

The Phone Call That Saved My Life

Would you like a phone call from your mother? I remember the days after my mother passed away. When I couldn't remember a recipe or when an extended family member's birthday was, I would pick up the phone to call her and then realize with sadness, I'd never be able to ask those trivial questions or the more difficult ones I never had a chance to ask.

Her Difficulties

My mother was a conundrum to me, especially during my growing up years. For 18 years, I watched my mother struggle with manic depression, anxiety, agoraphobia and many other issues. As a child all I knew about my mother's struggles were what I saw daily. She had high highs and low lows. She was frightened in big crowds. And she loved Jesus and us.

The fact she loved my brother, sister and me was a given, but the other issues tended to invade my mind at odd times and make me doubt everything in my life. It was difficult for me to process what was happening with her. My dad said she was "sick." It was his way of explaining things to us. I knew she wasn't sick like with a stomach ache, but some kind of other sickness that eluded me. I just wanted God to heal her. That was my first and most consistent prayer.

The Phone Call

The first year I was at college, 400 miles away, I got a phone call. To hear my mother on the other end of the line caused alarm bells to go off inside me. I knew from talking with my Dad that she still had not been out of the house in going on two years. She rarely spoke to me on the phone because of her severe depression. I didn't know what to think when I heard her voice.

I'd been away from home for about four months. I never thought I'd miss home. I wanted, like most teenagers do, to get out on my own and explore college life. After the first month, though, home sickness hit. I wanted to go home, but without a car and money the journey was impossible until Christmas.

"How are you, Mom?" I cautiously asked.

"I feel wonderful," she answered in a calm voice.

"Really?" I had heard this before. She seemed to be swinging back from depression and yet, there was not the hysteria of her episodes in the past. "Tell me what happened."

Fit Your Life Into the Bible

It was then that she told me the story that changed my life. What she told me impacted me then and even today colors my view of my mother and of God. After that one phone call, I knew my life would never be the same again.

A friend had called and asked her to go to a meeting. The amazing thing was that she agreed to go. At the meeting, a man was speaking about emotional illness. At the end he said God was going to touch three people. He asked those three to stand.

My anxiety-ridden, depressed, agoraphobic mother stood! He spoke individually to each one giving them God's plan for their freedom.

Mom was talking nonstop and I was standing in my dorm room with my mouth hanging open, "When he got to me, the preacher said, 'God is going to touch you today and start you on your healing journey. You have been trying to fit the Bible into your life. You need to fit your life into the Bible. Don't look for passages in the Scripture to justify what you want to do. Do what the Bible tells you to do.'"

"What did you think of what he said?"

"As soon as he spoke those words, I knew they were for me. I knew I had been doing that. How did he know I'd search the Bible to justify what I wanted to do? It's not going to be easy, but at least now I have a plan of action and I know now God has the power to help me get well."

"What are you going to do?"

"I'm going to hang on to Jesus just as tight as I can."

Holding On to Jesus

And so, she began her journey, tapping into the Word of God and hanging on to the very presence of Jesus in her life. She joined Dad for prayer times and Bible reading every morning and night. She focused on others instead of herself. She became a loving and caring wife and mother and then, grandmother.

I had all but given up hope that God could help my mother. I began to believe He couldn't answer that specific prayer and that my mother's struggles were bigger than God. Mom and God showed me differently.

I saw Jesus work in her life and I saw her let Him. Still, I had never wanted to have problems like her. I never wanted to be what I thought was crazy or insane. Fast forward 30 years. I'm sitting in a group listening to a mentor tell his story of overcoming alcohol addiction, another thing that was crazy insane in my book. Out of the blue he says, "Alcohol is one molecule away from sugar. Alcohol is liquid sugar."

My Insanity

Like a magnet, the pieces of my life seemed to snap in place. I am insane. I have been using sugar to medicate my emotions so I wouldn't be like my mother. At 430 pounds and a time limit of five years to live declared by a doctor, I was acting like a crazy person.

There was only one other person whom I knew had overcome something that seemed bigger than God and that was my mother. I was going to have to give up sugar, the thing I craved constantly, the thing that kept me bound in a tomb of death, the thing that loomed like a monumental giant in my life, bigger than my concept of God.

However, because of my mother's phone call all those years ago, I knew beyond a shadow of a doubt, God had the power to help me overcome my monumental problem.

All of my life I spent trying not to be like my mother and yet, right then I wanted nothing more than to be just like the woman I knew had overcome ONLY by the power of God. I began walking out my journey holding tight to Jesus. In the process I gave Him 260 of my unwanted pounds.

Delight Yourself In the Right Thing

One of my mother's favorite verses summarizes how she turned her life around. "Delight yourself also in the Lord, And He shall give you the desires of your heart."¹ She had to stop focusing on herself and focus on God. That was what the preacher was telling her back on the day she called me.

And that, my friends, is the answer I am beginning to understand more and more each day. When I focus on Him, my problems diminish and I can't help but surrender everything I think I can't live without to the One I never want to be without. He has become my delight and the real desire of my heart. I want nothing to stand in my way of following after Him.

I am forever and always indebted to my mother who walked out her journey in front of me. She was a living demonstration to me that the power of God can and does transform us! I am overwhelmed by a God who cares so much about me that He would walk with me through the hell of my life into the freedom² that

only He can bring.³

He can change⁴ us when we let Him!

Oh and Happy Mother's Day, Mom. I'm sure you're having a great time dancing the jitterbug with Jesus.

¹ Psalm 37:4 NKJV

² John 8:32 NIV

³ John 14:6 NIV

⁴ 2 Cor. 5:17 NLT

Teresa Shields Parker *is an author, blogger, editor, business owner, wife and mother. Her book, Sweet Grace: How I Lost 250 Pounds and Stopped Trying to Earn God's Favor is available on Amazon in print, Kindle and Audible [HERE](#). This story is from her blog, .*