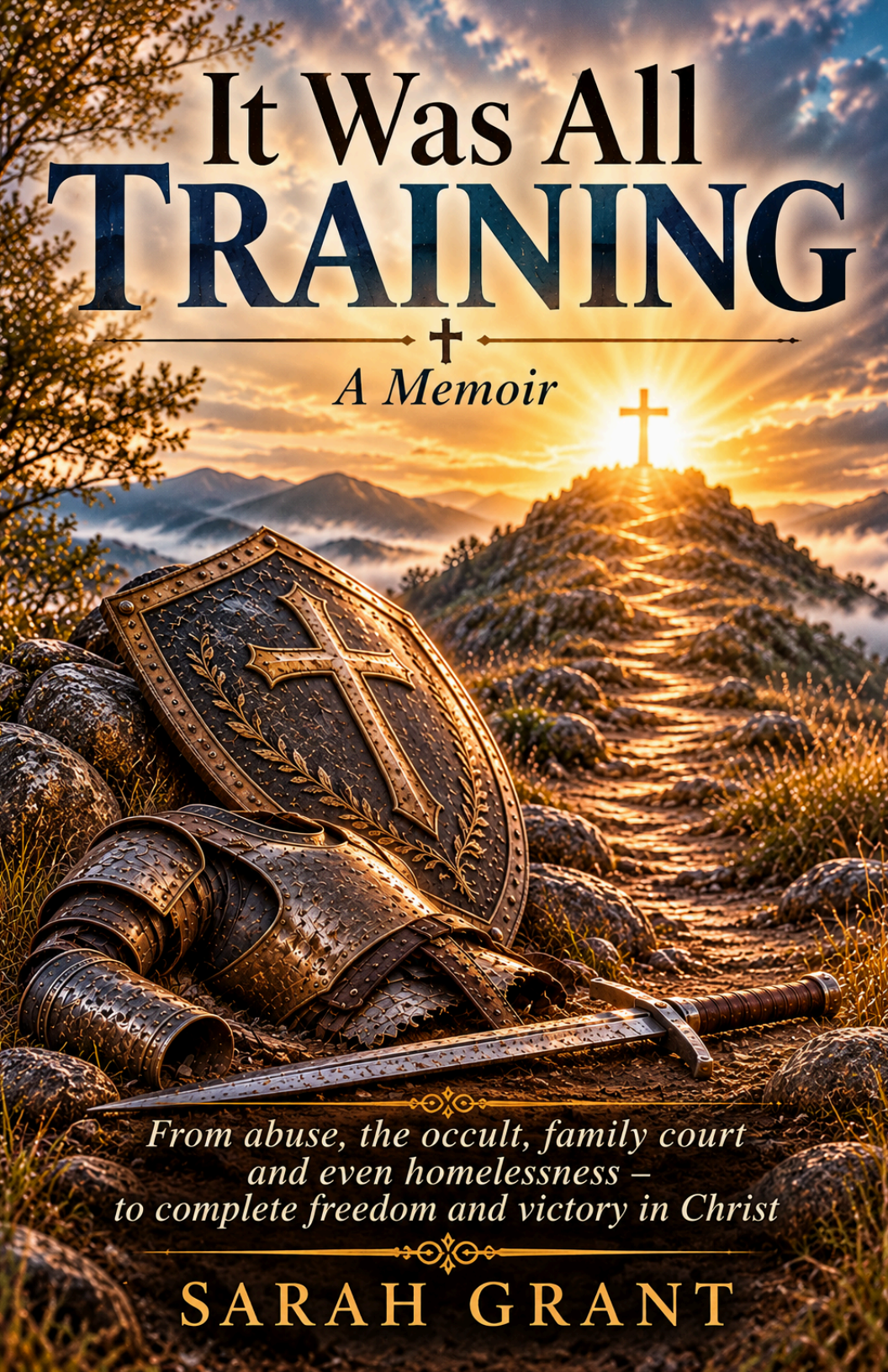

It Was All
TRAINING
A Memoir
From abuse, the occult, family court
and even homelessness –
to complete freedom and victory in Christ
SARAH GRANT

It Was All Training

From abuse, the occult, family court and even homelessness – to complete freedom and victory in Christ

Sarah Grant

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Edited by Amy Nadine McDermott.

This book would not have happened if it hadn't been
for Amy Nadine McDermott who motivated me to write it
and helped me all the way to the end. Thank you to Emily Dixon
for checking on me and encouraging me to persevere to the finish
and, of course, to The Holy Spirit Who parted many seas
to get me through it— I'm eternally grateful.

This book is also dedicated to my beautiful children— all of you.

Lastly, to a long list of prophets who were obedient
in giving direct messages from Yahweh or teachings
that were always right on time.

They are:

Shannon Savoy of Narc Free Living,Dan Duvall of Bride Ministries,
The Deep End with Taylor Welch, Apostle Isi Igenegba, Dr. Francis
Myles, Dr. TL Schneider, Transparent Ministry, Marc the Messenger,
Gavin Dees, DCM Lifestyle, Sis it's God, Prophetess Sebrena Akakpo,
Bold4Christ, It Ends With Me Ministries, Foundational Truths
w/Nayanda, Shannon Stevens of Stalked Targeted Chosen, Christi
Jessee, Oliver Lee, Believe One More Day, Dr. Nelson Shuman, Alwyn
Uys, Prophetic Power by Kaleigh Jimenez, Transcend with Ebony and
The Kingdom of God Matters— all of these on YouTube.

We may have chatted here and there,
but even though we've never met in person, we are family.

Isaiah 43:19

Behold, I am doing a new thing;

now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?

I will make a way in the wilderness

and rivers in the desert.

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Author's Note

This book is a memoir. It reflects my personal experiences, and events are told as I remember them. Some names and identifying details of private individuals have been changed to protect their privacy, and some conversations have been reconstructed to the best of my memory. Some events have been condensed. Statements about what others thought, felt, or intended are my own understanding. Public figures and ministries named in this book are referred to as themselves. The beliefs and spiritual practices described are my own and are shared as part of my story. This book is not legal, medical, or psychological advice. If you are in danger, please contact emergency services or the resources listed below.

Before You Begin

This book tells the truth about what I lived through, and some of it is hard to read. You'll find childhood neglect and abuse,

domestic violence including strangulation, the sexual abuse of children, suicide attempts, abortion, occult involvement, homelessness, and being failed by courts and churches. I've tried to tell it with care, but I won't pretend it's gentle. If something in these pages hits too close to home, put the book down. Take a walk. Call a friend. Come back when you're ready. You're allowed to go at your own pace, and God isn't in a hurry with you.

Words You May Not Know

SRA (satanic ritual abuse): Abuse carried out as part of the rituals of an occult or satanic group.

Bloodline Prayer: A prayer in which a believer repents for the sins of their ancestors and asks God to break the effects of generational curses over their family. (I describe the one I prayed in Chapter Twenty.)

Prophetic Word: A message a believer says they received from God, often for another person or a group, which should always be tested against Scripture.

Deliverance: Prayer ministry aimed at setting a person free from demonic influence or oppression, usually by commanding

spirits to leave in Jesus' name. In this book, it refers to times when I prayed for people, or was prayed for, to be freed from that kind of bondage.

Spiritual Warfare: The belief that Christians are in an ongoing struggle against spiritual forces of evil, not just against people or circumstances. It's fought through prayer, Scripture, praise, and standing on what God says is true. The idea comes from Ephesians 6:12, and I use it throughout this book to describe the attacks and obstacles I believe were spiritual in nature.

Demonic Covenants: Agreements, spoken or made through ritual, that I was taught give demonic forces a legal right to affect a person's life. They can be made by the person themselves or by ancestors, which is why I prayed to cancel them in Chapter Twenty-Nine.

Chapter One

Under the Chandelier

I was born on May 18, 1976 to a seemingly perfect, cookie-cutter family. My parents, who met at Venice High School in California, were both twenty-eight years old when I was born and my only brother was eight. We lived on a nice street in a nice middle-class Los Angeles neighborhood in a cute house with a white picket fence.

One of my first memories was in that home around age two. I was trying to get my brother's "castle people" toys and he angrily kept sitting on them to hide them from me. I don't remember much more other than how I felt. He seemed and felt mean. I didn't like it.

My next memory was at maybe two and a half when we moved to our next home, which I would live in until age sixteen. It was only a few blocks from the first house. I remember wearing polyester checkered bell-bottom pants and standing under the brass chandelier of this new, unfurnished house. There was gold carpet and white walls. The fireplace was also painted

white inside and out, but we couldn't use it.

I stood at the foot of the stairs under the chandelier and just stared into the fireplace. I don't know what else happened, but I didn't like the way that I felt. Something was off. Later, this would be the chandelier my mother said would speak to her, and when I was about ten, it scared off "Harry the Painter." He literally broke a sweat, packed up his belongings, and left, leaving the job unfinished for my father to complete.

After we first moved into the second house, I met the boy next door who was the same age as me. His mother was a teacher and I clung to her right away. From as early as I can remember, I would wake up early and leave my house (I was two or three years old) and walk next door to their house. I would stay there for hours on end to play with my new friend. As I started getting older, they would take me to the YMCA to go swimming, to the park, to the library to do summer reading clubs, and to their family gatherings. It was perfectly normal for me to be gone all day until the sun went down.

Once I started school I met other kids in the neighborhood and would disappear with them and their families. So many things happened that could have been

extremely dangerous or deadly, but by the Grace of God, they didn't. At least, not when I was still a child.

What I remember most about my parents during that time was that my mother would sleep all day with a pillow over her head, the fan on, and the curtains drawn. Dad would work and then would have late-night meetings half of the time. She would yell for me when she knew he was on his way home, and that was pretty much how it went.

One night when I was four years old, I remember my parents arguing and my mother crying. By that time this was normal for my brother and me. I didn't like it, but I also didn't know anything different. The house was very old, built in 1840, and had a very narrow stairwell that led up to my room on one end, my parents' room on the other and a bathroom in the center that we weren't allowed to use because the plumbing was so old.

After I had fallen asleep, my mother entered my room yelling and crying, turned on the light, grabbed me by the neck with both of her hands, and started strangling me. I distinctly remember the mascara running down her face and how pretty she looked, even though I was terrified. The sad look on her face made me sad. She was yelling at me, but I don't remember what

she was saying. I also don't remember any pain. Almost immediately, my dad wrapped his arms around her from behind and carried her out of the room. I sat there shaking and crying.

A few minutes later, he came into my room and tucked me in. I could tell that he was crying too, but was also in a hurry. So he turned off the light and told me to go to sleep. I don't remember the rest of that night.

The next morning I heard my dad and brother talking loudly downstairs. I walked down to find my mother on a stretcher, covered completely by a white sheet– her face included. I think I asked a question and as I did, the paramedics pulled the stretcher back and started to carry it out. Then my mom's blue arm fell out of the sheet. I screamed. At that age (four) I honestly don't know how I knew that was a sign of death. Perhaps it was because there were always scary movies playing in the house and my family had a huge draw to the occult, in general.

That event marked the beginning of a pattern of cycles that formed my childhood. She didn’t die, but she would regularly try to kill herself and end up in the mental hospital. My brother and I would be whisked off to a family member's

home for a long period of time and then return back home pretending that nothing ever happened, and then it would start all over again. Each time it seemed to get worse, more intense and more traumatizing, until I began to feel numb to the whole thing when I was a teenager.

Mom was on that stretcher because she had swallowed a whole bottle of pills. I had no idea she was on Lithium and had been diagnosed as Manic Depressive. I also had no idea she had previously been to a mental hospital. But the day after the paramedics came to our house, we ate Malt O'Meal for breakfast that my dad didn't make right because it wasn't like my mother's (he got angry at me for pointing it out). After we ate he gathered us with our things and whisked us off to my mother's parents' house.

We were there for what felt like a month. I liked it there because the youngest of my mother's 16 siblings was only six years older than me. I got to play with other cousins who came over, too. This wasn't the last time we would make an emergency trip to my grandmother's– it happened repeatedly over the years, and when we didn't go to their house it was my dad's Mormon brother's house, and I wasn't comfortable there at

all.

My mother was the oldest of seventeen children, and my father was the middle child of seven. You did read those numbers correctly. That means that I have 22 aunts and uncles, total. Needless to say, there were huge family gatherings regularly with lots of cousins. Our little family was fairly isolated and had to drive at least forty-five minutes to my grandparents' house when we visited. My dad needed to be close to downtown L.A. because he worked for the State. There was no way to understand as kids that we were actually being isolated. Both my parents made it seem like they didn't want to be too close to everyone. It made sense, considering they came from such large families with so much responsibility as kids themselves, so I didn't question it.

My mother was raised Catholic (as was I) and my father said he had attended a Nazarene church as a kid, but didn't really follow anything. From as early as I can remember I went to Mass with my mom when we got around to it, but my dad and brother never came except for maybe at Christmas. Occasionally, we would go to a Baptist church down the street for Easter, but that was it. Other than that, our bookshelf at

home consisted of *Rosemary's Baby* (mom's favorite book, right alongside *Gone with the Wind*), The Bible (decoration), Hare Krishna books, Yoga books, L. Ron Hubbard's *Dianetics,* Jonathan Livingston Seagull, and many other occult books.

My mom taught Yoga at the local YWCA for a while and I had to go with her where I would practice, too. And like I said, there were always scary or inappropriate movies playing at home. I watched *The Exorcist* multiple times before I was ten years old. My brother was in a heavy metal band and blasted his music out in his backyard room. He had Iron Maiden, Motley Crue, Judas Priest, and other posters plastered all over his walls. I was intrigued by the devil on the Iron Maiden poster with the people all below in hell. I didn't like it and didn't understand why it didn't bother him. But I left it at that. It was all normal.

When I was between seven and eight years old, a few distinct things took place. First, I decided I wanted to make my first communion. Second, my dad bought a cabin up in the mountains where we used to stay a lot of the time. I used to watch a particular movie there (*The Song of Bernadette*) that made me want to be like a saint. I would stay up in the living room alone and pray to God to help me follow Him. I didn't

understand anything about the Bible or theology. All I knew was I loved Him and wanted to follow Him.

So I told my mom, and she enrolled me in Catechism. I didn't like the classes because they didn't answer my questions and just had me memorize a bunch of prayers with words that I didn't understand. I also didn't know what to say during confession, other than I would fight with my brother. Nonetheless, I made my First Communion at about eight years old. That was my way of dedicating my life to God.

That summer I also got sent to a Baptist camp, though I'm unsure how it happened. I attended every summer thereafter until I was thirteen. It was there I learned about what was actually in the Bible and that not everyone was Catholic. It was so different to me that I could hardly process it. However, I did feel the Holy Spirit's presence while I was there, and I recall not wanting to leave. Every year, I would buy something to bring home: a pewter plate that said, "Give us this day our daily bread," or a sticker of a dove that said, "Come, Holy Spirit." I would add them to the top of a hope chest I had at the foot of my bed, along with a Jesus candle and some Catholic relics.

That became my altar, and I often knelt and prayed in

front of it when things got terrible. I had forgotten about this altar until just a few months ago, at the age of 49. I had no idea at the time what power an altar had or that it was a place where the spirit met the physical realm. But I did feel that God's presence was there with me when I prayed to Him, even when I was horribly backslidden and turned away.

The last big thing that happened when I was around eight years old was when my brother joined the Army and went away for three years. I didn't realize what a huge impact this would have on me or how much things would change. I was sad to see him leave, but he was never happy at home. My dad, the nice guy everyone thought he was, expected my brother not to show emotions and "be a man." I didn't get it at the time, but he really bullied him and broke his spirit. He expected my brother to fight and be tough, but never showed him love. I have no memory of my father ever hugging him.

My mother was a malignant narcissist and addicted to I don't know how many pills and street drugs at this point. She was also very bad to him, but in a different way. She had started giving him weed and different pills as early as age eight and had a strange enmeshment with him. If he had a girlfriend, she was

way too involved and talked openly about his sex life with him (in front of me). But she would also slap him and scream at him about different scenarios, causing major confusion. I remember a time when he came home with hickeys all over his neck (he was about fourteen) and she slapped him so much that he cried and she didn't stop until I yelled at her.

When he came back home for his first leave, it was for about three weeks. At this time he got his girlfriend pregnant and then headed back to Germany. My brother was eighteen and had so much trauma that he was now heavily addicted to alcohol, and the news of him becoming a father pushed him off the deep end. I started to hear him speak in ways I had never heard. He sounded like my mother: cold and mean. He did go back and forth with his girlfriend for a few years, but it didn't work out.

I, on the other hand, was elated that there was a baby on the way. My nephew was born when I was eleven and I loved him in a way I don't recall being able to love before. All of a sudden I felt a sense of dread and wanted to protect him. I couldn't explain it. When he was a baby and spent the night, he would sleep in my room. A few times on Sundays, I would

wake up early and get him ready and walk him in the stroller down to the Baptist church. I sat in the main Sanctuary in the very back and headed out before it finished. It's strange now, looking back. No one said anything to me. But I felt like it was important.

Chapter Two

Cinderella

When my nephew was still a baby my mom’s behavior got worse and worse. She would sit in front of the mirror for hours applying her makeup and yelling at us in intervals from the one bathroom we could use. As the years passed her rage increased and she became violent a lot of the time or incoherent at others. I'm sure this was due to a mix of medications, recreational drugs, my dad never being home and a multitude of 'gods' in the house. She also had demands and expectations that no one could live up to.

She expected the house to be spotless at all times. With my brother gone and me being a girl, I became Cinderella almost overnight. We had a path we had to walk on throughout the house. If one of us stepped off and she saw a footprint, all hell broke loose and I had to vacuum again. There couldn't be

dust on any furniture. We couldn't take showers because she didn't want water on the walls, so we had to use the bathtub and scrub the tub when we were done. I would have to do everyone's laundry, hang, fold, and put it away. Whenever my brother came back from his army leave, I even had to iron his uniforms with starch. My mother eventually had so many clothes that I wasn't allowed to use my own closet. My dad even built her a huge walk-in closet in my brother's room when he was gone, but it wasn't enough.

After school I would have to come home and cook. I was also her hairdresser and needed to style it with whatever new trendy hairstyle she wanted. If I messed up, I had to start over until it was to her liking. If I argued or fought back, she projected everything onto me and made me feel guilty for being such a selfish, spoiled, rude, disrespectful daughter. Once I started junior high the insults got worse (including 'slut' and 'bitch').

During these years, there was an odd connection between my mother and the home's prior occupants. Our house had a history of being owned by a somewhat famous family. The previous owner's wife would talk to the chandelier and

eventually lost her mind and ended up in a mental hospital. We had this family's relics and a whole board of spoons my dad and brother had dug up from the backyard. They hung in the dining room for years.

