

How Your Past Trauma Paves the Way for a Powerful Testimony

I stood in the car dealership and listened to the news, Jared Fogle was agreeing to a plea deal for having been involved in child pornography and having sex with minors.

My heart sank. I put my hand up to my eyes to rub out the threat of tears. I thought about those minors and what they'd experienced. He is to pay them \$100,000 each. Really? Like that will make the years of confusion, anxiety, insecurity, shouldering *his* guilt and *his* shame, and uncertainty of who they are in worth just go away?

Really?

When I made it home I turned on another news channel and listened to the young woman in the St. Paul's Prep School rape case defend herself in court.

The disguised voice came across confident of her truth with a trade of uncertainty. Will anyone believe me? I know this because I have been that girl. When asked why she would respond to his emails and from all appearances make it seem like she was playing the same game, she claimed it was because she didn't want him to 'come after her again' and she didn't want to become a target for ridicule at the school she still had three years to attend.

I get it. I never spoke of what happened with the first young man who raped me because we were friends who hung out in the same circle. Would any one believe me?

And with the second rapist in college, I went back to him because he was such a *force* at the school. Everybody seemed to

love him, to praise him, students and school staff alike. How could I ever be credible against him?

I get it. The sting of tears that threatened to erupt in the dealership now flowed freely in the comfort of my home. They weren't tears for me ... I've overcome the anxieties of this part of my past. These were tears for these young girls.

I know what they are struggling with right now and I want to take that pain away from them. I know the path they'll need to follow to find freedom from this part of their life and I know they'll be stronger for it, but I want to hold their hand along the way, maybe even give them a ride. If only I could.

An hour later my phone rang one ring and stopped. The fact my ringer on was a miracle because I never have my ringer on. (Just ask Neal. It's a pet peeve of his that I never get his calls because my phone is on vibrate!) I picked it up and called the number back thinking to myself "Why am I doing this? I'm sure it was a wrong number or misdial."

A woman with a heavy proper English accent answered and stumbled with her words. At first I was still uncertain if she meant to call me and finally she began to make sense. She needed information on my ministry.

Two hours later I hung up with the flesh on my arms still bristled with Holy Spirit goosebumps.

She was a woman in her 60s who had suffered through an unimaginable horror in Africa when she was younger. Once she was able to truly get her words together she began to lament about the 300 young women who had been stolen from their families in Nigeria.

She explained in detail the various horrors they were undoubtedly suffering (if they were not already gone) because she had lived through them herself. She wept for these young

women and simply needed to speak it out loud.

In the end she let me know she had been holding on to my number for nearly three years. She had tried various times to call but would hang up before it rang just as she did today. When I called back she said she tried to lie and say it was a wrong number, but God wouldn't let her, which is why her words were so jumbled.

She wants to see me, to share with me more of her story. She's been to countless therapists in her life and yet she knows what she needs is to speak to someone who understands her pain.

I would have listened to her all day but she needed to get back to her life. She left me singing a hymn and asked me to look up the lyrics. I thought I'd leave you with it today:

Unknown – *Lead Me Guide Me*

Lead Me Guide Me Verse 1: I am weak and I need thy strength and power to help me over my weakest hour/lead me through the darkness, Thy face to see/lead me, oh Lord, lead me

Chorus: Lead me, guide me, along the way/for if you lead me I cannot not stray/Lord, let me walk, each day with Thee/Lead me, oh Lord, lead me

Verse 2: Help me tread in the paths of righteousness/Be my aid when Satan and sin oppress/I am putting all my trust in Thee/Lead me, oh Lord, lead me

Chorus: Lead me, guide me along the way/for if You lead me I cannot stray/Lord let me walk each day with Thee/Lead me, oh Lord, lead me/I am lost if you take Your hand from me/I am blind without Thy light to see/Lord just always to me thy servant be/Lead me, oh Lord, lead me.

We are a support to one another—Christian to Christian and

survivor to survivor. When you speak your truth, you are healing another who knows your pain.

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