

How Hope Will Find You

When I was just 5 years old, I was kidnapped and forced to live a life burdened with cruel and bizarre physical and emotional abuse. My will to survive, inspired by an invisible hope, helped me fight the demons and stay alive as I endured haunting experiences. Mine is a story of forbidden secrets driven by darkness and deception. First birthed into a marriage of teenage parents and their destructive relationship, I was later kidnapped, given away and ultimately raised by strangers who tortured me.

At the age of 13, I was rescued by my father. This resulted in his relief and triumph. However, this wasn't the "happily ever after" I expected. What appeared to be the light at the end of the tunnel only proved to be another pit of pain. I was passed on from the strangers in my life into my destructive father's hands.

I finally broke free from the physical abuse when I was 17 years old. God provided help and support in my best friend and her family when they took me into their home. Although I was physically free, I remained living with post-traumatic stress disorder. I have survived poverty, 26 years of eating disorders, marital demise, relational travesties, watched my mom try to commit suicide as a child and much torment. But I have come through it all because God has saved my life. He has renewed me with strength, dignity and power; He has transformed me into a successful woman.

It is my passion to empower others to keep going no matter what and to keep their focus on and faith in God. Where and what I've come through is profound and clearly the work of God, His grace, mercy and power. The one lesson I want others to learn from my story is, "never give up hope."

Our lives are too precious and our calling too high to ever

settle for less than what God has for us. There is no life without trials and suffering, it is imminent. "I have told you these things so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But be of good cheer. I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).

I want the world to know Jesus snatched me from the enemy's hand. He delivered me from hopelessness and despair. I was sinking in an ocean full of despondency. My heart was desperate and broken. I wanted love so desperately. I was a daughter never approved, loved or accepted until I discovered my true Father, the one seated in heaven, my Creator.

My heavenly Father gave me all the strength I needed and filled me with an unexplainable hope. This feeling inside of me motivated me to keep on keeping on, no matter what my circumstances looked like and no matter how I felt. There was an invisible hand that carried me, an invisible love that held me and an invisible joy that filled me. While I had no one to live for and nothing to look forward to, I kept pressing on and moving forward in life. I can't explain it, but I know, "hope kept me alive."

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