Like the woman who lost her mind that lived in the house before we did, my mother also exhibited intense mental issues. Additionally, she had suffered sexual abuse as a child by an uncle (by the time I was seven, I knew every detail) compounded by the fact that her father was an alcoholic and she was the oldest child. Although my mom had gone to mental hospitals, the doctors were only medicating her and I'm not sure she ever received therapeutic counseling. She also had a full hysterectomy at age twenty-eight after she had me. They said it was because she suffered from endometriosis. I'm not sure how much of that I believe anymore, as that procedure was historically utilized to silence ‘crazy’ women (the root word of hysterectomy is hysteria, or ‘hystra’ in Greek, which means uterus).

Throughout all of this, I somehow managed to get myself up and walk to school every day during my Elementary years. School was tough. I was bullied a lot and was very

daydreamy. I had to have my tonsils removed at six and was sick a lot. I remember being home every other month. But I was also in the drill team and other activities that kept me busy, so my mind wasn't always on home. I didn't understand why everyone else was able to have company over or sleepovers, and my friends seemed to speak to each other and to their families in ways that were foreign to me.

When I was in the 4th grade, I wore the same outfit every day for at least a month. I liked it. It was a Betty Boop sweatshirt and black baggy leggings. But then I overheard the kids making fun of me at lunch time, and one of them walked up and asked if I had anything else to wear. Everyone laughed. I never wore that outfit again and did not tell my parents. I didn't have very many other things, but I figured it out.

One day in 6th grade I had two girls follow me home from school because I wanted them to try some chocolate cake I had made. I was desperately trying to make friends with the popular girls. I made them stand at the front door, went in through the back, and gave it to them through the front door. They stood and looked at me, wondering why I wasn't letting them in. I whisked them off at once and told them they had to

hurry before my mom woke up and heard. They left wide-eyed. I'm not sure what conversation they had on their way home. I felt so embarrassed and helpless at how things were.

The fights between mom and dad got much worse over time. My dad would walk in after work and immediately, as he was taking off his shoes, she was in there yelling. It was non-stop until the middle of the night. Sometimes things got violent. She broke a glass coffee pot over his head (with coffee in it) and another time, chased him around with a butcher knife. But then she would end up on the floor crying while he sat and hugged her. He rarely fought back. He would grab whatever tool she was using and manage to take it away, but didn't usually lash out.

One time, he did snap. I was about twelve. I was sitting on the couch watching TV (this was my way of trying not to pay attention) while they yelled in the nearby kitchen. All of a sudden, I heard a thud. I ran over and saw her on her knees, and he was holding her hair. As soon as he saw me, he stopped. I yelled at both of them, frustrated and worn out. She grabbed the cordless landline phone and started to call 911, but then hung up. That was just another regular night at home.

Then there was the stealing. My mother was a shopaholic. We went to the mall so often I had the whole place memorized at a very young age. When I was ten years old, she got caught for the first time. We were in the mall at CVS and I was looking at magazines while she purchased some makeup and other things. As we walked out, a man met us outside the entrance and asked us to walk with him to the back of the store. I had no idea who he was or what was happening, but I followed along. When we got into the room he led us to, she opened up her purse and started taking out things she didn't pay for before he even asked. I was shocked and mortified.

The man asked me if my father could pick me up. I called him and he did. They took my mom to the station. I don't remember what else happened that time, but it wasn't the last.

After maybe two more times, I refused to go to the mall with her. It was around that time I also realized I was going to need to get a job if I wanted my own clothes or needs to be met. My mother had run up all of the credit cards, was spending all of the money, and I was neglected. It may not have looked like it on the outside, but I somehow managed to use what I had to make it look like everything was fine. My decision not to go

shopping with her would come with a price.

Once, when I was eleven and had already gone to bed, my parents were still fighting and I was dozing off. My mom walked up the stairs but as she got to the top, she fell against my door and onto the floor of my room and had a seizure. I turned the light on and screamed. My dad came in and put his finger in her mouth (this is the way they used to prevent people from swallowing their tongues. Please don't do this, ever.) and blood got everywhere; her eyes rolled back and she growled.

I got up and called 911 but within a few minutes, my dad told me we could get her to the hospital ourselves, so I canceled the call. We took her in and they pumped her stomach. Within an hour I was in the room with her and a social worker. She told this woman how my dad and I caused her to take sixteen Ativan's that night because we were so bad to her. She also told the social worker she didn't want to live.

Something changed in me that night and I was never the same. I had a newfound rage that began to grow.

When I turned twelve my brother had come back home and brought an Army buddy with him. He had graduated to cocaine and was now more violent and scary than ever. I was

happy to have him home, but things were very bad. There was one night when my parents' fighting got so bad that my dad decided to go to our cabin in the mountains. I begged him to take me, but he said I needed to stay there to make sure my mom would be okay. I was furious.

My brother, his friend, and my mother were all raging high (and she was also drinking a large bottle of Vodka); she stood outside my bedroom door yelling for what felt like hours. I had to turn my Black Sabbath album all the way up just to drown out the noise, and since I had an old keyhole lock with no key, I moved my large dresser in front of my door so that she couldn't get in. At some point, maybe at about 1:00 AM, I needed to use the bathroom. I came out and walked carefully downstairs to find exactly what I was expecting.

She was sitting on the couch, vomit all over her and the cushions with an empty bottle of pills on the floor. I now had to let my brother know, who ended up calling the Paramedics. I had told him Dad couldn't afford an ambulance and that he needed to take her himself, but he refused, so he and his buddy followed the truck to the hospital. I had to stay behind and clean up the mess, and got chewed out by my dad about the

Paramedic bill. He didn't end up coming home that night.

The next day, my brother forced me to go visit my mom at the hospital and once again, she sat in front of the social worker, blaming me, my father, and my brother for what she had done. I actually asked the lady if there was a way that I could be removed from the home, but she brushed me off. My mom put on an excellent show, and so did my brother. I was the crazy one. A few months later would be the first time that I ran away. After that, I was rarely home.

***

The last suicide attempt happened when I was in the 8th grade while I was at school. I had to take the public transit bus home, which took almost two hours. She knew what time I would get there. When I walked in the back door, it was quiet. There was a note on the table that said, "I went for a walk with my friend." First of all, she didn't have a local friend. Second, she didn't go for walks, especially during the day. So I went all over the

house looking for her. Lo and behold, she was under her bed, lying on her right side. I was able to pull her out and she was drowsy but conscious.

I called my dad at work to ask how I should handle it and he came home right away. I already knew I had to sit her up and keep her awake. The same scenario happened at the hospital. By this time, I was done. I actually told her that she was doing it wrong and really didn't want to die. I also told the social worker my mother was only doing it for attention and to torture us. To my knowledge, she never did this again. At least not to me. If you grew up with a parent who used a crisis to control the whole room, you know this mix of fear and exhaustion. I was a child, and I was already the one staying calm. A child should never have been in charge of that.

Chapter Three

Daddy’s Girl

I was a total daddy's girl. In my eyes he could do no wrong. I felt like he loved me. He was nice and we used to do a lot together. We would go sailing on his boat and up to the beach to surf (which I was horrible at, but he was a pro); we’d go up to the mountains and clear the brush at the cabin, or go bungee jumping with folks from his work– all of it. But my mother never wanted to leave the house, except to go out to dinner most of the time or to go shopping. I always saw my mother as the bad guy who abused all of us and blamed us for everything. This is true, but it's not the whole story.

My dad was gone a lot. He either worked all day or was at “meetings” all night. My mother regularly accused him of cheating (which may or may not be true), but she never associated the meetings with Freemasonry. I wouldn’t understand the connection until much later, when I learned that

Freemasonry is believed to bring curses over the mason and his whole bloodline, whether or not some of them are Christians.

He never told any of us. What he did do was come home in those suits with a Fez/Shriner Cap. To become a Shriner, you must first be a Master Mason with good standing in a lodge recognized by, or in amity with, both the Conference of Grand Masters of North America and the Interamerican Masonic Confederation (CMI) (and/or the World Conference of Grand Lodges). My father had the relics, too: real Saudi Arabian Crossed Swords in his gun case, the Knights Templar Pirate Ship we had to keep in just the right spot, the antique chess board that was set up a certain way, and the pictures of him doing secret handshakes. I had no idea that any of this was weird or unusual. It just was what it was.

After his passing, I discovered his Bachelor's Degree was fake and the state agency he worked for retired him at 33 years. If this number doesn't mean anything to you, we'll get to it in depth in Chapter Twenty. My point here is that the rituals my father was doing, in addition to neglecting his wife and children, his porn addiction, misogyny and so many other things– all contributed to the curses that were affecting our

household. These curses were added to bloodline curses that were already passed down (but more on that later as well). I didn't discover any of this until the last decade.

My parents met in high school at age fourteen and got married at age seventeen. I do believe my dad had good intentions and wanted to rescue my mom from her bad home life. But he also knew what buttons to push. She was isolated, previously abused, and broken. Having a really pretty wife at home with children and a perfect-looking house was a good look for him, until it wasn't. It fit the bill, but it was unrealistic. There was no love. No affection. No empathy....at all. And everything was a secret.

Where did the stuff come from? What were the meetings about? Why so much traveling? What's with the stupid hat and always having a loaded pistol on hand? He never told me. We just got to go to the Shrine Auditorium Circus for free, or use a guy's motorhome for free, or whatever. Everyone wrote my dad off as being very private. I guess that's one way to put it, but no. He would admit that he had secrets, and that was just how things were.

When I was going into the 7th grade, my dad decided I

needed to go to a school that was in another town because my brother had "messed up" at the one that I was supposed to go to. All of my friends (whom I was barely holding on to) were going to go to the local school, and I pleaded with my parents to let me go there. I, believe it or not, had gotten really good grades and wasn't messing up at school. It felt like they were punishing me for something that I didn't do.

Needless to say, on the first day, my dad, who had faked our address by using a coworker's info, took me to that other school. It was not only a Junior High, but also a high school, 7th - 12th grade. I was terrified. I felt paralyzed and pleaded with him not to make me do it. It was then I realized that he actually didn't care about my feelings. There was a cold stillness to him.

We stood in the enrollment line for a long time and my dad became impatient because he needed to get to work. At one point, he made a hand gesture to the Dean in the office and that guy started pandering to my dad right away. It was almost pathetic, and I had no idea what was happening. I could see a sort of fear on the guy's face and he giggled nervously. I ended up getting enrolled before everyone else who was waiting in front of us. I got sent to the auditorium for a week until my

classes could get assigned, and it was there I met my new best friend.

On day two, we ditched for the first time. It was all downhill from there.

The rest of the 7th grade got worse by the day. I eventually figured out the "crowd" that I wanted to hang out with was the metal/stoner crowd. I wasn't a gangster and I wasn't a preppy nerd but there was no way whatsoever that I could just be a good girl anymore. Those days were gone. I started ditching regularly and taking the bus with my best friend to Hollywood or the beach. I still managed to get schoolwork done at first, but even that dwindled. By the 8th grade, we were going to backyard gigs, Hollywood clubs (we made ourselves look older to get in and got away with it), and often hitchhiked home. How we lived through that can only be described as the Grace of God.

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On February 2nd, 1990 at the ripe old age of 13 I met my first

real boyfriend, who would later become my husband. We were at a backyard gig in L.A. He was drunk and I was babysitting my friend who was falling all over the place. He was sent out by a guy I had thought would be my boyfriend, but kept ignoring me at school, so I gave him the cold shoulder that night. This new guy gave me attention and acted like he was interested in me. He was cute, crazy, and seemed to know everyone. He was also 16, and I later found out that he had a girlfriend. But hey, he liked me. That night, my dad picked us up and we dropped my friend off at home. He knew that we were intoxicated and lit a lighter, saying that we were flammable. That was it. It was funny.

***

Over the next few months, my new boyfriend and I talked on the phone almost daily. A few times, he came to my school to visit. He went to a nearby continuation school but his brother came to mine. One day, his brother, who was older than him, knowing that I didn't have a ride to my really far home, offered

to give me a ride on the handlebars of his bike. I gladly said yes. No harm done. He was my boyfriend's brother, so it was a nice gesture. But later that day, when my boyfriend called me, he was furious. He cursed at me, accused me of things I won't repeat, and slammed the phone down. I was shocked and terrified that I had done something wrong and was going to lose him. It was such a familiar feeling, but I couldn't figure out where it was coming from.

After that, things just kept getting worse. I apologized, begged, pleaded, and tried to understand why he would think that way of me or even his brother. But that's how it started. From then on I had to work at being perfect and was never, ever good enough. The word-twisting, manipulation, projection, threats, rejection, and blame took on a new form. I knew this felt like what was going on at home, but I just couldn't understand how I found someone just like my mother. Clearly, I had to be the problem. Look at what I did there. A man was twisting my words and blaming me, and I decided the problem was me. If you've done that, I'm raising my hand with you. I didn't have names for any of this then. I do now, and I'll point it out as we go.

Chapter Four

The Hard Stuff

When I was fourteen my brother got a job as a plumber in West Hollywood. My dad had known the owner of the company and somehow hooked him up with a job. I remember my dad not wanting to do it because he said he'd have to owe something if it went sideways. Even so, it happened. My brother had gone to the V.A. Rehab a couple of times by then, but always left against medical advice and seemed as if he was going to be fine for a few weeks. Plumbers made a lot of money, at least back then. This is never a good thing for someone with an addiction. But by then we were all tired of having our house cleaned out and our stuff sold for drugs. And no, my parents never made him leave.

I had already gotten my first job a few miles away at a bakery and was making my own money. During that time, I would get my paycheck and go to the bookstore to sit in the occult section and read up on everything I could. Astrology and

Palmistry were my main focus. But then I got deep into demonology, the black bible, Wicca, etc. Oddly enough, I was also trying to read the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Bible, but I just couldn't focus on them and didn't have what I thought was the instant gratification or answers I was looking for. I did believe in God and Jesus. But it was too hard to follow Him in my situation, and I believed that I was more than likely going to hell.

I was also becoming a master thief at this point. My mother had nothing on me. I stole stuff all the time and never got caught. Even wallets and credit cards. My brother would join in on the free shopping sprees when he was around. And my friends? They all benefited and just thought it was funny. But it wasn't.

One night, maybe a few months after my brother had been working as a plumber, he asked me to come out to his room because he wanted to show me something. His room was out in the backyard, separate from the main house. By this time, my parents were getting sick of both of us, but they thought it was nice that we were close and liked to spend time together. Willful ignorance is not bliss.

When I got out to his room and shut the door, he showed me the mirror with the lines of cocaine spread across it. He was so happy to share. I had never tried it, but didn't want to disappoint him. I had already been drinking and smoking weed with my friends, but the hard stuff made me uncomfortable until then.

Not long before this, my parents had sat me down to explain to me that I needed to lose weight. I was a whopping 115 pounds, but had really big, pointy hips and wasn't a little girl anymore. They had given me a large can of Slim Fast to start drinking to replace meals. I already wasn't eating. I was too afraid at school to go get food with my lunch tickets, and my mom was spending all of the "family" money. I was paralyzed with fear during my teen years and would only stay near my friend group, so I rarely ate. But now that I had this newfound obesity on my mind, it seemed like a way out. My brother told me the cocaine would help. I believed him. That went on for at least a year. I couldn't sleep and felt nauseous all of the time. And yes, I did lose weight, but not my “fat hips,” so I was never satisfied.

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By the time I was 15, my boyfriend and I were fighting more and he was so abusive and controlling that I couldn't go anywhere or make eye contact with anyone. I still had to go to school and work, but this was extremely difficult. He expected me to walk around with my head down, wear big clothes to hide my curves, shut up, and have sex with him whenever and wherever he wanted. I was expected to keep to myself. If he thought another guy was looking at me, he'd either get in his face or actually do something violent that would shock the other person.

I discovered around this time he also had a porn addiction and expected things of me that I wasn't aware existed. I had known my dad and brother watched porn, as it was all over the house, and the way they talked about women and treated my mother and me, made me understand that I amounted to nothing. But deep down, I knew it was wrong, and the level of betrayal I felt consumed me.

When I tried to break up with him, he would go cheat on me to torment me, or he would try to hurt himself, or stalk me

(literally at my window on my balcony, in the backseat of my car, etc.) or he would beg with flowers and tears, even rolling in leaves crying at the park. But he never, ever just let me go. Even more, he would go to my friends or whoever he thought was supporting me and get them to feel sorry for him and then find ways to isolate me from them altogether.

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When I was still 15 my mother had tricked me into telling her that I had lost my virginity during a heated argument. I was so far gone that I didn't even care anymore, but that only gave her more ammo against me. First, she dangled it over my head for weeks that if I didn't basically bow to her, she was going to tell my dad. I eventually told him myself because I couldn't handle it. He cried and tried to talk to me about it, but it was too late. Then, she took me to the doctor and made them give me birth control pills. She called I don't know how many people to announce it and let it be known that her daughter was having sex, and that she was being a responsible mother by putting me

on the pill. She even announced it at the next big family gathering we attended. I was miserable, terrified and being abused. None of that ever came up.

Due to her pill addiction, I really did not want to go on birth control and had a gut feeling it wasn't going to go well. I was right. I gained weight, broke out, had massive headaches, and cried constantly. Every little thing would set me off. Eventually, my boyfriend kept telling me to "turn off the water works" because he got sick of it, so I just stopped taking them. So now, no matter how it went down, it would be my fault if I got pregnant.

One of the times my boyfriend cheated, my mother had started talking to the girl that he was cheating with. After that, she started calling all of my friends and even other people I didn't get along with just to talk badly about me. When my father had to clear the brush at our cabin in the mountains and I had to go with him to help, I called my boyfriend, and he said that he had just gotten home from going out to dinner with my mom. He then shared that his plan for the night was to go to a party where his ex-girlfriend would be. He ended up going and cheating on me. My mother knew about it in advance and took

him out prior just to somehow get under my skin. She was upset that my father and I had to go clear out the brush at the cabin, but she also didn't want to come with us.

I just could not understand why she hated me so much, was jealous and why everything was a competition. She would take my clothes that I bought with my own money and refuse to give them back, and then buy me things I didn't want just to turn around and tell people I was spoiled, selfish, and disrespectful. There were times teachers had called the cops and social workers because they knew I was being abused, but when they came to visit, they always believed my beautiful, put-together mother and wrote me off. Once, they even told me to take a walk when I was upset. These things were chipping away at me in ways I didn't understand. I was completely lost and felt I was falling into a deep, black hole with no way out.

