

You Are Not a Victim

I never intended to be a victim.

Shortly after my dad was murdered, my family and I were referred to the victim services department at the courthouse. It was the first time we were called victims, but I honestly didn't consider myself to be the victim at the time. My dad was the victim, not my family and me.

But somehow, I think the victim thing crept in, and my dad's death became a defining moment of my life. I didn't want to be defined by this tragedy, but I was. I became the girl whose dad was murdered. I hated being this person. I hated being a murder victim's daughter, but as far as I saw it, it's who I was. I couldn't escape it.

"I guess I am a victim," I finally concluded.

At this time in my life, I was very much in the world. I didn't know God, and I certainly wasn't following Jesus yet. But after living with this identity for close to 10 years, I met Jesus, and when I did, He completely rocked my world. It was then that I began to cry out to Him for an alternative. I needed a new identity. I was tired of being the murder victim's daughter. I wanted to be someone new. I wanted a new story—one that didn't end with death and tragedy, but ended with life, hope, joy and peace.

I cried out to God, begging Him to allow me to see as He saw, asking Him to reveal who I am in His eyes and pleading with Him to take away the reproach that came along with being a victim.

And this was how my journey began.

It wasn't long after that Jesus called me to forgive Anthony, the man who murdered my dad, and I was given the grace needed

to abandon my victim identity in exchange for my new, true gospel identity. The truth that I learned throughout that journey profoundly altered my perception of who I am. The truth is that:

I am *not* a victim.

I am a child of God.

I am redeemed.

I am chosen, precious in my Father's sight, and loved beyond measure.

I am healed from my past.

I am forgiven. I am freed to forgive others.

And my past sins, as well as the sins committed against me, bear no penalty upon my present or my future.

Quite honestly, I was a victim far too long, but it doesn't have to be that way for the rest of you. We are victims only as long as we say we are. And so what we need is a mind-shift. Maintaining a victim mentality only harms us further, allowing the clouds of yesterday to cast their shadow over our joy today. (This analogy is not my own, but I don't have a source to attribute it to. I just love this word picture, though, and so I had to use it!) Forgiveness, however, frees us from all this destruction. For the moment we forgive—leaving the offender to the judgement of God—we are set free. We are free to live out of our real identity. The one established by God.

"We are victims only as long as we say we are."

You see, you are not a victim. Or at least, "victim is not your identity."

The same is true of you as I said of myself, if you are a follower of Christ.

In Christ, you are a child of God.

You are redeemed.

You are chosen, precious in your Father's sight and loved beyond measure.

You are forgiven. And now, you are free to forgive.

Truly, your past sins—and the sins committed against you—have no claim on your present or your future.

This is your true identity.

Allow yourself to believe this. Go there. Believe. And I can assure you that your life will never be the same.

Do you struggled with being a victim? Do you still need to forgive? How has recognizing your true identity in Christ changed you?

Laurie Coombs is a passionate writer and speaker on the issues of forgiveness, redemption, and the hope found in Jesus. She is the author of *Letters from My Father's Murderer: A Journey of Forgiveness*, an incredible true story of grace, mercy, and the redemptive power of God. Her story was featured in Billy Graham's film, *Heaven*, as well as on many other national and regional radio and television programs. She is a contributor to Zondervan's NIV Bible for Women and writes at [The Gospel Project](#), [The Gospel Project](#), and [The Gospel Project](#). Laurie and her husband, Travis, make their home in Nevada along with their two daughters. To connect with Laurie, please visit [lauriecoombs.com](#) or find her on Twitter, Facebook and Pinterest.