

Stranger with a Message

Some years ago, when I was working as a dancer in a nightclub, two customers summoned me to their table. Two more jerks, I thought, never dreaming that the one drinking a Coke would speak words that would change my life.

One of the gentlemen, Mr. Hobbs, was an architect who designed boats for the Navy. He asked me what abilities I had besides dancing. I told him that I'd been a secretary but could not make enough money to keep my 5-year-old son with me.

Mr. Hobbs told me of some missionaries his family supported in Mexico, and then he said, "They would give anything to have someone like you to help them."

I had recently remarried and was stunned to find that my husband insisted I continue working at the club. I made three times the money he did, and we fought every time I mentioned quitting my job.

I was disappointed in myself and convinced that I was a total failure. I hated going to the club, but tranquilizers and alcohol helped.

Out of ignorance, I had blamed God when my first baby was stillborn. Before that I had never been in a nightclub and wasn't even allowed to wear shorts as I grew up.

Mr. Hobbs' few words to me that night gave me a glimmer of hope and the courage to stop dancing at the club. I began to think that maybe there was a little worth in me, even after all I'd done.

Though I sent my son to church, I didn't feel I could attend myself because of my past. Then one of my son's classmates invited me to go with them. That Sunday, the pastor was preaching about the fact that God would forgive you no matter

what you'd done.

I began attending church again, returned to God and started growing spiritually. Years later I started Encouragement Ministries for women in despair, reminding them through my speaking, writing and singing that each one of them is precious to the Lord.