I did try to break up with my boyfriend after that. It lasted for a few days until he came and threatened me. I can't recall the very first time he actually hit me. He would drive too fast, punch holes in the wall (or tear things out of the wall) slam things and stomp; and there was sexual abuse of all kinds. And then, when I was sixteen, I found out I was pregnant.

As bad as things were growing up, my mother still made a few things clear that were ingrained in my mind and heart. Murder was bad, sex before marriage was bad, and hell was real. Doing these things was going to cause me to go to hell. As soon as I lost my virginity at fifteen I was riddled with guilt and believed I couldn't turn back. But in no way, whatsoever, did I think it was okay to kill an unborn child, even though people were getting abortions the same way they were going out to dinner back then.

There were conflicting ideas about abortion in my household. When I was about ten years old, a woman down the street from our house taught me how to sew. She and her husband had come to visit my parents one evening, and they sat in the dining room talking for hours. I found it odd because they usually didn't have any company or friends who came over. My mother later came upstairs, visibly upset but quiet, and she told me that the woman was pregnant and they were asking my dad for the money to abort it. My dad agreed. I never forgot that. I was so uncomfortable and uneasy about it, and my mother wasn't okay with it either. But it wasn't up to her, and clearly her feelings didn't matter, so he gave them the money.

When I told my boyfriend that I was pregnant, his instant response was, "Well, get an abortion." I don't know why, but I was shocked. I avoided him as often as I could and even went to a prenatal visit. I had stopped whatever drugs I was using and had said, more than once, to him and different friends who were telling me I couldn't and shouldn't have a baby, that God would take care of it if I chose to have her. (To this day, I believe it was a girl). But the more the days went by, the more he started to come around and threaten me. I was not to have that baby.

By then, my mom had gone to a lawyer to file for divorce. When my dad moved out, I moved with him. He was showing signs of being sick and was very frail, and my friends didn't support my decision to keep the baby. So, I caved in. I was distraught.

I had no one to turn to. My brother was on crack and on the streets or at my mom's house on and off. Things were worse than they had ever been. I was hardly ever home and practically lived with friends or in my boyfriend's car. I had a car, but he used it all the time while I worked a full-time job at an answering service. My brother would also go with him, and

they would party together until my brother got so bad he started stealing from my friends and selling their stuff for drugs, too. He also took my car down to MacArthur Park and had it completely stripped. Not long after that, a drunk driver hit it while parked on my street and totaled what was left of it.

***

Before I had moved out with my dad, there were times in between when my brother would get in the middle of arguments I was having with my mom. Once, she went out in the back to get a large hoe to beat my door down. He had been on a drug spree for days, but happened to arrive home as all of this was unfolding. When he heard the yelling from down the street, he ran home and had to break a window to get into the house.

After he got up to my room and saw my mother and I wrestling over the hoe that I was trying to get out of her hands, he got in the way and ended up slapping me so hard across the face that I had a handprint for a week that I had to cover with make-up. I was shocked that he sided with her and believed that I had gone out to get a hoe and hit my own door with it.

When I ran outside to get away he chased me, and many neighbors were standing outside in their yards looking toward our house. He had managed to catch up to me and threw me over his shoulder, but I kicked him until he let me go. Then I just kept running and didn't go home. A few days later, my teacher at school called the cops, but again, they did nothing. I was ‘overreacting.’

***

At Christmas it was tradition for us to go as a family to my mother's side for the annual Christmas party. It was about a two hour drive from where we lived. The year that I moved out with my dad, when I was 16, my brother and I were going to go with my mom and I was going to drive. I called at about noon to see if she was ready for me to pick them up, but she wasn't done with her makeup.

About an hour later I called again, and she still wasn't ready. This was not abnormal. Throughout my entire childhood, nearly every event revolved around this topic, and we were

regularly accused of making her nervous by asking if she was almost done. Finally, my brother called, but it was to tell me that she was yelling at him and decided not to go because she didn't want to be around us.

I called my aunt's home, where the party was held, and spoke to one of my aunts. I explained what was happening and let them know that we would be coming without her. I knew I needed to let them know because most people took her side and believed her stories, even though they knew about her addictions, mental hospital visits, behavior, etc.

Well, I heard my grandmother in the background saying, "No, they can't come without their mother." Just to confirm, I asked again, and that was the final verdict. So that was that. We didn't go. My brother was quiet when I told him over the phone. I knew that he was hurt but wouldn't say it.

I sat on the couch next to my dad in the living room. I didn't realize he was listening to the whole thing. Usually he didn't do much to stick up for me. But that day, he took the phone, walked into the other room, and shut the door behind him. I heard him quietly saying things to my mother I had never heard before. Now, I would be even more isolated than before.

At this point, nothing surprised me, and I was so used to betrayal that I just added it to my list and tried to push it down.

One late afternoon, when my boyfriend and I were in the car, eating on the side of a busy street, a family walked by on the sidewalk beside the car. A teenage girl, about my age, looked me in the eyes and walked over to my rolled-down window. She said she was a wandering gypsy and had a message for me. I, being deeply involved in the occult at this point, believed her and wanted to know what she had to say.

She asked for my palm and 5 dollars. I coughed it up, gave her my hand, and she told me things were going to be very difficult for me and that I was going to have children soon. I don't remember what else she said. I only remember her striking green eyes and feeling almost a deep sense of dread. I didn't like her tone. After she left I couldn't stop talking or thinking about it, but my boyfriend brushed it off. He was visibly uncomfortable and kept changing the subject.

There was another time, not long after that, when my dad took me to his "Christian Psychic." She read Tarot with a huge picture of Jesus behind her on the wall. That didn't sit well with me, even then– I thought it an oxymoron. But my dad was

older and wiser, so I believed that it must be fine. She told me during my reading that I would have children soon, too. She also said my relationship was bad and that I was being cheated on. I didn't tell her or my dad about the gypsy.

None of this helped me feel better or gave me any peace. They only made me feel so much worse and hopeless than I already had. That dark pit was only getting deeper, and I could feel it down in my spirit and even see it in my mind's eye. I would sit in my room on the floor and pray to God and ask why, but I didn't hear Him. I imagined He was angry and I accepted it. Instead, I turned to all the evil. Surely He hated me, I thought, just like everyone else. I deserved it.

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Somewhere in between moving out with my father and the abortion, another pivotal incident occurred that I did not want to add to this book because I have pushed it down for so long. But the Holy Spirit is being very clear that it is important for me to tell it. I do this reluctantly.

I was still 16. I was working full time at night and homeschooling during the day so my boyfriend was always over while my dad was at work. One night when I slept at home (not at a friend's house or in a car), my dad and I were talking in the living room. I don't remember how this part came up, but he asked if he could hypnotize me. I literally thought it was a joke, so I said yes.

He tried, but it didn't work. When he thought that I was fully under (or however you'd put it) he gave orders for me to go to the bathroom and then come back out and do things to him that I will not write. You can do the math.

What I did do was go to the bathroom and lock myself in there for about an hour. Then, when I thought that maybe he'd fallen asleep, I ran out to the bedroom and locked myself in there and pretended to do homework until 3am. At one point he came and knocked. I opened it and when he saw my face he looked terrified and said good night.

It just so happens that I had scheduled an appointment with a therapist through our insurance about a month prior and the only available date for her to see me for the first time was

the day after this happened. I did think it an odd coincidence at the time, but I no longer believe in those. This was God's perfect timing.

The following morning, before that appointment, my boyfriend came over and I told him what happened. Silly me thought that he should feel protective or supportive or something normal, but no. Not this devil of a human. He raped me and then when I went to the room and locked myself in there, he watched my dad's porn until he decided to leave on his own.

When I tell you that my mind could not seem to comprehend why I had not one safe person in my life, it's an understatement. So I thought that going to this therapist may help. I thought there had to be someone out there who could help.

The therapist was a young, redheaded, beautiful woman and she sat and listened to me for maybe 15 minutes before she was crying. Then she stopped me to explain that she needed to call the authorities and report my father. That didn't sound like such a big deal until she told me the other part; they needed to call my mother. My parents had never dealt with any custody

issues. I had just left with my dad to get away from my mother and that was it. Other than that I was a runaway the majority of the time and no one else cared.

I begged this therapist not to call my mother, but she insisted that it was the law and her hands were tied. She even typed up a letter and sent it to my mom. Later, after my mother died, my daughter Grace found it in an old journal. I denied that it was true. There aren't many things in my life that I haven't been open about, but this is the one thing that has been too hard. In the end, that was my last therapy appointment. She called me for months and left messages on the answering machine trying to get me to come back.

Later that same evening, after therapy, I went home to get some clothes before going to a friend's house. My dad was home early from work and sitting on the couch, crying. He told me that he wanted to die. He would never hurt himself, so I wasn't afraid of that. But he apologized and offered to move out and let me stay there alone. I declined because I knew that he couldn't afford it and I didn't even want to be there.

He never did any such thing to me again and I truly forgave him. But after that I saw him differently and nothing

was ever the same. Even though he wasn't properly raising me, protecting me, caring for me, etc. (which I was unaware of at the time), I had still seen him as the only safe person in my life. Now that was gone and I was on my own. And my mother? She blew this thing to heights and proportions that would break world records. None of it was out of care for me. It was ammo to use against him. I'll leave it at that. God knows and He is Judge over all. I forgave him, and I still saw him differently. For years I thought those two things couldn't both be true. They can. Forgiving someone doesn't mean pretending they're safe.

Chapter Five

I Woke Up In A Vision

On the day I was scheduled for the abortion, as we walked from the car to the building, there were people outside protesting. Not the kind with big signs and blowhorns. A woman walked up to me with a small embryo figure in her hand and tried to talk me out of it, then she handed me a pamphlet. From the look on my face, I was sure she knew I didn't want to go through with it. But my boyfriend grabbed my arm and pulled me in.

The nurse inside gave me a urine cup and told me to go to the bathroom. I refused to give the sample. Instead, I started trying to find a way to jump out the window. We were on the second floor. I wanted to die. As it turns out, they had bars on the windows, so I couldn't kill myself. When I failed to produce urine, the doctor took me into a room and gave me an ultrasound. With no empathy or even question, she looked at the nurses and told them to set me up. After that, everything is a

blur. I was out.

Growing up, I don't remember having vivid dreams or visions. I knew people who did, and even some who astral projected. But I didn't. I would have the occasional nightmare, but I used to sense things more in this realm. Less than a year before this whole event, some friends and I, my boyfriend included, were at a party at a friend's house and decided to play the Ouija board. It went very badly.

One of them had insisted that once we wrapped up and said the word “good-bye,” the demon who was appearing on the board would be gone. But that wasn’t true.

After the "game" was over, the old TV tube made a low vibration, and different colors kept streaming across it even though it was off. Then within weeks the boy who lived at that house was dead, shot in the head at seventeen. I watched them pull the plug at the hospital. His cousin, who also lived in that house, was sixteen years old and after our game she ran off with a fifty-something-year-old who gave her so many drugs she overdosed. She died within three months of her cousin. The lives of everyone there who played the Ouija board that day began to unravel and fall apart in ways that we could have never

dreamed.

I knew what it all was. I knew that the spirit realm was real. I knew that Satan and demons were real. I knew that God was real. But at this point, I did not believe that I could reach Him.

After the nurses put me to sleep for the abortion, I woke up in a vision. It was all white. Blinding white. I was on my knees with my face to the floor, and a large hand went under my face. On the hand was a little baby. “Sarah. What have you done?" said the deep, commanding voice. "Her blood is crying out to me." I was more aware of what was happening there than anything I had ever experienced. I wept loudly and begged Him to put her back. I begged and begged and promised I would keep her and never do this again. I don't remember the end of the vision. I woke up, but it was four hours later. They had overdosed me with too much medication and had to move me to another room, because they said that I was yelling and crying and upsetting the other women.

A nurse was sitting by me, wiping the tears from my eyes with a tissue and telling me that everything was going to be

okay, that it was all for the best. I was furious that she dared to tell me such a thing. I argued back, but I knew it was no use. This was my reality. I now had to live with it.

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My boyfriend took me back to his house where his parents were. He told them, and they agreed it was for the best. I was in the Twilight Zone and wanted to die. Because of the overdose, I had long, black veins running up and down my arm. I had to avoid my dad as much as possible, so I wouldn't go home at night and only went during the day when he was at work. I had a job and still managed to show up. But somehow I had mentally checked out. It was as if I was only running on adrenaline.

I had told a few people about my vision, but it was brushed off as crazy or the meds. I kept trying to get away from the boyfriend and would stay with my two friends, who had their own place. But he kept coming around and wouldn't leave me alone. I started using speed, working more, and tried to

figure out what on earth I was going to do with my life. I would end up going with him just to keep him away from my friends' house because he was causing problems with the neighbors, but my goal was to get away altogether.

During this time, my mom was convinced by my brother that they should let my friends come to her house for my seventeenth birthday. I wouldn't call it a party. I honestly don't remember if there was cake or singing. I don't think so. What I do remember was my mom trying to be way too cool. There wasn't only alcohol, but weed and whatever else, and one of the guys left to go get cocaine. A friend just recently reminded me of all of this. I was so unhappy in general that this didn't do anything for me. I wanted a mother. I wanted to believe she was trying to do something out of love for me. But instead, she joined in the festivities. The funny thing is that I didn't. I was already getting tired of drinking and using. I didn't like the way it made me feel, and everyone was getting on my nerves. Shortly after that birthday, I was dead set on changing my life. I didn't know what to do, but I knew I couldn't go on with the way things were.

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One night, I was sitting in the car with my boyfriend, parked outside of his apartment. We had been fighting, and he was yet again twisting my words and making me feel insane. I said that I wanted out for good, we were going nowhere, etc. I wanted to go back to school and maybe to college. He turned it around and said that I just wanted to go **** all the guys, etc. I didn't care anymore. I wanted out.

I asked him to get out and go home, but he turned and started punching me in the head from the passenger seat. My instinct told me to get out of the car, but it was into oncoming traffic on a busy street. Thankfully, it wasn't too busy at the time. I started to run, but a car stopped, and a guy told me to get in, so I did. This was terrifying. Not because I was in the car with a stranger, but because this young man who wanted to help was now in danger. I told him the truth, and he turned left and sped off. As he drove me around in a big circle, he spoke about Jesus and invited me to his church. I don't remember what else he said, only that when he was talking I felt an unusual peace

fall over me.

I had him drop me off a few miles away and went to a payphone. I called a few friends but they weren't answering, so I started walking. I was literally hiding behind trees because I didn't want my boyfriend to find me. One of the guys from our crowd was walking on the sidewalk and saw me. He gasped, asked me if "he" did that to me. He then handed me a knife. He was angry, but that was the gist of it. I walked to a nearby friend's home, no answer. Then I saw my boyfriend in my car. He yelled out that he was sorry, got out of the car, and walked away. I then took my car to another friend's where I stayed for a few days until I didn't look so bad.

Shortly after, I went to work, walked into my boss's office, and gave her my two-week notice. I told her that I was going to re-enroll in my old high school so that I could live a normal life. I wanted to go to prom, graduate on stage, and do the things I had been missing out on that other people my age were doing. She was sad that I was leaving, but seemed proud of me.

I then told my dad and my friends that I was seriously

breaking up with the boyfriend. Then, yes, I told him again. He actually left me alone for almost a full week. But then it hit me. I wasn't feeling well, and I hadn't started my period on time. I had made a promise to God that I knew I had to keep, and I never wanted to go through getting an abortion again. But this was the absolute worst-case scenario. I was almost out of my dire situation and at what seemed to be the home stretch.

My boyfriend came around a few days later, as expected. I didn't know what to do and against my better judgement I ended up telling him what was on my mind. He, happy as he could be, took me to the store to buy a test. I took it, and what do you know? I was pregnant. He was elated. I was terrified and furious with him for being happy about this one. I knew it was only because he wanted to trap me and not because he actually cared. But here I was, yet again, backed into another corner.

A few days later, I found myself going back to my boss and asking if I could keep my job. She was supportive. I enrolled in a homeschool program for my senior year, my boyfriend cut off his long hair, and I helped him get licensed as a Security Guard. And so, as the story goes, we started preparing to be parents.

I tried to make the most of the whole situation. All things aside, I love babies, and as time went on, I was super excited to have a baby girl to care for. But nothing had really changed. Of course, he had put his best foot forward for as long as he could (which wasn't long at all), but he was still jealous, controlling, and wanted to isolate me even more. Now that I was pregnant it was even easier for him to do because I couldn't really even go out with friends anymore. I was still living in a small, one-bedroom duplex with my dad, and I worked as much as I could to save money. Other than that, I basically spent every waking moment with him. As long as I behaved, agreed with everything he said, and didn't argue back, everything was fine – until it wasn't.

During my pregnancy, I worked really hard and tried to get myself together. When my car had been totaled and I hadn't bought another one yet, I needed to go to my mom's house one day to pick up my income tax return check. I needed the money to get another car. She wasn't answering the phone and I had left several messages on her answering machine. My brother was there on and off, but his drug addiction was so bad that I could hardly get a hold of him either.

My boyfriend drove me over there and waited in the driveway as I knocked on the front door. I was about five months pregnant at the time. After knocking for a few minutes, she finally came to the door but wouldn't open it. I told her through the door why I was there and asked if she could please give me my check. She yelled profanities at me for a few minutes. I was so frustrated and trying not to yell, pleading with her through the front door. She knew I needed a new car and was pregnant, but this was yet another way to control and hurt me.

After a few more minutes, she stopped yelling and started to open the door. There was a screen door that was locked, so I had to step back a little bit so that she could open it. She had the check in her hand. Instead of opening the screen and handing it to me, she reached out and punched me in the face and then said that she was going to call the cops on me for trespassing. Blood gushed out of my nose and in shock, I ran off to the car.

My boyfriend was actually upset. He drove off and parked nearby and tried to console me. My nose wasn't broken,

but I was. No matter how hard I tried, I just could not escape *any* of my awful circumstances. And no, she didn't give me the check. I had to go through a million hoops with the IRS to have a new one sent to me.

Chapter Six

In A Rage

In 1993 we had the Northridge earthquake while I was pregnant and working a graveyard shift. Then 1994 came around. That was the year I graduated from high school and I had my beautiful baby, Theia. It was eventful, to say the least. Instead of being at school, I homeschooled myself and had a baby three weeks before my on-stage graduation with the independent study school. I actually gave birth on the night of prom for the school I wanted to go back to. I did manage to finish my work months early with straight A's, even though I was pregnant, being abused, and working full-time. I attribute all of that to God. There simply is no other explanation, even though I didn't recognize it at the time.

