

How These Parents Found 'Unshakeable Faith in Unthinkable Circumstances'

No one likes for the phone to ring at 3 a.m. It is almost always bad news.

For Carol and Gene Kent, it was far worse than bad news. It was horrific. Their shining-star son, recently and happily married, finishing Navy SEAL training, was in an Orlando jail for murdering his wife's ex-husband.

How could he do that? Why would he do that?

Carol and Gene had a respected "Speak Up" ministry. Carol had taught Speak Up conferences for years, training the next generation of Christian communicators: writers, speakers and leaders. A sought-after speaker, author and coach, Carol's influence had spread widely. Her husband, Gene, managed the business side of their ministry.

They were so proud of Jason, his hard work and good character, his success at SEAL training. They loved his wife and her two daughters—their only grandchildren.

Gene and Carol flew to Florida as quickly as possible, beginning a years-long journey that changed the trajectory of their lives.

Years later now, there are hints at what caused Jason's incomprehensible action, but even he doesn't understand. Perhaps he thought his stepdaughters were in danger from their dad when he was about to be deployed.

It was three years before his case was decided: He was found guilty of first-degree murder, sentenced to life imprisonment without the possibility of parole, where he has been for 17

years now.

Carol and Gene faced many questions from friends, people touched by their ministry, reporters and their own minds. But from God they heard assurance that their lives—and Jason's—were not over. God had plans for them.

The Kents moved to Florida to be able to visit their son as often as possible. Their ministry continued to expand. Carol's book *When I Lay My Isaac Down: Unshakeable Faith in Unthinkable Circumstances* told the story with compassion and courage.

For Jason, God opened many doors of ministry as well. He talked about Jesus, disciplined men and became to person to talk to for other incarcerated men.

His parents began another "Speak Up"—this one for hope. They partnered with their son and prison officials to help meet needs of the inmates, many of whom get abandoned by family and friends as the years pass.

Carol and Gene have learned much that benefits anyone in a hard place in life. They talk about making hope-filled choices. You can hear more about them on this week's episode of *When You Love a Prodigal* with Judy Douglass on the Charisma Podcast Network. Visit to learn more.

Judy Douglass is a global writer, speaker and encourager. Her most recent book, *When You Love a Prodigal*, has ignited her new podcast of the same name. She directs Women's Resources at Cru.

Read articles like this one and other Spirit-led content in our new platform, CHARISMA PLUS.

{eoa}