to see a pediatric neurosurgeon.

I wondered: A pediatric neurosurgeon? Nathaniel's only 4 months old. I'm just here for a checkup. Will they operate on his brain?

By the time my husband, Art, got home that day, I was remembering that God was in control. I believed we could pray and this situation could turn completely around. Art and I agreed that not only did we need to pray, but we also needed to have a prayer service at our house for Nathaniel.