My birthday is in May, and my mother's birthday is April 12th. I was due on May 16th, according to what the doctors had all said. However, on April 11th, I started getting contractions. Being so young and not having had a mother I

could discuss pregnancy issues with, I didn't realize what was happening. It didn't feel like what I expected.

I went to the doctor and was examined. The nice lady there told me that I was in labor, but that she was sending me home because it would be a long time.

She told me to go home, have a glass of wine (I was terrified by this and did not do such a thing), relax, and come back when the contractions were a few minutes apart. You can imagine my horror when I realized my baby was going to be born on my mother's birthday. I asked the nurse multiple times if she was sure that I was in labor, and asked her to confirm if the baby was due the following month. All that she could say was that it was true, and I needed to go relax and get ready to have the baby.

I had not spoken to my mom in a few months during this time, due to the face punching incident. Whatever medications she was taking had made her much worse. Now her head twitched and tilted as she spoke, and she would say (mainly at the top of her lungs) outlandish things for hours on end until someone would call the cops. If there was anything I could do to avoid her, I did it.

Well, somehow she and my dad spoke when I ended up at the hospital the next day, and he told her I was in labor. I was furious that he would do such a thing. She showed up at the hospital, expecting me to be excited to see her, and she wanted to be there when the baby was born. Ya know…even telling this story now is surreal.

Even though he should have known better, my dad also told my mom that my boyfriend and I were upset that she was at the hospital. I tried to make it clear that I did not want her there, but I was in LABOR. In the end, I lost that battle and couldn't fight it. Everyone made it seem like I was being a mean daughter, so I gave up.

I was in labor for a total of 18 hours. I was exhausted and scared. But once I gave birth, all that I cared about was the baby. Everyone else disappeared from my mind. I had no idea I could feel that much love and over-protection. I had felt something similar when my nephew was born, but this was different. It was palpable. I needed to protect her from the world. God was giving me a second chance, even though I was sure that I was going to hell. I, at the very least, felt good I had kept my promise to Him after what had happened before.

As you can imagine, mom-life for a seventeen year old was very difficult. I didn't know how to properly breast-feed, so I had to go back to the hospital to meet with a lactation nurse when Theia was three days old. I rarely slept, and now it was affecting my dad as we were still living in a small duplex. My mom had never breastfed and kept pushing me to bottle feed because I was going to "ruin my body," but I wouldn't. At least not right away. When I had to go back to work, I did, and I was terribly heartbroken about it. But life moved on and I loved having my little Theia.

For the first few months, things seemed to be going okay at home, but not with my mother. When Theia was about two weeks old, my dad was at work and my boyfriend was over at our place. She showed up outside and started trying to look through all of the windows. I knew it was her and asked what she wanted, but at first she didn't answer. Then, out of nowhere, she started yelling and screaming profanities and making wild accusations about us abusing the baby and all sorts of other obscenities.

I didn't open the door because I didn't want her to try to come in. I was hoping that with time she would leave. I also

didn't want to call the cops because I didn't trust them at all at this point, and they had never helped before. This must have gone on for half an hour until I finally opened the door because she was now banging on it and the baby was crying while my boyfriend held her.

As soon as I opened it, she pushed me in and tried to wrestle the baby out of his arms. When he pulled back, she then turned and pushed me. In a rage, I swung at her and hit her left eyebrow and drew blood. She walked out and over to my neighbors, whom I did not know, and they called the ambulance. I locked the door and cried. I didn't know how to feel. To make matters worse, she told the neighbors an entirely different story and then went and got plastic surgery on her nose, stating I had broken it. I waited for the police or someone to come over and question me, but that never happened. Afterwards, I didn't see or speak to her for months. She never let that down. I had hit her, and it was all my fault.

Within a few months, I could tell that my dad was getting tired of me living with him and I started to feel uncomfortable. Eventually, he told me what I had been suspecting. I needed to move out. He said that my boyfriend and

I should move in together since we were playing house and that I needed to grow up now.

It just so happened there was another duplex behind him that came up for rent. There were multiple in that location, and they were cute and inexpensive. I was actually elated to have my own place. Starting when I was fifteen I had tried multiple times to get my dad to agree to sign emancipation paperwork so I could move out. I had worked since I was fourteen, but he kept showing me on paper how I wasn't making enough money. The fact that I was going crazy and being abused wasn't ever part of the conversation. Finally, I was going to get to have my own closet, kitchen, bathroom, and freedom. Or so I thought.

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I did have a feeling, deep down, that things would go badly. But now I was backed into another corner and so far, the boyfriend and I had been doing fine, so I rolled with it. As it turns out, my dad hired my boyfriend at the State agency where he was

working as his own employee. This would have been a conflict of interest if we were married, but since we weren't, no one needed to know that they were "related." With the boyfriend making triple what minimum wage was at the time and me getting another answering service job that paid more than I made before, things were looking up.

Theia was about five months old when we moved out. I bought a ton of stuff to decorate with, filled up the kitchen, bought a ton of cookbooks and got a bigger crib for the baby. But right away, things started coming out that I wasn't expecting. I started finding porn all over the house. Then he started having his friends over to party all the time. When I went to work and school (I had enrolled in a trade school which later got in trouble for being illegitimate) he would not pick up the baby from his mother's, wash any dishes, do any laundry, or help at all.

As far as he was concerned, he was now a bachelor with his own pad, and his chick lived here and did everything for him and his baby. No matter how many arguments, how much I tried to explain, he consistently twisted my words, and I was always the complaining nag that wouldn't leave him alone.

But he had no problem expecting all of the other “wifely duties” from me, and more. There was nowhere to go. I was trapped.

One month after we moved in together, I received a call from my mother telling me that my grandma wanted to know when I was going to have Theia baptized in the Catholic church. I had honestly never considered it. One of my aunts had thrown me a baby shower when Theia was three weeks old, which I was thankful for, especially considering my mother would have never done such a thing. I rarely spoke to my family anymore because it always went through my mother and now years had passed since the Christmas Party incident. On top of that, my boyfriend didn’t want me to have anything to do with anyone, not even them. He was able to use their treatment of me as the reason for needing to keep me away from them.

The idea of baptizing Theia didn’t seem bad to me. So I called up the priest from the Catholic church where I had made my Holy Communion. I really didn’t think much of it. I had plenty of Catholic friends who had their babies baptized, so I should be no different. But the priest started going down a list of questions: “Are you a member of this church? When was the last time you went to confession? Are you married?” Well, the

answers were no, eight years old, and no. But I wasn't asking about myself, I was asking about my baby. So I held my ground.

When he told me that due to my answers, not only was I in danger of hell (which I was well aware of), but that I couldn't baptize the baby– I was actually surprised. I totally understood what he said about me. But then I asked, "How is this the baby's fault?" because I had a genuine theological interest. I wanted to know what page it was on in the Bible, but the priest replied, "You cannot read the Bible. The Priest is here to translate it for you." I argued for a few minutes because it did not make sense.

If the priest wouldn't baptize my baby due to *my* wrong answers, why should the baby go to hell on my account? I asked again where I could find this reasoning in the Bible, and he refused to tell me. So I said bad things to him and hung up. I was shaken, but I didn't want to give up. So I called a different church. The same thing happened. It was almost as if it were scripted.

Next, I called my mother. I knew she wouldn't know what page it was on, but I told her to call Grandma and ask her where I could read about it in the Bible. When she called me back and said that I needed to do what the priest said, and did

not have an answer regarding the page, I was furious! I could not believe there wasn't a single person who could give me an answer to something so serious. They just wanted me to trust these guys in robes that I didn't even know!

At that point, I told her I was no longer Catholic and wanted nothing to do with any of it. I knew that God was real, in my heart. I knew that my vision had been real. But I was absolutely fed up with everything.

Chapter Seven

Secrets, Machetes, Bullets, and Jesus

At around the same time, I had changed jobs and started working nights at a bank to accommodate my school schedule. It was really hard. I never slept, was being abused when I was at home, and had to leave Theia with my boyfriend's parents because he wouldn't help with anything. I'm thankful for his parents looking back, because he was unsafe.

One evening, when I was getting ready to leave for work, we were arguing about him hanging out with his friends and not taking care of his daughter when I was at work. He went into one of his rage fits and took his guitar and started to bang it as hard as he could on an amp. He did this right in front of the baby, and it shattered all over the place. I quickly grabbed her and ran down to my dad's house. He wasn't home from work yet, so I somehow managed to get her to the car and take her to his parents. I told his mother, and she understood I needed to go to work, but she also wanted me to leave him. That

never went anywhere. She was supportive and did try to help me, but she was in a similar situation herself. I don't remember how that ended up. I went to work and somehow came back home. Things like this became frequent until a friend of mine told me that he was cheating on me.

This time, I went to my dad's to see if there was a way that I could move back in or if maybe he could help me move away. Instead, my dad sat me down and had a long talk with me about how everyone has secrets. "Secrets are normal in relationships, everyone has them," he said, and, "You had a baby with this guy, so you need to suck it up and stay. You need to do it for the baby." I knew he was wrong. I knew deep, deep down this wasn't right. But I did not have a soul to turn to for help and I was in danger. So I stayed. I tried to make do and just be as perfect as I could.

Throughout the time I was with my boyfriend before Theia was born, going all the way back to the beginning, there were continual mind games. According to him, I was too young and inexperienced, so if he cheated on me with a grown woman or even someone his own age, it was my fault and I needed to catch up. If I did try to leave, he would project and play his

whole hand against me in ways that I could not fight back. I needed to dye my hair a different color to look like someone else he was interested in. Or I was too skinny, but to my parents I was too fat.

People were seeing me as the obsessive one who was begging him to come back. In the first year or two, that was partially true. I had no idea what to do, even though I felt insane and knew that it was all wrong. I couldn't handle that sort of rejection, especially with him getting the support even from my family members. He put on such a good show, and was able to speak so eloquently, that I looked like the crazy one.

One time when I had tried to cut him off, he ended up on my balcony outside of my bedroom, drunk. I was fourteen. When my dad heard and I told him the truth, he sent my brother outside. My brother, who is eight years older than me, didn't do what my dad had instructed (which was also wrong!), but instead thought it was funny and kindly told him to move to the outer lawn until he was okay enough to walk home. That was the day they became friends.

Another time my brother's drug addiction was so out of control that a dealer came to our front door. This was before my parents separated, so we were still living together. My brother knew who was at the door and why. He wasn't there to deliver, he was there to collect. I knew who he was, he lived down the street. But I did not know what he was doing. My brother asked me to go out to the backyard with him to meet the guy on the side of the house. Right before we got to the gate, he handed me a machete and told me to hide it behind me, and if the guy attacked him to swing it. I didn't even question it. He was my brother and I thought this guy was there to harm him. I'm amazed, even as I write this. It turns out as soon as my brother opened the gate and the man saw me, he calmly looked at my brother and said, "We are not going to do this here. Not with your sister. But this is not over." and he shook his head as he walked away. That drug dealer cared about me more than my own people.

Around the time my father gave me the pep talk to stay with my abuser and advocated for being secretive, a few events happened in tandem. One of them was that my father kept getting promoted at work to really high positions and as he did,

haters came out of the woodwork. One, in particular, had filed a lawsuit against him. My understanding is that it was because he said something bad about being gay during an argument. Unfortunately, due to all of the secrets, I don't know the whole story. But within a year of that guy filing the lawsuit, he died of a long-term illness on my father's birthday. Something way down inside of me knew that was no coincidence. I probed for weeks and even asked my dad if he thought that was strange. He brushed it off and didn't make eye contact.

The other event was when my dad went to eat by himself at a familiar local restaurant. When he was done eating and walking out to his care in the parking lot, he got shot at and the bullet ricocheted off of a lightpole and into his back– right beside his spine. He actually drove himself home to his duplex and called me, but he didn't tell me the truth. What he said was he had been bitten by a large spider and was going to the hospital and wanted me to know. I, of course, marched right over to see blood all over the back of his shirt. The only thing he would let me do was patch it up, then he was off. He didn't tell me the truth until a week later. He said he didn't want me to worry. I was just angry because I knew he was lying.

All of these things and more played into my understanding that it was just normal for people to be completely dishonest and to think only of themselves. Even though I was raised by these people, I was somehow an unselfish person and would give my life or fight for almost anyone. Regardless of who my dad really was, everyone loved him. He was a mechanic and would help anyone with their car, or with building something, or lending money. He was a really nice guy. But they also said he was very “private” and respected that. I am going to publicly correct that now. No, he wasn’t private. He was secretive. He was hiding things. There is a huge difference. And now as an adult, he was telling me to live like this too. I still had not made the connection about how this affected my mother or brother at this point. That didn’t come until I was in my 40’s.

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Once my boyfriend started working with my dad (I was 18 and he was 21), they grew closer and sometimes my boyfriend went

out to dinner with him. Since I was going to work and school, I was gone quite a bit and the baby spent a lot of time with my in-laws. I felt so guilty for leaving her and was depressed a lot. This was in addition to what I had to endure otherwise. Still, I felt it was right for me to try to better myself and find a way to get a better job. In the end, the professional trade school I was attending turned out to be bogus and us students ended up successfully suing them, shutting them down.

I could say all of that time was wasted, except there was one friend I had grown close to at the school, who was a Christian. She had tried to commit suicide a few years prior and had an encounter with Jesus. So even though I was trying to avoid "religion," she was exposing me to Him in small layers and I couldn't deny what I was seeing.

So much happened over the next two years that my head spins thinking of it all. My boyfriend's mother and younger sister, about age ten, moved in with us because his mother was being abused by his father. Then we moved into a bigger house and since I wasn't going to school anymore, I began to work more hours at the bank.

My brother went to jail and was away for quite some

time. While he was there, he had sent me a letter describing how he had read the Bible and all that he learned. I didn't make much of it, but I thought it was good and hoped he would change. He then sent me a copy of the New Testament in a very easy to understand version, and it was small enough to fit into my purse. Time went on and things seemed to be okay in short periods. I was glad not to be alone with my boyfriend. It made me feel a bit safer with his mother there. Again, that was short lived.

Time went on and maybe a year or so later, I was assigned a special position at the bank where I needed to be on a toll-free answering line, helping people whose accounts had been hacked. It was a graveyard gig so it wasn't busy. I didn't mind at first, but after a while it got really boring and no calls were coming in.

One night I had an epiphany. I'll read that Bible and find that page that I was looking for! It was in my purse and I was trying not to fall asleep. Couldn't hurt! So, I opened it up and started reading. I didn't realize at the time that it was only the New Testament. It didn't even cross my mind that Genesis wasn't in there. But as soon as I got to maybe the 3rd chapter of

Matthew, I was hooked and could not put it down. I think I read every chapter maybe four times because I was so shocked! I couldn't get over how different it was from everything I had been taught growing up. I would even stand up at work and read to all of my co-workers, asking them if they knew that it said whatever I was reading.

Many people ended up buying their own and reading because they didn't know what I was talking about and wanted to find out for themselves. I also bought my boyfriend, my parents, his parents and a few other friends Bibles that year for Christmas. To say they were offended would be an understatement, but I truly meant well. Good times.

Right as I finished reading the Bible my position at work changed and I was given a different schedule (no coincidences). I knew that was God. And now, I had a new love. I had no idea that I, Sarah, could actually be saved and still come to Jesus. I was sure there was no way, after all that I had done, that He would accept me. But He left the 99 to get the one…

Matthew 18:12 (ESV). What do you think? If a man has a hundred sheep, and one of them has gone astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains and go in search of the

one that went astray?

I was head-over-heels in love with Jesus and wanted to spend every waking moment in His presence. But this created a huge problem. As you know, my boyfriend was jealous and controlling. He was not okay with any of this. Then things seemed to move in waves. Sometimes it felt like things were on the up. God knows I begged Him to change my boyfriend and turn him into a man of God and all of that. When it got to the point that I wanted to find a church to go to (this was months after I had finished the Bible), he would come with me to check them out because he wouldn't allow me to go to a place where there were men, without him. This included work, the store, etc. He would even drop me off and pick me up from work and interrogate me all the way home about who I talked to and what about.

The first church we attended was a Church of Christ, and it had maybe twenty elderly people in attendance, aside from the Pastor, his wife, and two young daughters. Not too shabby. But now a new problem arose. We were not married or baptized.

There were several issues at hand. I was starting to feel extremely convicted about living in sin with my boyfriend and not being married. I was also starting to have health problems related to this that caused me to not be able to participate in said sin as much. The Pastor kept discussing with us how these two issues (marriage and baptism) needed to be dealt with asap and I knew that it was true.

On the flip side, my boyfriend was watching the Howard Stern show regularly in front of me just to spite me, becoming more and more disrespectful and cruel, watching porn more frequently (which I would find all over the place) and psychologically tormenting me. One night, when I was trying to discuss all of these things with him, he took the Bible that my brother had given me, went into the bathroom, and tore each and every page into little tiny pieces and scattered them all over the place. I prayed and prayed for God to lead me in the right direction, but things kept getting worse. And that wasn't just paper. I believe it was meant to say nothing of yours is safe, not even what comforts you. If someone has done that to you, I'm sorry. It's not a small thing.

Chapter Eight

Handmade For The Chapel

Due to my background and confusing upbringing, I still had it ingrained in my mind that I had to marry the father of my child and the man I was having sex with. I had never been with anyone else and was overwhelmed with guilt. But remember, he was also working for my dad and it would be a conflict of interest for us to get married. When I discussed with my dad how I wanted to get married for all of the above reasons, he got mad and basically wrote me off as a religious freak. He told me my boyfriend had a good paying job with health insurance and that I shouldn't jeopardize the situation. No discussion about a man needing to respect his daughter and marry her (or maybe not abuse her and treat her like trash, etc.) ever occurred.

Meanwhile, my dad's symptoms were getting worse. He was diagnosed with COPD and just seemed to be winded all of

the time. More and more time would pass when I wouldn't hear from him, but since he worked with my boyfriend, I didn't worry too much and figured he was just busy. But I had also been made aware he now had a young girlfriend that worked with him. She was only about five years older than me. Of course that bothered me, but what bothered me more was she had been the girlfriend of one of my dad's longtime friends whom he owned property with.

I was appalled and angry. When I confronted him, he brushed me off and even laughed. Needless to say, it put a huge strain on our relationship. I refused to meet her and wanted nothing to do with her. It was all wrong and I wanted it to go away. The fact that they were together was also a conflict of interest at this job, so the hypocrisy of not wanting my boyfriend and I to get married had me furious. But he wouldn't budge and that was that. Until one day, I received an unusual phone call.

It was Super Bowl Sunday. I could care less about the football, but I still paid attention because it was everywhere. People were making bets, going to parties, wanting to watch the halftime show, or whatever. But I didn't have any plans that day.

It was cold and rainy outside and I was just getting stuff done. When my dad called he sounded faint and his voice was shaky. I could barely hear him. He said, “I think I need you to take me to the hospital. But watch the game first and then we’ll go.”

I left right away, speeding as fast as I could. My dad never asked anyone to take him to the hospital so this had to be serious. When I barged into his apartment, he was lying on his bed, face down, with his face hanging off the side. He was conscious and said it was easier to breathe that way. I carefully got him to his feet and whisked him off, practically carrying him to the elevator and headed down to the car. He was completely winded and ashen. I asked if I could call the ambulance but he insisted I take him (a familiar conversation). Off we went.

I had to take him to the hospital in Hollywood which was not close, but he talked to me softly on and off to let me know he was still with me while I tried not to give him a heart attack by my driving. At the E.R. they rushed him into the back and within minutes I was signing a packet of paperwork. I was there when they intubated him. There were at least seven doctors in that room. One of them walked me out and said he

did not believe my dad was going to make it. He apologized and said that I should start making arrangements.

I was shattered. My brother was on the street somewhere and I wasn't talking to my mother. I called my boyfriend and told him to let my dad's close friend from work know so they could also notify his girlfriend. This was no time to be selfish. I stayed for a few hours and then had to head home to spend time with my daughter, shower, etc. and then grabbed my Bible and went back.

My father had actually bought me this Bible after my little one had been torn in pieces.. I don't remember if he even knew mine had been destroyed. I had moved on to reading this one because it included the Old Testament and when this all happened, I had just started to read the Book of Job. I read to him out loud, even though he was in a coma. This went on for days until they woke him up. He was still intubated so he couldn't talk, but he managed to write things sloppily onto a note pad with his hand that was strapped to the bed.

I asked him about Vietnam. When I was 16, I found a picture of him that said Vietnam 65' on the back. He was holding a gun and very young. When I asked him about it at that

time, he refused to answer and acted like it wasn't him. I never saw the photo again. I knew he was lying and I never let it go. I had bothered him about it for years and he wouldn't tell me, but now he was willing.

He wrote on scattered notes stating that he had been hired by the CIA to go on a secret mission to Laos to bomb the bomb making facilities, and he had been taken captive. In order to escape, he killed 4 people. He also kept pointing out that he had done many things he needed to ask forgiveness for that I had no idea about. I wasn't going to pick his brain about them all right then. So I told him to ask for forgiveness and I continued to read the Bible and prayed with him for days.

His girlfriend came to the hospital to visit, and we talked. After that we were good. It wasn't my choice what decisions my dad made. My brother had also shown up and was a wreck. He didn't stay long, but I was glad to see he was alive. And my dad? He did not die. It was nothing shy of a miracle. The doctors even said so. I gave all of this glory to Jesus and everyone needed to hear it. I was elated.

He came home to stay with us for a while until he could go back to his apartment alone. Then, life went on. He went

back to work, back to his girlfriend, back to smoking a pack of Marlboro Reds a day. I was angry and made it very clear, but I had no choice, as per usual. Not long after this, I started to bring up the marriage issue again. I could not live like this anymore. So, both my dad and boyfriend decided it wasn't such a bad idea after all.

The beau went to my dad to let him know he was going to get me a ring and propose. It was nothing fancy. We went to the top of a hill in our old neighborhood and he got on his knee and did the proposal thing. I appreciated that he went through the effort and that my dad said yes, too. I really believed at this point it was God's will and He was making it all happen. I still do, as far as Him having favor on me at that time. I wasn't receiving any sort of wise theology counseling from anyone. I was still winging it and the Holy Spirit was keeping me alive.

I started making my own wedding dress in preparation. When I got close to being finished, wouldn't you just know that something popped up? One of my closest friends at that time, Gail, had been with my boyfriend's brother for a few years. We ended up becoming best friends because a lot of things that were happening to me were happening to her as well. But we

were also very different in a lot of ways. I didn't mind. We did need each other and I was thankful to have a close friend he couldn't scare off or get rid of, even though he did try a few times.

When I told her that we were getting married, where and when…she somehow talked her boyfriend into marrying her at around the same time. I'm not sure how this happened because it happened so quickly, but I ended up making her dress, the bridesmaid dresses (mine included as the maid of honor), and Theia's flower girl dress. We offered to have the reception party at our house because we had a huge yard that made a good venue.

This ended up completely sabotaging my plans and they got married in the little church that I wanted to. It would be too expensive now, and take too much time to try and do this for both couples. So, I conceded. We could just go to Vegas. I was happy for them.

I found out that I was pregnant with my son, David, the day after their wedding. I was happy, but also felt the urgency to hurry up and get married before I couldn't fit into my dress anymore and so that I wouldn't have the baby out of wedlock.

Again, I wasn't well versed in theology at this point, but I was trying to do my best. Surprisingly, my boyfriend was also happy because his friends were all having babies at the same time.

My dad and his girlfriend had offered to take us to Las Vegas to get married before we had begun to prepare the other wedding but I had declined. It wasn't what I had ideally dreamed of and I really wanted to have it at this particular church. Anyhow, I was used to this sort of thing happening, so I made the most of it. At least my dad could walk me down the aisle.

So, I packed up my dress, we left Theia with my mother-in-law at home, and headed out. When we got there, after the miserable drive from L.A. (I hate that drive), we checked into our hotel room. My dad was worn out and not taking care of himself again, so he was really winded and frail. They all rested for a while and I took out the local phone book to try to figure out where we were going to get married.

As I was searching and saying the names of places out loud laughing because some of them were really funny, my dad cut me off. He said, "No, we are here so you can get married at the courthouse." I protested and reminded him I had brought my

dress and thought we were going to one of the Vegas Wedding Chapels. His girlfriend looked at him sternly and I could tell she was on my side. But he made a comment about only having enough money for the courthouse.

I didn't know how to respond. I put the phone book away and said I would start getting ready for bed. Of course, now I was the one being difficult and needed to find a way to put on a happy face. So I did.

That night we went to get the license and my boyfriend had to find a way to drink. After that we went back, went to bed and woke up the next morning to head over to the courthouse. I just wore my jeans and the white shirt I was planning on wearing on the trip home. I still smiled at whatever the guy who officiated the marriage said. On the drive home, I managed to read part of a book about the Shroud of Turin I had picked up at one of the stores we were in the night before. It was a nice distraction. My dad and boyfriend talked most of the way and then we got home to a happy little girl who knew her parents were now married. I was happy to see her.

Chapter Nine

Demons And Restraining Orders

I'm not sure what the catalyst was for this next event. I was in our room unpacking and somehow we ended up arguing. It wasn't about the wedding, it was something petty. Within a few minutes, he had thrown me up against the dresser and held me down on the floor. My mother-in-law banged on the door to try to get in and told him to stop. When he let go of me, I instinctively started putting clothes back into my bag when he said, "Oh my God. We are married," and he looked down and held his face as if he had just discovered the worst realization of his life. He needed to make sure I understood how I had now trapped him. But within an hour, after having left the room, he came back and acted like nothing had happened. And so it was. I was now married and could get baptized. Surely, God would be pleased with me and could see I was trying to make Him happy and hold on to my salvation.

As time passed, I continued to go to church. Sometimes my husband came, most of the time he didn't. Since there were only a few elderly folks there, it was safe for me to go without being accused of anything crazy. Still, it was a struggle. I started not to agree with things that were being taught and had questions. One time, the Pastor invited us over for dinner and he and my husband began to discuss what was going on at the time with Jeffrey Dahmer.

I had seen on TV he had professed faith in Jesus and had recently been killed in jail. I knew that folks were debating whether or not he was actually saved. I had taken the side that if he professed it publicly, he was. He didn't ask to get out of jail or anything. Anyhow, the Pastor and my husband said that he absolutely was not saved and that the Bible was very clear on what happened to people "like him." When I started to debate, citing Scripture, I was shut down.

It turns out this was the type of guy to buy his wife a vacuum cleaner for her birthday (this actually happened) where women couldn't speak when it came to Biblical matters. I was not okay with this. But we continued to go to this church for some time. I had even gotten baptized there, which was another

issue altogether. I was eight months pregnant with my second child and had to wear a white gown that was provided by the church. My husband threw a fit and wouldn't talk to me afterwards because he said it was see through. It actually was not. But whatever. Once again, he managed to ruin a special memory for me. And I had to hear about it for months. But even with all of that, my husband ended up getting baptized, too. Still, nothing changed in his behavior. If anything, it got worse fairly quickly after that.

Before I had my son, a few things happened. I was fired from my job at the bank due to calling out sick too many times in a row. I had hives due to an allergic reaction to an antibiotic. And then it turned out I was a few weeks pregnant and was throwing up all the time. I didn't fight it, but was devastated. Thankfully, at that time, my husband wasn't angry and said that I could stay home until I had the baby. We were financially okay for the moment.

At this time my mother was stalking me and showing up at our house yelling and screaming at all hours of the day and night. Sometimes the neighbors would call the cops. Sometimes I would be in a rage and would yell at her to get her to leave.

Other times she would be standing outside of a window where my mother-in-law would see her and she would scare Theia. I was nearing the end of my rope. I didn't trust the system to help me and didn't know what to do.

We had a baby shower at my house when I was eight months pregnant, right around the time of the baptism. My mother's side of the family came, and she came with them. I really didn't want to invite her, but under the circumstances, I felt I had to, and she was usually on her best behavior around them. The day before, my Theia, now four years old, had tripped and fallen and had a mark on her face. All day during the baby shower I could tell my mother was trying to act normal. She did pretty good, until the end.

On her way out she accused me of abusing Theia and of allowing the Pastor at our church to molest her. Everyone who heard it was angry and wanted her to leave. She did, but the next day the Department of Child and Family Services showed up at my doorstep. By this time, we had my brother-in-law and his wife Gail (who was also my best friend at the time), my mother-in-law, and my little sister-in-law, Rachel all living with us.

This woman interviewed everyone who pointed it all back to my mentally ill mother. She dropped the case. Still, I was about to have another baby, and my mother tried to have them both taken from me for no reason. It was then that I had to go to court to get a restraining order. The Judge granted it right away.

When David was about six months old, I received a call from my brother, who was living in New Mexico, crying. He was homeless and brokenhearted due to a break-up. I, having no boundaries and not even knowing what those were, I offered to let him stay with us to get on his feet and hopefully start having a relationship with my nephew, his son. During the years prior, he had also converted to Islam. Yes, my only brother, who led me to Christ. The irony. But I was hoping that his coming to stay with me would change all of that. It didn't.

Less than six months after he started living with us, all hell broke loose. He smoked all over the place, was rude, loud, disrespectful, cussed in front of the kids even when I asked him not to, and so much more. Also, he prayed to Allah at the dinner table, even though I had discussed with him, prior to moving in, that I didn't want any of that.

I had lent him my car so that he could work, but he ruined it, and with every place that hired him, he would complain and get fired or quit almost right away. Asking him to help around the house, even just to take out the trash, was like slapping someone's baby. There was no winning with him. I wanted my brother to be okay. I wanted him to get well and on his feet. I wanted him to establish a healthy relationship with his son, whom I was very close to. But I realized that I was doing something that was not my job and that I had no control over. My own cognitive dissonance was bad, but at this point I think it was starting to clear up. At least when it came to my brother.

One night, my brother had announced that he was going to drive my mother-in-law to a local donut shop to pick up some donuts for all of us. My husband, being jealous, controlling, and evil, snapped. He had never said anything about them hanging out, up to this point, but he took it too far and started cussing and then stormed off downstairs. My brother got upset and left, while my mother-in-law stayed behind and cried. Then she and my husband argued. It was a mess. I don't remember how that night ended up, but within a few days, my brother and I got into a huge fight and I sent him with 100 dollars on a Greyhound

back to New Mexico. That was very, very difficult for me. I cried for a week. But I realized I couldn't have him around my kids. His demons were much worse than before and he wasn't going to change unless he decided to surrender to God himself.

Also during that time, things started to get weirder at church. I was teaching Sunday school to the four or five kids there, and it was Christmastime. I wanted them to sing an old Christmas Hymn and had brought a book with buttons that you push to play music to sing along with. It turns out that this denomination doesn't allow music of any kind other than singing without instruments.

When I questioned this and stated that David used instruments, etc. I was told that we don't use the Old Testament, and if Jesus wanted us to use instruments, He would have told us. Needless to say, when the Pastor heard the book tune while I was trying to teach the kids upstairs, he marched up and told his wife to put a stop to it. Shortly after that, I stopped going. It was spiritually dead, and I was now miserable.

I had been invited by Gail to check out a Four Square Church (an Evangelical Pentecostal denomination) down the road and finally accepted the invitation. I was shocked at the

difference. Remember, I grew up Catholic and Mass is much different from other denominations. I did attend the Baptist church occasionally when I was a kid and the Church of Christ was similar, but this was very different. I had wanted to shop around, but it was difficult in my situation because I didn't have "permission" to just go anywhere.

During that season, I had changed jobs and began working for the phone company. As sad as I was to leave my kids to go to work, I was thankful for this job. It paid very well and it was very difficult to get a position there, but I passed the test the first time and started almost right away. At first, they didn't pay me properly for all of the experience I had. I had brought that to the Union's attention and at first they said there was nothing that they could do. I accepted and left it alone. But a few months later, I received word I was going to get a wage credit and a huge raise. This was a miracle, as it would lead to the amount of money I would need to make in order to qualify for a house in the near future.

The house we were living in sold and we needed to move. We didn't have time to look to buy a home and there was too much going on. I was still being abused in every way and

very depressed, but didn't realize it. Sometimes I would show up to work with my eyes puffed up and red from crying, or I was shaky and couldn't concentrate. My arms occasionally had bruises and I needed to wear long sleeves even on hot days. But I kept on. I had no choice.

We had found an apartment that was three stories with the garage at the bottom. It was a duplex with very thin walls. When we looked at it, we knew it would do for the time being, but I had a really bad feeling. We didn't have a choice because we had a deadline, so we took it. My husband, his teenage sister, his mother, and our two small children and I moved in.

Days before we moved, my mother had shown up in the middle of the night screaming and blasting music out of her car with the door wide open. I had asked her to leave and reminded her of the restraining order. She wouldn't. My husband let her know that if she didn't leave we would need to call the cops, but she just kept on screaming. So, I called.

They took her off to jail and kept her for five days. Within those five days we moved. When she got released and someone took her back to our old home to get her car, our house was empty. I saw that as a divine miracle. For the first time ever,

she couldn't find me. I also changed my number at that time.

Once we were in the new apartment and settled, we started having trouble with the neighbors. Right away, whenever my baby would cry they would bang on the walls, hard. They would slip long letters under our door and sometimes come and try to discuss how we should put more insulation in our side of the walls. I was so frustrated and done at this point. On top of this, my husband was now drinking a lot more and still going out with friends as if he was in high school. At this time I wound up pregnant with my third child. This, of course, was all my fault and he was going to make sure I understood that I was ruining his life.

There were other things, too. I was told by Gail that I could use her credit card to prepare for the baby since I was struggling financially at the time. The point of this was that I could pay it off monthly but still get what I needed to set up for the baby. But then, maybe a month later, she asked me for the cash, and changed her mind. She insisted that I come up with $500.00 that I didn't have and this created a huge amount of stress. I don't remember how I did it, but I came up with it. The level of stress that I was under at this point in my life became

unparalleled to times before. No matter how hard I tried, things just kept getting worse. I kept praying, reading, pleading and knowing in my heart that Jesus was real and had my back. But I also accepted that this life was just going to be terrible.

Chapter Ten

White Dove, Code Blue

Soon after Gail asked for the money, her husband, who was addicted to crack at the time, moved another woman into their home while Gail and their baby were still there. Yes, you read that right. The 'other woman' was also using drugs with him. Gail and her son, only a few months old at the time, then came to stay with us for a few months. My husband, knowing that his brother was the problem and what he was doing, still sided with his brother and so did my mother-in-law. This caused more strife in our home then there was to begin with.

Then, when Gail and her baby moved out, my brother-in-law's 10-year-old daughter that he had with a girlfriend from high school, came to stay with us. My brother-in-law was obviously out of control and she had been staying with him and the other woman.

Shortly after, I was put on disability when I was five months pregnant due to early contractions and being violently

ill. I had also recently gotten a new doctor because I had changed my health insurance. I really liked this new doctor and was happy to have her, but when I showed up to my next appointment she had literally abandoned her office, and I was left without any prenatal care. The waiting list for other doctors was so long that I ended up having the baby without having my own doctor.

Throughout all of this, I held on to my faith in Jesus and tried so, so hard to properly follow Him. I still spoke about Him as often as I could and attended church. But everything in my life was so chaotic. Everything. Occasionally, I would fast. I knew that this would help because there were always miracles in between. But I still could not seem to get a break.

I had my third beautiful baby, Grace, in the year 2000. I was still working for the phone company, but was on maternity leave. When it was time for me to go back to work, I was devastated. I no longer felt comfortable leaving the kids with my mother-in-law. Over time, I could tell that she was burnt out, and the whole situation was toxic.

During the first week I had to leave the kids, my husband was already gone to work, and my mother-in-law cried

as I left. She was taking care of David, who was now 2, our nephew (Gail's son, Michael), who was only 2 months younger, and our newborn. I didn't want to go, but she had made it clear that she couldn't (or wouldn't) get a job, and we could not afford to eat or pay the rent if I didn't.

My husband was no help. He blamed me for her coming to live with us in the first place since I had initially offered. She had been crying loudly in front of me and my first baby after a huge blowout with her husband and I wanted to rescue her. Anyhow, fast forward, here we were, and on top of all of this, my father's health was now declining rapidly.

By the time 9/11/2001 hit, my dad's health was so bad that he couldn't come to visit me at my apartment because he would run out of breath climbing the stairs. He was living with his girlfriend in a rental house a few miles away, but I couldn't visit him much due to my own chaos and schedule. I tried to visit when I could, but it was sporadic.

One day, my husband told me that my dad hadn't been to work for a few weeks and that he hadn't returned his calls. I tried calling my dad's girlfriend to ask questions, but she didn't answer or call me back, so I went over to their house. She

wasn't home, but I found my dad downstairs in his bedroom, looking half dead. His beard had grown out, toenails long, he was ashen in color and very skinny.

I was furious. I made him food and tried to get information out of him. He had basically given up and I think she did, too. Over the next few weeks, I tried to go see him in order to feed and groom him, but this became overwhelming. It was at this point that I discussed with my husband that we needed to buy a house immediately. I had never been so firm or sure of anything in a very long time, and I wasn't going to take no for an answer. My dad was dying and he needed a room on the first floor. So that was that. We started looking immediately. With the two jobs that we both had, we now qualified for a loan.

I'm not sure how many homes we looked at, but it wasn't many. The one that we ended up getting found us. I would like to say that I'm joking, but I'm not. The Real Estate Agent was honest about the property. It was in foreclosure and the previous family had a falling out. Apparently, the husband had beaten up the wife, and then, in a fit of rage, had accidentally run over his 7-year-old son in the driveway, killing him.

Also, back in the 1960's, a woman had run a daycare there, and one of the kids had drowned in the pool in the backyard. I found this odd because it still lacked a fence, almost 40 years later. I tried not to let these things bother me. It was perfect. My dad would have the downstairs extra room that faced the pool with sliding glass doors. There were enough rooms for all of us to be comfortable, including the mom-in-law and teenaged sister-in-law, Rachel. I assumed that if I prayed over the property, everything would be fine. This was God giving us just what we needed at the perfect time.

I will say before I move on that the latter is true. God always came through right on time and this was no exception. I was extremely grateful and despite what the rest of the story entails, He was there and He showed up and out, again.

The day that we got the keys, I went and got my dad and brought him home. Then we moved everything else in. Someone from the church gave us a hospital bed, and we were able to make him comfortable. I felt so thankful and blessed. It really was very beautiful, nestled in the hills and we were all elated to have a swimming pool.

My husband attended the Four Square Church with us at first, and he actually seemed to have liked it. There was a band, and younger people there. The Pastor and their family were nice, and the preaching was very different. We stayed for a few years. His mother and sister even attended the Spanish service (this is their native language) at the same church, too. The Spanish Pastor had once pulled me to the front of the church to tell me that I had a gift of prophecy and that my children would play music. I took it to heart at first, but since nothing happened right away, I forgot about it.

Eventually, everything about that church went sideways as well. There was a group of us who broke off and began meeting to pray about what to do about the whole situation.

It was around that time that the internet was becoming more accessible, and we had a desktop computer at home. When I researched the origins of the Four Square denomination, it all made sense. Amy Semple McPherson had left her husband and traveled across the country to come and start a church near Hollywood. It was she who had Angeles Temple in Echo Park built and also attended the Azusa Street Tent Revival meetings. She also ended up having an affair with her secretary's husband

and running off to Mexico with him to fake her own death.

After coming back from all of this (and still being accepted!) she continued to preach. She overdosed on pills the night of her last big sermon and died. This was all too familiar to me, considering all that had happened with my mother. I wanted out of there, but was led by God to speak out about it. I fasted and prayed many times and was terrified. I felt unworthy and didn't see why little old me needed to do this thing. But I knew that I could not let it go if He was telling me to do it. In the end, we, the group who got together and prayed, called Four Square International and had a meeting with them. The church ended up splitting, and not long after that, our family stopped attending.

As my father grew more ill, it was harder for me to go to work and leave him. My mother-in-law was there during the day, but I was riddled with guilt. I eventually took some vacation time and then went on Family Medical Leave, which allowed me time off to care for a family member, unpaid.

I now had more time to groom him and take him to doctors appointments. I tried to spend a good amount of time with him, but I also had the kids and tried to do as much as I

could with them, too. I was still that mom who volunteered in the kids' classrooms, was the librarian, baked for all the kids on her birthdays or what have you. I wanted so badly to do everything that my mother never did. But of course, I was wearing thin. My youngest was still only a year old during all of this. That said, I was glad my dad was there.

One night, I received a call from my uncle, my father's brother, stating that his mother's long-time boyfriend had died and that she was coming out to California to visit. We were very isolated and it had been years since I had seen anyone from that side of the family. My dad was a bit nervous because by this time he was much thinner and sicker.

Allow me to point out that he refused to quit smoking, even though he couldn't breathe. I couldn't stand it, but he didn't care. I had made sure that his doors to outside were open and it wasn't getting into the rest of the house. But it was still so frustrating. That said, the family came. They were shocked and didn't realize how sick he was.

After visiting for a few days and then leaving, my uncle ended up coming back and staying for another week. My dad really enjoyed his company. They were only 11 months apart,

and apparently very close when they were young. Of course, having another man in the house caused problems with my husband. He started to point out my uncle was looking at me wrong or hugging me inappropriately, etc. (which was not true.) Thankfully, my uncle didn't notice and I managed to somehow pretend that everything was well until he left.

Three weeks later, my dad grew worse. One morning I went in and told him that I was going to strip the paint on a window frame toward the front of the house. I asked if he wanted breakfast, and he said no. About an hour later, I went in and asked again, and this time he said yes. I made him eggs, sausage, and toast. I took him the plate, but he got upset and seemed confused. He said that he wasn't hungry and asked why I brought it to him. He also wanted to make sure that he could see the crucifix that was on the mantle in his room as it had been blocked by some random items, so I moved them.

I took away the plate, frustrated, but I didn't realize what was happening. He had been to the hospital at least 7 times since he had first gone in, and each time, they sent him home. Usually, the reason was dehydration. So I let him rest a bit longer and about another hour later, I went to check in.

Somehow he had managed to wrap the oxygen tubing around his arm, and he was trying to get into the fetal position. This time when I tried to talk to him, he just looked at me. So I called the paramedics.

When they arrived, they asked him all of the regular orientation questions. Who's the President? What day is it? With each question, he would point at me and say, "That's my daughter." After doing this 4 or 5 times, they put him on the stretcher and wheeled him out. As they loaded him in the back of the ambulance, I leaned in and told him that I was going to drive behind him and not to worry, I'll go straight to his room. This was standard. I was never not there. I didn't want to ride in the ambulance because I didn't want to be stranded without a car. This was a mistake.

On the drive there, a white dove was on the side of the road behind my house. I found this odd, as I never see white doves. When I arrived at the hospital, I parked and rushed in. The lady at the ER told me to sit down and wait. I told her that it was imperative that I be in the room with him, but she still told me that I had to wait and they would let me know when I could go back.

On the overhead, they called a code blue and people started running. I was calm and panicking all at once. I felt my whole body go numb. I was talking to Jesus the whole time in my chair and grew impatient. A full half hour went by and after I'd asked 2 or 3 more times, finally a woman came out the door and called my name, but she didn't take me to see my dad. She took me to a side room to sign paperwork and let me know that he had been intubated and more than likely wouldn't make it.

I internally asked Jesus to hold me together, signed the paperwork, and asked her to take me to my father. When I got there, the MD met me outside of the door and told me that he couldn't believe that my dad was alive and talking when he came in. He said that his O2 levels were in the 70's and he kept mentioning my name. I asked if I could go in and if there was a pulse. He then asked if I was in the medical field and I said no. He said that he was asking because I was so stoic and seemed to understand what was happening. Anyhow, he let me in.

I walked in and there was a guy still doing CPR. I asked if he was alive and the doctor said no, so I told the guy to stop. The MD nodded to give the okay, and the female nurse in the room began to cry. She was wearing a large cross necklace. She

apologized to me and told me that I could hold his hand. Then they all walked out.

Chapter Eleven

To Be Truly Alone

I sat there, stunned. They left and gave me time alone with him. His eyes were opened, but he wasn't there. I couldn't talk to him because I knew that he wouldn't hear me. It was the most bizarre and surreal feeling I had ever had. What was he doing, wherever he was at that moment? Where was he? I wasn't sure if he had accepted Jesus before he died, because he didn't want me to pray over him, didn't want to discuss it, and didn't understand God's Grace. Heck, I didn't understand God's Grace at that time! Yet, he wanted to have the Cross in view, so that gave me some hope. I won't know until I get there. I am okay with that now. But this did not sit well with me for a long, long time. He was 54 years old.

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About a year before my dad died, he was back with his

girlfriend who would visit him at my house when she could. Prior to that she had gotten with another guy, but that fell apart fairly quickly. At one point, a few months before my father passed, I had seen him drawing pictures of wedding rings and asked him why he was drawing them. He said that he wanted to marry her and make things right. I, believing that he may get better and be able to go back home eventually, didn't know what to make of it, but it seemed respectable enough.

In addition to that, though, my mother would not leave him alone. We had transferred his land line phone to his room and he used to get messages on his answering machine on and off all day with yelling and commands for more money, etc. He refused to let me block her number and just ignored them. I didn't understand it, but I wasn't going to fight that battle. However, one day I heard her speaking through the machine and he picked up. She was saying that she had sold one of his 1957 T-Bird's to her brother in law, and the other one that was in the garage she had sold to her boyfriend.

There are multiple issues wrong here. One, part of the divorce agreement was to sell everything and split the money in half. However, even though he sold the cabin, the boat and a few

other things and gave her her share, she refused to move out of that house that I had grown up in. I had questioned before why he didn't somehow enforce it, but he said that he felt guilty and didn't know where she would end up, so he just let her stay.

He had left those cars there, one was his and another he was storing for an older gentlemen who paid a small rental fee to have it in the garage. For years they sat there, without question and now that he was sick, he couldn't fix them up to sell like he had originally planned. But in the back of his mind, he still planned to do that. So they had come to an agreement that as long as she was in the house, he would keep the cars there.

Now, with this having taken place, my dad received a call from the other owner, furious, and my dad, on his death bed, had to take out a $12,000.00 loan to buy the car back from my mom's boyfriend. He was heartbroken about his own car, but was too sick to fight it. I was furious, too. But there was just too much going on for me to do anything. To this day, it sits in my uncle's garage, fixed up, having won several awards and prizes since the transfer of ownership.

Those two events were the catalyst for what happened

next. My dad decided to enforce the divorce judgement that would make her move out so that he could now pay for that loan. He had a close friend who was a real estate agent (whom I had never heard of before) step in to help.

Over the next few months there were back and forth arguments about the showing of the property, which she refused, and there was the possibility of having her court-martialed. This was complicated by my drug addicted brother living there on and off in between. Finally, after months of this taking place, the sheriff showed up and gave her an ultimatum. At this time, I was still not talking to her so I'm not sure of all of those details, except that the sheriff spoke with my dad for a very long time over the phone and my dad was apologetic.

She ended up at a hotel with whatever she packed, and eventually went to stay with one of her sisters. My dad, even after all of this, was concerned because all of her stuff was going to be confiscated and thrown out or auctioned off if someone didn't go get it. I'm not sure how or why I got involved in this, but I'm sure it was guilt.

So my husband and I took a week off of work, and went

to empty it out. This was a 2 story, 950 square foot place, but my mother was a hoarder. The place was packed from top to bottom and unlike the way it was when I, Cinderella, used to live there. It was filthy. Dust an inch thick everywhere. It took us literally every waking moment of that week to pack, move things to storage and my own garage, and then have a dump truck take what was visibly trash.

That whole incident was so triggering and overwhelming that I became sick with hives and extreme exhaustion for weeks. I even lost more weight and a good wind could have carried me off, I was so skinny.

I still went back to work, took care of my dad and 3 small children, dealt with an abusive husband and had in-laws living with us. But now, to make matters worse, one of my mom's sisters got involved and accused me, alongside my mother, of getting rid of my mom's stuff and robbing her. On top of that, she also assisted my mother in trying to get all of the profit that my dad would get from the sale of the home, which was under $20,000 after all was said and done. By the time he got his money, it was only enough to pay my mom's boyfriend back for a car that should have never been legally sold.

I could see my dad fade after that. His motivation to get well or marry again seemed to drop off slowly until it diminished. I began to grow bitter and knew that I needed to pray against it. But it always seemed like the enemy had the upper hand and no matter how hard I tried, prayed, intervened, cried; there was always another devil right around the corner that had a tactic I hadn't mastered yet.

Right after he died, my brother had to come from New Mexico to sign paperwork. The first thing that he asked me when I called to tell him of our father's passing was, "Did he have any bank accounts or leave us any money?" I let him know that we had a lot of things to go through and split, and that once we had the death certificate, we would get his retirement, pension, life insurance and his savings, which was not much.

He was happy and gladly came to sign whatever paperwork was needed. We were able to go to the bank right away and get the savings. With my share, I paid off our mini van and was able to resign from my job. My plan was to stay home, grieve, raise my kids and prayerfully get our household in some sort of order. My brother bought a car, reluctantly paid back owed child support, and squandered the rest. Then he was

back off to New Mexico until I would give notice about what we needed to do next regarding the retirement, which would be in about a month.

What happened next changed the course of everything, and exposed yet more secrets. First, I received a certificate from my dad's job that said he was now retired after 33 years of service. At the time I thought that it was nice of them, but also a bit strange. He didn't retire and had been out of work for about 2 years when he died. Then when I did get the death certificate and called the State Agency to discuss the retirement and life insurance policies, they ended up telling me that my parents were never divorced. It turned out he had never finalized it so she could stay on his health insurance plan.

He had always said that he had made an oath to take care of her forever. Boy, he wasn't playing. Now, she would get everything and my brother and I would get nothing. I was actually fine with it. Deep down, it may have felt a little unfair, but to see my brother that angry over not getting any money made me feel satisfied enough.

My mother seemed to change for a few years after that. She wasn't expecting my dad to die and was truly shocked.

Then, with this new money, she started to get plastic surgery and shop more. But she also had been diagnosed with end stage kidney disease and changed her whole diet, took vitamins and weaned off of some of her meds. Even though she was still extremely difficult to be around, I was hopeful and she started coming around to see her grandchildren. She had never met the youngest two, so it was a big deal. Still, the visits had to be few and far between. It was even tough on the kids.

Within that same time-frame, tension began to grow with my mother-in-law. By then, Rachel had already moved out with her boyfriend. That was a hot mess, too, but she needed to get away and I understood. My mother-in-law, however, did not want to leave, ever. The kids were getting older and she was taking up a room of her own, staying up late sewing with the machine, cooking at whatever hour, etc.

People at church had recommended different ways to help her get on her feet and offered to help, but she would refuse. Finally, I discussed it with my husband and asked if he would talk to her about the future/big picture. Since her living with us was my fault entirely, he would do no such thing, but he said that he did support me discussing it with her.

The next day, when the kids were at school, the youngest was asleep and the husband was at work, I sat her down and let her know that she needed to find a new place to live. I went over all of the things and ways that I could no longer help her and how it was beyond toxic. She stated that she had a friend who was ready to take her in and it seemed to go very well, at first. But after my husband got home she laid on the couch with her radio and played sad music, crying for the whole family to see. Then he turned on me and said that I was hurting him by doing this to her.

Sure, I reminded him of what we had originally discussed and how he had said that he supported me, but it didn't matter. Now this was all my fault, too and I was being horrible to him and his mother. When I suggested that me and the kids could leave and he could stay with his mommy, he only got more mad. This went on for more than a week with way more drama than I'm going to add in here, but eventually she moved in with her friend who literally lived around the corner and behind our backyard. Within a few years she had to go somewhere else for the same reason. But now, I was alone with my husband and 3 children. I was now 27 and this was the first

time we had lived alone as a family since I was 18 years old.

Chapter Twelve

At The End of My Rope

I still hadn't gone back to work, so it was nice to be the woman of the house again. I cooked, baked, did preschool with my babies, took them swimming in the backyard, took them to and from school and even volunteered at the Christian school that they were enrolled in. After they had been attending that school for a while, we started going to Church there. It was a very old school and still very old fashioned. We liked it and it felt safe.

Maybe a few months into living alone as a family, my husband all of a sudden wanted to join the Army. I don't know if it was a mid-life crisis (he was about to turn 30), or if he was just afraid to be an adult, or what. But he was dead set on joining the Army and going off to fight the bad guys. Funny thing is that after 9/11 initially happened, he had thought that it was an inside job and tried to convince me of it. I had adamantly rejected the idea and we would fight about it. But

now, he wanted to go do this thing, and so I tried to be supportive. I honestly thought that maybe it would be good for him and our marriage for him to receive military training and discipline.

The people at the school and church thought that I was crazy for supporting this, but they didn't understand what kind of prison I was in, at all. I remember one of them saying, "Go home and let him know how you truly feel about all of this." I literally laughed out loud. My opinion or feelings had never, in any way, mattered and I was the wife who needed to do all of the work and shut up about the rest.

After about a year of going through the motions for him to get into the Army, it happened. He had to become a citizen first, since he was born in Mexico and sent here to the States when he was 5. He was here legally, but went through the whole process. Then he did all of the testing, etc. I was proud of him and believed that this was going to be God's way of changing him.

As soon as he graduated from boot camp and was off to his base, instead of staying at the barracks and doing Army things, he used his military pay to get hotels and be gone every

weekend. This meant that the children and I did not get that money. We still had an income from his job, but it was a lot less than when he was actually at work and we were severely struggling financially. On top of that, he was out cheating and using. He wasn't there to get beauty sleep, although his reasoning was that he just needed time away from everyone because he was the oldest. Yet again, my opinion, protests, and voice did not matter. I was about 28 years old at this point and not feeling the same as when I was a teenager. I was more angry and didn't have the same kind of patience.

I was raising all of the children by myself, trying to hold it together for them and make it seem like everything was okay. I was also regularly remodeling the entire house by myself, with Theia's help when she wasn't at school or doing other things. This became a sort of obsession and kept my mind off of things that I didn't want to think about. I dare say, we did a dang good job and my daughter learned skills that most girls don't. It was an old Craftsmen house, built in 1912 and turned out exactly as I wanted it.

When my husband was around, he would do whatever he could to put me down, get mad about the type of yellow I'd

chosen and have me redo it, intentionally paint sloppily so that I would tell him to leave and do it myself, or what have you. In the end, he didn't lift a finger to help. My 10 year old daughter did, though! She learned so much and even had her own tool set. We were proud of our mini, yet huge accomplishments.

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Time passed. This part gets a little foggy for me. My husband was back and forth between the base and coming home for long periods but eventually we were told that he would be deployed to Iraq. During the in-between phase, he had started talking to another older woman at work daily and even had picked up a young girl– he said she was 18– and took her home. These things are important because if I was to even look at the male neighbor by accident, all hell would break loose. But when I questioned his loyalty and even his weirdness, i.e. too old or too young, he literally twisted my words, projected back and made me seem like a crazy, jealous woman. Time was nearing for him to leave for Iraq and I started to realize that I wanted him to go

because I wasn't sure how much more I could take.

I was driving home from dropping off the kids at school one day and on the way home was listening to Dr. Henry Cloud and Dr. John Townsend on their Boundaries show on KKLA Christian radio. I had previously been praying out loud in the car and practically yelling at God about how I hated myself and had no idea what to do. I didn't like who I had become and what I wanted to accomplish as a mother, wife, and Christian. I was at a complete loss.

On the show, a woman called in and basically told my story, minus the part where her husband was dangerous. In the end, Dr. Cloud told her that her husband wasn't the problem, but that she was. She needed counseling and needed help discovering how to set boundaries. I was floored. I pulled over and wrote down the counseling hotline number. Prior to this, if I had mentioned therapy to my husband, it was a hard no. No one was going to tell him what to do and I wasn't going to badmouth him to anyone, period. Even if I mentioned it or asked, it would cause a one-way argument that lasted for months where my words would be twisted and I would be demeaned and written off as a silly, bitchy, stupid woman. But

now, he was leaving.

It was now getting close to the time when my husband would need to deploy to Iraq. About 4-5 days before he needed to leave, his Army buddy came out from Utah to stay with us. They were to be flown out from our base, together. The night before he arrived I had told my husband that I had skipped my period and wasn't feeling well. We were standing outside in our driveway talking and I remember him leaning in on my shoulder with his face and saying, "Please, Heavenly Father, no." I backed up and shot him a look and walked away. That was that. I didn't want to discuss it anymore.

When his friend showed up the next afternoon, my husband tried to pretend we were a perfect, happy family. I played it off for the most part. When it was announced that I was, in fact, pregnant again, he was happy and congratulated us. It wasn't long before my husband began to point out all of his friend's faults and snapped at him. When he was out in the front yard playing with our kids and threw Grace up in the air to catch her, my husband accused him of "putting his hands" all over her. His friend was stunned and tried to go on like everything was fine. I was just so embarrassed.

The night before they had to deploy, a few things happened. First, I had ordered a special meal for everyone from a restaurant that we liked. It took way too long to get it home, in traffic, and when we sat down to eat, it turned out some of what my husband had ordered was incorrect. He was very upset and ate as fast as he could and stomped off. That was our final family meal together. No one talked at the table and we were all nervous.

Then, he decided to take his friend out for a drink. They were gone until 3am. I kept calling my husband's cell phone, of course, with no answer. I knew that it was bad. By the time they came home and he passed out drunk, I managed to check his phone and saw that his Army buddy had also called him and left him voicemails asking him to come out of the sex shop and go home to his wife. For those who don't know, some of these shops offer booths with different "services." Yeah.

I'm not sure if I was only feeling sick because I was pregnant, furious, or both. But they both needed to be dropped off about 30 minutes from home at 8:30am. So I got myself up, vomited a few times, didn't make eye contact with either of them, and drove them off to where they needed to go. He tried

to say goodbye to me and was expecting me to park and see him off like the other families. The second he got out I sped off. I had no idea what would happen or what to do. But I knew that I was at the end of my rope.

Sometime shortly after that I called that hotline and found a therapist. It took quite some time for her to get to know me, even somewhat. But she was really good and helped me discover a lot of things. While he was deployed, he and I were still talking and emailing. I was so confused and back and forth because I felt guilty. On top of that, people were now praising me for being a military wife and cast a different light on the whole situation. If I even tried to tell people the truth, I always got the deer in headlights look. At least the therapist believed me. But we were only scratching the surface and it was pricey. There was no way that I could explain everything to her to give her a complete understanding.

Being pregnant without him there was definitely a different experience. The children and I were so different without him at home. The air was lighter and no one was walking on eggshells. Even though I had 3 kids and was pregnant, I started to realize that I was happier than I had ever

been. Considering that my husband was off fighting a war, this was disturbing and I knew it. But it was what it was. I prayed and asked God to reveal to me what I was supposed to do, and how. All I could do was live day to day.

My mother was tolerable at this time, but still extremely difficult and demanding. She would continuously ask me to do things for her, even though I lived 30 minutes away and she could do them herself. But if I refused, she would call me over and over to yell and point out what a horrible, selfish person I was. I'll give you an example.

One evening right before sundown, she called and asked if I could come and mail a letter for her. She wanted me to drop it off at the post office that was 4 blocks from her home. I, in turn, told her no and that she was going to need to do it herself as it did not make sense for me to load up the kids, drive for 30 minutes and go mail her letter near her own home. Mind you, she had a car and yes, could drive. But she wouldn't drive just anywhere. If it was far or whatever she considered to be out of her way, someone else was going to need to pick her up and take her. After days of going through 'the letter' calls, I finally caved in and went. I was trying to not cut off my mother again

and my mind was all over the place about how I should deal with literally everyone in my life. Maybe you are living this exact tug-of-war, trying not to cut off a parent who keeps hurting you. I'm not going to tell you there's one right answer. I wasn't doing it perfectly either.

Chapter Thirteen

Deep Down, I Knew

When I was about 8 months pregnant, the main water line under our house broke. Long story short, I ended up hiring a family to do the plumbing for less than it would have cost to have a plumbing company do it. But we needed to leave the house for a week. I didn't want to do it, but I asked my mother if we could stay over. Reluctantly, she said yes. But after one night of sleeping in her living room and having to deal with her demands, being upset and controlling and scaring the kids, we left. It was easier to stay at home with no water and shower at Gail's apartment, than it was to stay in her apartment with her.

After the plumbing was complete, I needed to patch up the drywall in the kids' room where the baby crib would also be, and paint the walls. We, the kids and myself, got it done. Everything worked out right on time. One of my aunts threw me a baby shower about a month before my birth, where my mother announced how huge I was and told me to take a "water pill" to

get rid of my swelling. (Don't worry, I didn't).

I was still in contact with my husband, and in therapy, which I did not hide from him. Around this time, I found emails between my husband and the older woman from his work. They were bad and I called her (because I couldn't call him first) and told her who I was, that I was pregnant with baby number 4, and that I knew about "them." She tried to deny it all, but couldn't. I told her that she could have him and hung up. I also emailed him and told him not to come home when his deployment was over and to find a military housing complex or ask them for assistance, but do not….come….home.

Theia was now 12 years old. I would love to tell you all that I was such a wonderful mom and protected her from everything, but I would be lying. I did run a clean, pretty house. I was trying my hardest to rid it of toxicity and follow Jesus. I had the kids in Christian school and we went to church most Sundays. But my girl, being the oldest, knew what was going on because I shared a lot of it with her. I didn't realize back then that that wasn't normal. My mother shared everything with me, in detail, all the way up to teaching me about sex with a porn magazine when I was 6. While I didn't do that, I did share with

her that I was trying to get out of the marriage and why. By then she had had to deal with him for so long that it was affecting her, too; like him saying that he was going to shoot her dog when he was mad at her, or stuff like that. Any protest brought on the, "you're all too sensitive" or, "you're overreacting" accusations, along with stomping, throwing, kicking, speeding, etc. She also saw how he treated me, drank too much, and was jealous and controlling.

I really was hoping that I could get her out before it was too late. Not just for her, of course, but all of the kids. But I was further confused by people (even at church) telling me that I should stay with him for the kids because taking them from him would make their lives harder, or that it would be too hard for me and I couldn't do it. I just could never win. I knew deep down in my heart what seemed right, but somehow there was always a misused Scripture to prove me wrong, right alongside a heaping pile of guilt.

Close to my due date with baby number 4, Theia was set to go to the summer camp that I used to go to. Thankfully, folks from church were taking her best friend at the time and they took her, too. She was supposed to be in the delivery room with

me and my friend from church. My friend worked at the Christian school and was the mother of my Theia's friend. We had grown close over the last few years and she and her family were very helpful during this time. The plan was that as soon as I went into labor, I'd call her and let her know and my mom had agreed to drive to my home and stay with the younger kids while I had the baby. I know what you may be thinking, but I had no choice.

There was an ongoing dispute with my mom at this time, because she was upset that I had washed all of the new baby clothes that I received at the baby shower. She would not let it go, even when I told her that it was none of her business and I wasn't going to discuss it anymore. This, along with the breastfeeding argument. I was "ruining my boobs" and she was angry about me having done this natural, non-narcissistic thing for my children. Aside from that, I did agree on the name that she had picked out for the baby, and since she wasn't around at all with the other kids (due to the restraining order), I did let her pick out the name. She was, at least, happy about that.

The day that Theia went to camp, I started having contractions. This is one of those funny but not funny stories.

Theia would have been devastated if the baby had come without her. I had gone to the hospital but they gave me ice water to stop the contractions and sent me home. Wouldn't you just know it? The baby waited for her big sister! Do you know what that means? I was in labor for a week! 6.5 full days and nights. On the day that I actually really needed to go to the hospital and Theia was already back, my mom came over to the house. We went off to the hospital for maybe 10 more hours and during that time, my mother called to yell and complain about how I didn't have waffles or Top Ramen there to give the kids and wanted to know why I didn't go to the grocery store. I told you it would be funny.

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About a month before the baby was due, I had met with my Obstetrician to sign up to have my tubes tied when the baby was born. I had just turned 30. She interviewed me and asked me what felt like 100 questions. I had told her as much as I could and that in no way, whatsoever, did I ever want to have a baby

with my husband again. I told her that he wasn't supposed to come home, but that I still didn't want any more kids. She almost begged me not to do it. She told me that I would find another man later on and that he would want me to have kids. She saw it all the time. But I was darn serious and wouldn't take no for an answer. I told her to tie and burn them. So I signed the documents and had the surgery after I had given birth.

Anne was born at 3:16pm (which always reminds me of John 3:16) and she was perfect and Theia didn't miss it! Once we got home and settled, things seemed to mellow down for a bit. I received a call with congratulations from my husband. I didn't really care at this point, but he was acting like nothing had happened and I couldn't control his actions.

The kids were elated to have a little baby at home. At that time their ages were 12, 8, and almost 6. They were all so good and helpful. Since the baby was born at the end of June, we didn't have to worry about getting up and going to school, so it was a nice transition. For many years up to this point, my husband's nephew (I say it this way to distinguish him from my brother's son) would come over often while his mother was at work, or doing other things.

His mother and I still spent time together on and off. We knew everything about each other, what was going on, etc. But sometimes we clashed because there was always so much and we handled things in different ways. At this particular time, everything was going well between us. My mom was also coming around to see the baby here and there, and would gladly watch her for a while so that I could spend a little time alone with the older kids.

Throughout this time, I was still going to therapy when I could afford it. When it was getting close to the time when my husband was supposed to come back to the States from Iraq, she knew that I didn't want him to come home and why. I was glad to have someone to talk to about it all. My mother, however, wanted me to let him come home and thought I was being mean. My church didn't understand the depth of what was going on, and I didn't feel comfortable sharing it all because of the reactions and cognitive dissonance. I was in a bad situation, even with the therapist, because she didn't know him and couldn't really help me other than during sessions. I distinctly remember her asking me if I felt that I was in danger, back when I started with her, but I had said no because he was gone.

For weeks, prior to his return, I had told him over and over that he needed to find somewhere to live and ask the Army for help. When I would question whether he was on top of this and had it mapped out, he would dance around it and not be frank with me. He would placate me just enough to shut me up.

Deep down, I knew that he wasn't going to do it. He didn't do anything, ever. I don't even think that he knows how to lift a hammer or a screwdriver, much less try to arrange a place to live in. Anything that had ever been done for our family, up to that point, was done by me. He would sign the dotted line or look at things and point out what he liked, didn't like, and expected me to fix them to his liking, but that was it.

The day he arrived back at the local Base, he called. His voice was shaking and he said that all of the families were there, picking up their soldiers with balloons, flowers, tears, etc. He was upset that we weren't there and couldn't believe that I was doing this to him and our children. On top of that, he had nowhere to stay but the Army said that within a few weeks they would have a place for him but that he needed to come home until then. It was all a lie and I knew it. But once again, I was the bad guy no matter what I decided to do.

Furious, I put on a fake smile and told the children that their dad was back and we were going to pick him up. I had no support and nowhere to go. Theia was upset and nervous, but I assured her that it was temporary, again. By this time, her nerves were a wreck and she was getting tired of the back and forth. It was driving her crazy and I felt horrible about it, but didn't know what to do. I knew that if I didn't pick him up, he would end up there one way or another, and that would be more scary.

I don't remember that car ride. I don't know if I have intentionally blocked it out, or not. But once we were back home, the baby, now 10 months old, was all over him and he was in tears with the kids. I let them have their time and tried to wrap my head around it all. Within days I was already "back to normal" and had already been told that he wasn't going to leave, that was his home, and I couldn't make him. Those were not the exact words he used. I'll allow you to use your imagination.

He came to church with us and received all of the praises of a soldier who'd just come home from the war. I figured that if we had to do this thing, we should at least try going to an upcoming marriage conference that I had heard

about on the radio. People were supportive and agreed to watch the kids. Everyone was rooting for us and seemed to want it to work out. The past history and all of that didn't matter. He was a soldier and we had a beautiful family.

At the conference, he went through the motions during the classes, etc. He did fall asleep while the guy was preaching for an hour, but he managed to pull off the daytime activities, acting as if he was paying attention and all that. But at night, while I was pumping milk for the baby in the hotel room, he went down to the bar to drink and then came back up with his horrible attitude.

My heart was growing black inside and I was sick of trying. I had heard that the definition of insanity was doing the same thing over and over but expecting different results. I knew this was crazy! But I didn't know how to get away. By then I had stopped going to therapy because he wouldn't allow it and she couldn't really help me with this anymore anyways.

Within a few months, our household was turning to chaos. He was getting more edgy and everyone was walking on eggshells again. Theia was now 13 and had met a boy that was 16. I don't remember how she met him, but the school she was

going to used to go to the park across the street during lunch, and he was meeting her there. They were also talking on the phone. Does this all sound familiar?

I was internally panicking. Of course, I spoke to Gail and my friends from the school, but what I really needed was for my husband to help with this matter. I knew it would not go well, but I had to try. So, I told him about my concerns and that I was worried that she was doing the same thing that I did, and didn't want that for her. I told him that it would be a good idea, at minimum, if we had the kid over so that her father could make himself known and lay down some rules. In my mind, I knew what those rules were, but my husband had never followed not even one.

Chapter Fourteen

When Evil Broke Loose

For days he kept promising that we would have the kid over for dinner. Theia knew and had told her boyfriend (I couldn't bring myself to say that word at the time) and they were both nervous wrecks. But after 4 days, on December 31st, 2007, in the morning, I couldn't take the anticipation anymore and I knew that my child couldn't either. This passive aggressive behavior was driving everyone insane.

My husband and I were watching an old movie on Turner Classics at about 11am. We had already eaten breakfast and all of the kids were occupied. David and Michael were playing video games in a small room that was off of the living room, Theia was in her room which was off of the dining room, and the other two girls were playing in their bedroom. During a commercial, I finally asked why he was doing this and what he was waiting for. This caused a small argument that he was not going to participate in, so he stood up and kicked a cardboard

box across the room and stormed off upstairs to our bedroom.

I had been doing laundry in the back room where my dad used to sleep. There was a bathroom in there that had a stackable washer and dryer. I headed in there to get it out of the dryer and had shut the sliding bathroom door behind me. This was now David's bedroom, so I emptied it all on the bed and began to fold.

As I was folding, my husband entered the room and shut the door. He stood directly behind me, so I turned around to face him. His chest was puffed up and his nostrils were flaring. He had a glare in his eyes that I had not seen before. He began to question why I wanted "that guy" to come over so bad. When I tried to explain, again, that we were parents and needed to parent our daughter, protect her, be involved in her life, etc., he would interrupt me with absurd accusations of wanting to meet this kid. After going back and forth for maybe 2 minutes, I finally caved. I said that I wanted a divorce and could not do this anymore. I said, outright, that I could not be married to him for one more day and that I knew what he wanted to do to me at that moment. I meant it and I didn't care. He then walked away and out of the room.

I was shaking all over and turned around to continue folding. But within seconds he was back in the room and locked the door behind him. The next thing I knew, I was on the other side of the room on the floor, in between the bathroom door, an end table and a bookshelf. He had picked me up and thrown me. I was on my back in a sort of fetal position, so I was able to block with both arms as he punched the left side of my head over and over for a while. But then he dragged me a bit and began to choke me. As all of this was happening, I yelled, "Jesus, Help Me!" over and over. I must have said it 30 times. With each time that I said it, I could feel a thick, heavy presence in the room and his momentum running out. I could literally feel the strength draining out of him.

Now, as I was saying what I was, my husband was saying, "You want to f*** him, don't you, b***h!" and, "You want him, don't you!" At first, I wasn't concentrating on what he was saying, but after a few times, I looked him straight in the eyes and said, "What?!" Then he stopped saying it. Eventually, he got me into a position where I couldn't move and he told me that now he had to kill me and everyone in the house (his 8 year old nephew, included) and that if he couldn't have me, no one

could.

Since he was strangling me, I closed my eyes and pretended that I was out. He stood up and threw a chair over my knees that my dad had made for me when I was little. Then he threw a few of David's toys at me and walked out.

I was lying under the stairwell and knew that he had my dad's pistol upstairs. As I heard the stairs begin to squeak, I managed to get up, adjust my sweatpants and tank top, leap over the squeaky hallway into the kitchen and tiptoe into the dining room. My body was completely numb.

I prayed at that very second that I could find my keys. I'm that person that used to just leave them anywhere and couldn't find them when it was time to go. Praise God, they were right in front of me. I quietly grabbed them and then knocked on Theia's door, quietly. She opened, looked at me in shock and I whispered for her to get the baby and get into the car.

I then swung open the game room door. The boys both looked at me and I motioned for them to get into the car. My 7 year old was sitting on the couch, eating her oatmeal. When she

saw my face, she dropped it. I told her to get into the car. I do believe that we were in that van within 60 seconds and I was driving before all of the doors were closed. As soon as we were halfway out the driveway and onto the street, I saw the screendoor fling open in my rearview mirror. We were out, safe.

All of the kids were crying. I remember David's little face from the very back seat as I looked at him through the mirror. He said, “Why did he do that to you, mama?” I don’t remember what I said. I just knew that I needed to act like everything was okay until we got to safety. I let them know that we were going to the police and that everything would be okay. I drove to the station, on adrenaline, and marched in as fast as I could. I was barefoot and bleeding. The pain hadn’t hit me yet.

When I got in there, I explained to the young officer at the front desk what had happened and let him know that my husband was armed and dangerous. He then asked what I was going to do with the kids. I let him know that I needed to take them to my mom’s and would be back but I asked him to go and have him arrested. He said that they couldn’t until I returned.

I drove the kids another 20 minutes away to my mom’s. She was upset and took them in, gave me a pair of sandals and a

sweater, and I used her phone to call my nephew's mom at work. She had said that she would meet me at the station, and I headed back over there. My mind was racing and I was in shock, but also terrified that he was going to find us all and kill us.

When I got back to the station, they had me sit on the wooden bench in the waiting room and called the Fire Dept. They arrived at the same time as Gail. They asked me a bunch of questions and then asked if I wanted to go to the hospital. I sat there, not knowing what to say, until one of them nodded his head to help me out. So, off to the hospital I went.

It was then that the pain started to hit me. My head, elbows, knees, ears, back, everything was starting to hurt. But let me just say this; nothing was broken. I was beaten, badly, by an Army Sergeant that had been to Iraq and had every intention of killing me, but Jesus, who was in the room with me when I called, did not let him break even one bone.

At the hospital, officers came to get the report and take pictures. It was a grueling process and I was more concerned with when they were going to arrest him. As it turned out, since it was New Years Eve, they were short staffed and needed to

wait for a certain detective to come in to assist. Since my husband had weapons and had been to Iraq, they needed a special team that wasn't yet available. So they wanted me to come back to the station with them when I was done at the hospital, to assist.

Gail took me back and I sat on that wooden bench for literally hours, while she picked up diapers for my mom and took her son home. I was in horrible pain and was now starting to swell up all over. But the adrenaline helped and my fear helped even more. At about 10pm, after about 9 hours, the detective and his team finally arrived and asked me a bunch of questions. Then they wanted me to call my husband and let him know that everything was okay but that they were going to escort me home. I did not want to, but I did. With the detective on another line listening, I called and with a monotone voice, my husband simply said, "Okay."

The officers drove in front of me with about 7 or 8 cars. They first rolled up to the house, turned off their lights, and surrounded it with armed Officers. Then the detective parked right out front, while I was way down the street, watching from about a half a block away. The detective then called him from

his cell phone and asked him to come outside so that they could chat before I came home.

When my husband stepped onto the porch, officers jumped at him from both sides, arrested him and took him away. Then I had to go into the house and meet with the other officers. It was then that they searched the home and found the gun, loaded and under my pillow. He had also left notes for all of the kids on their beds saying that we had gotten into a big fight and that he was sorry. Those things were confiscated, along with my dad's rifles that were family heirlooms. I had never thought to register them in my name after my dad passed, and at that moment I could care less.

The officers then proceeded to give me a few instructions. First, they gave me a temporary restraining order and told me that I had to go to the courthouse in downtown L.A. to have it made permanent. They then proceeded to tell me that a restraining order was just a piece of paper, and that I legally wasn't supposed to change the locks on our house. They said it about four times until I understood that they thought it a good idea for me to change the locks. The last thing was that I should not receive any phone calls from my husband, and to report it to

the police or Judge if I do. We wrapped up and I headed to my mother's to pick up the kids.

I don't remember that drive. I only remember my mom being frustrated at how long they were there, but not giving me too much of a hard time. Once we got home, I soaked in the bath for as long as I could and then told the kids to get the confetti ready. We had a long standing tradition of throwing confetti, watching the NY ball drop on TV, drinking sparkling cider and praying at midnight on New Years Eve. Shockingly, we had enough time to do this and pulled it off. As bad as everything was, the kids and I were happy during that moment.

Shortly after midnight, the phone rang. The first two calls were bail bondsmen who wanted to know if I wanted to bail my husband out. I explained a few things to them and we hung up. But then, he called. He immediately started crying and saying that he was in trouble, this wasn't going to be good for the Army or work, and wanted to know if I was going to bail him out. He also wanted to know why I told him to hit me. I told him that if he called again, I was going to record it and report him to the police. He didn't call back.

Chapter Fifteen

A Large Funeral Bouquet

On January 2nd, 2008, when the courthouse was opened after the holiday, Gail took me to get the restraining order. I wasn't sure what to expect, but having been through this with my mother, I had thought that it would be similar. It wasn't. A woman interviewed me as she typed away and asked me questions that I wasn't expecting. I was shocked when she said, "How long has he been abusing you?" I didn't even answer her. No one had ever put it that way before, and I had always thought that I was just being too sensitive or overreacting. Gail actually answered her and said, "for 18 years." I literally couldn't talk after that. The woman handed me a pamphlet about domestic violence and told me to go sit and wait for the Judge. After the Judge saw my big, beat up face and head, she immediately granted the order and told me to go take it to Parker Station, where my husband was being held.

I'm not sure how I ended up alone after this. I think that Gail needed to leave. But I absolutely did not want to go do this thing. By now, my bruising was bad and my face deformed. One of my earlobes was torn from earrings that I had been wearing and my face was swollen and discolored, even with makeup. But I had to get it done.

When I walked into the jailer's office, a very tall police officer saw me and stood up. When I handed him the paperwork and ran and hid in the corner, he came out to see me. I told him that I did not want my husband to see or hear me and I wanted to leave. He asked me, "Did he do that to you?" When I said yes, he told me to wait right there and that he would be right back.

Those 5 minutes felt like an hour. I was shaking all over and wanted to throw up. I was also in a lot of pain and the Ibuprofen was wearing off. When he finally came back out, he gave me a copy and said that he had given the order to my husband personally and not to worry. I was, and still am, very thankful for that man and how he treated me.

The next morning, I headed down to the local locksmith

business that wasn't too far from home. I had gone around and taken off every doorknob that entered the house and put them in a bag. One of the owners of the business had been to my church a few times, so he recognized me. He stood quiet as I handed him the bag with my left hand. He looked at me and said, "Why do you still have that on?" He was talking about my wedding ring. I hadn't had time to even think about it before. I took it off and stuck it in my pocket. I then asked how much he would charge to change the locks and he just said that he would follow me home and do it all himself.

We had a large family portrait hanging on the wall in the living room with my husband wearing his Army uniform. He kept staring at it and looking away as he worked, shaking his head. I didn't know how it would affect the kids if I took it down right away, but I knew that it was upsetting him. He only charged me $35.00. I am thankful for him, too.

The day after that, I received a call from the police, telling me that my husband was out of jail and needed to come home to get his things. I began to cry and ask how this could be? But he had done his time, and was out. They would escort him home to get his belongings where he would then take them

to wherever he was going to stay.

I immediately began packing all of his stuff and putting what I knew he needed in large containers in the living room. When the police knocked on the door, I had the kids ready and we all walked out into the van. I just told the police to call me when they were done and to lock the door on the way out. They asked me to stay and ensured that we would be safe, but I couldn't be in his presence for even one second. Having to see him standing outside waiting to get in completely triggered me and I was terrified.

I managed to remain calm and drove around with the kids. But they were scared and confused, too. Beginning that night, we all slept in the living room. I slept with a crowbar and a can of Lysol. For weeks after that, I would hear his loud, 1960's Plymouth Fury drive by at all hours of the night. I also heard noises outside, but could never prove they were him. Eventually, I couldn't handle it anymore and decided that we needed to move.

I began to look for someone that I could rent the house to. After going through a few different interviews, I settled on a single mom who needed a place to stay quickly, and we began

to move out. It was hard to find a place because I didn't have a job and had to use my husband's income, which was still going to our shared bank account. I somehow managed to pull it off and we got into an old house a few towns over. I was excited to get out and start somewhere new.

We got settled at the new place fairly quickly. I still drove them to their school and began to look for a job. I had no idea how I was going to pull off working, on top of everything else. The baby wasn't even 2 years old yet and to make matters worse, once we started going to court for the divorce, custody, etc., the Judge ordered supervised visits every week, and therapy for myself and the kids separately. There was not enough time in the day or week for me to do all of these things. Then, he started finding ways to withhold money from me and we started not having enough to pay for my bills. Plus, he was not relenting on stalking me in the most subtle ways.

The facility that I had to take the kids to had 2 parking lots. One for the victims and one for the perpetrators. We had separate entrances and he would have to wait for 15 minutes after the visits so that me and the kids could leave. One of the rules was that he could not give the kids any gifts. But the first

Valentine's day that came up, he showed up with chocolate and flowers, supposedly for the kids. This may seem nice, but the bouquet that he gave to Theia was a large funeral bouquet and he whispered to her that it was for me as she was leaving. This not only scared both of us, but broke her heart because he really didn't get her anything. Of course, he wasn't thinking about that. Why would he? But these things, all of them, were affecting her deeply. I complained to the facility and they said it would never happen again, but the damage was already done.

Since I was renting out our house, I had some profit to help with my new rent. But now I needed to find more ways to make money. For a while, I managed to find books at thrift stores at a low cost and sell them for profit. But this took up a lot of time and wasn't enough. I also figured out that he knew where I lived, because he would use the ATM card from our account in a circle around the perimeter of my new house. There was no reason for him to be in that town.

One night, while I was sitting on the couch watching TV, the screen had gone momentarily dark during a commercial, and I saw him standing at the french door in front of me, peeking in through the window. I turned off the TV and ran to another

room and called the police. I had just happened to move one block from the local station. They came almost right away, but I couldn't prove that he had been there, so they couldn't do anything.

During all of this, Theia was about to go into high school and I wanted to try to find a way to send her to the Christian school that some of the kids from her current school were going to. My mother had agreed to pay for it, since she was getting my dad's retirement and had gotten his life insurance. But after the first two months of school, she changed her mind and denied that she had agreed to it. Theia was already really struggling and hanging out with the wrong crowd wherever she went, so she didn't even want to go there after all. But now I needed to find another school for her.

At the same time, the therapist that had been assigned to the kids had a long discussion with me about how it was important for me to go back to school so that they could see me advancing and growing. He knew that I was depressed and having a hard time finding a job. He didn't want me to take them out of their school and send them to the local public school, but instead recommended that I find a way to keep them

there for stability and go to school myself. Well, I was motivated but had no idea how to make it work with everything else that I needed to do.

The first thing that I thought of was to go see a college counselor at a vocational school for a respiratory therapy technician program. I made an appointment and met with the woman that was in charge of that department. Within not even 5 minutes of knowing me and my plight, she told me that I wouldn't qualify and that it would be too hard with four kids.

I was discouraged, but also angry. She didn't know me and what I was capable of! So I spoke with another parent of my kids' friends that was a vocational nurse and asked a bunch of questions. I figured it was worth a shot, so I made an appointment with a different school. This time I got in, but there was a catch. I couldn't own a home or make the amount of money that was going into the bank account if I wanted to qualify for the student loans. I didn't qualify for financial aid, regardless. But these other things needed to be dealt with because there was no way that I could work, raise the kids and go to school. I needed the loans.

It was a hard decision to make, but I prayed and knew

that it needed to be done. Besides, I didn't ever want to live in that house again. Ever. So I found someone to help me do a quit claim deed and signed the house over to my husband. My name was no longer on the title, but it was still on the loan.

I got approved for school and set off to become a nurse. At first, my mother agreed to watch the kids when my classes were held during the day. Other times, Theia, who was now homeschooling, was able to watch them. But none of that worked out. My mom only ended up coming once. After that I would drop off the baby with her when we could work it out, and I still had to find ways to get my kids to their school, which was pretty far. It was a very difficult time, and we had only been living at the new house for about 8 months during all of this.

Then, the unthinkable happened. I suppose I should have known, but I really didn't see it coming. My husband spoke to a lawyer who told him that he could now legally throw out my tenant and move back into the house. This meant that I would no longer have that income, and the child support situation was still not clarified. I had signed a one year lease and was now being threatened with a lawsuit by my new landlord if I broke it. In the end, I found a tenant for the house that we were living in,

my tenant moved out of the house that I owned, my almost ex-husband moved into it, and we…were homeless.

Thankfully, the church where the younger kids were still going to school offered us a room above the Kindergarten class. It was like a mini apartment with a full bathroom in the hallway. There was a fridge and sink, but not a kitchen, so we had to create a makeshift kitchen. As bad as things were, we still managed to set it up in a way that was homey. We shared bunkbeds, set up an office desk, TV area, dining section and kitchen, all in a 13x12 foot room. The kids were able to walk downstairs to school, which was also very helpful.

In the end, I couldn't complain. We were safe, eating, and I was able to somehow continue to go to school. It was tough, though. The baby was now a toddler, the oldest a teenager and I had 2 in between. For the most part they all got along, but we were in one room. I had to study and do my homework there, cook dinner, help the other kids with their homework and everything else.

It also seemed as if the kids were always sick. Ever since they were babies, they had so, so many health issues. They would all get pneumonia at the same time, which is quite

uncommon, and David had developed asthma after he had his three month baby vaccines. I didn't realize it then, but he had come down with bronchitis the day after his shots. I wrote it off as having been due to being at the doctor's office with other sick kids. But ever since then, he had allergies and breathing issues that progressed as he got older. Needless to say, we spent a lot of time at the doctor for so many different reasons.

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Within this same time frame, a woman I'd known since childhood asked me to meet her at the mall. Because she knew my ex, at first I thought that it might be a trap. But once I heard the seriousness in her voice over the phone, I met with her in person. She told me my ex had been secretly grooming her teenage daughter since the girl was 14 (and the same age as Theia) and it went on for 2 years. Yes, the worst case scenario. He was 34 when it began and almost 37 when we found out. She was a child.

This whole time, I had been forced to take the kids to visit him at the visitation facility. The kids didn't want to go even without knowing any of this, minus the youngest who didn't know the bad side of him because we got out when she

was a baby. I was livid and determined to somehow find justice in all of this and didn't see why the children should still need to spend time with him, considering the newfound circumstances.

I called the Army, I called his work, I called the visitation facility, I called my lawyer… I don't think that there was anyone that I didn't call to try to find help. They were all upset and unhappy, but he didn't do it on Army time, it's got nothing to do with me or his fatherly rights, he's already being supervised, he could not lose his rights for what he did in his free time and it's got nothing to do with work. Looking back, I'm not sure what I was expecting, living in California. I definitely did think that the Army would be able to do something. Silly me.

When the day came for his arraignment at the courthouse, I showed up. He was chained to multiple other men in a line, and they sat behind a window. When he saw me in the audience, he looked down and didn't look up again until it was all over. The mother and daughter did not show. It was too much for the girl and they had moved away (which I fully supported). But because of this, he only did three weeks in jail for statutory rape and the D.A. didn't feel that he needed to be added to the

sex offender registry since he had done his time. He also remained in the Army reserves for many more years. Are you thinking that this is all like an episode of the Twilight Zone? Yeah, me too.

The day of the hearing my ex-husband's sister Rachel– the one who lived with me since she was a little girl– was in the hallway. I hadn't seen or spoken to her in a very long time prior to that day. Right off the bat, she began defending him and saying that he wouldn't have done that. Even after all that he did to her, myself, the children… I explained all of the evidence to her and tried to convince her, but it was no use. I was so tired and fed up that I didn't want to deal with it. I made the truth known and left. I could not believe how much evil he was able to just get away with over and over.

I couldn't understand why, when I was trying so hard to do everything right and follow God, were these things still able to happen with no justice. I was entirely unaware of the impact of bloodline curses, previous sins, or open doors that needed to be addressed in the Courts of Heaven. I would learn about all of this years later, but in the meantime, things carried on as usual.

A few months after all of that took place, I was back in

court to finalize my divorce. I had been to court so many times at this point that I should have received an incentive. It was finished and I was finally not his wife anymore (Praise the Lord!). I ditched his last name and thought that I could at least put that part behind me. Gail threw me a divorce party at a place near our old neighborhood and several friends showed up. It felt like a small slice of revenge and I was no longer able to hide my anger and bitterness. I got very drunk, and called it a night. Don't worry, I don't drink…at all. Most people think I'm a total prude, but I really don't like feeling out of control. That night, however, it felt appropriate.

Chapter Sixteen

Graduation, Sabotage, And A New Satan

So many other things were happening and I cannot write about all of them or this book will be triple in size (you're welcome). But each of the kids had their own issues and things happening while I was dealing with school, court, post separation abuse, and so, so much more. I wanted my kids to be healthy and learn to have good relationships, but I also wanted them to be respectful, well-behaved and well-rounded too. They were very well behaved when we went out. That was never an issue, and I was proud of that. But as time went on, I started slipping and they, of course, struggled, too.

Now that I was divorced, Gail started asking me to go out with her. She felt that I needed to go out and maybe even find a new man. The thought terrified me at first, but then I just figured that if I went out with her once or twice and left it at that, it wouldn't be a big deal. She had also convinced me to open up a Facebook account. I wanted nothing to do with social

media before that and I didn't even know much about it. Anyhow, once I opened one up and started talking to people that I had gone to high school with, or even family, it didn't seem so bad.

I graduated from nursing school after 14 months as President of my class with a 4.3 GPA. Due to the fact that the school was in the process of moving to a new building, we couldn't have a large graduation and could only bring one person. I brought Theia and managed to give a speech that gave the Glory to God and made people cry. I was so happy to be finished, and so hopeful that I would hurry up and find a job that would pay enough to get us out of the room and into our own place.

At around this time my brother, who had been in jail for running a meth lab and assaulting his girlfriend, was about to be released. He had been there for a few years this time. My mom had been sending him money regularly in jail. She said it was for soup and cigarettes. It didn't matter what I said. So be it. But when he was about to get out, she bought him a manufactured home in New Mexico. She bought it and he was supposed to be responsible for the taxes and upkeep. As expected, after a few

years he destroyed it and let it go.

My mother also started to get plastic surgery during this time. It started with a tummy tuck. That turned into 3 tummy tucks (she was never more than 130 pounds), a face lift, chin implant, breast implants, and I don't even know what else. I'm aware that it was her money and her body. But I'm also aware that I was the one who took care of my dad who hadn't even been with her for 10 years when he died, and I was her daughter– struggling with her grandkids. I had to intentionally force myself to ignore these things as they were happening around me just so I could function without getting caught up by the distraction and injustice of it all.

Right before my graduation, an old guy friend from Junior High reached out to me on Facebook. We were both recently divorced and our kids were similar ages. You can see where this is going. We started to chat more and catch up, and then I invited him to Grace's birthday party at our church yard outside of the room where we lived.

It went well and almost immediately, he was my boyfriend. It didn't seem to bother the 3 youngest, but Theia was very upset. I didn't know how to handle it and felt guilty,

but I also was getting very lonely and I really did think that this was God. The guy did say he was a Christian, too, which made me feel better. But after a few short months, I don't even think it was 3 full months, we called it quits. His ex-wife had heard of our relationship and tried to get him back. He wanted to try it out again for the kids. I was supportive and backed away. But after that I started to spiral.

I passed my NCLEX (National Council Licensure Exam) in the late Fall of 2009 and obtained my nursing license. Within the time that I was waiting for the license to arrive so that I could begin working, I started going out with Gail more frequently on the weekends. It started with a concert or a show at a venue, but then turned into gigs at bars. There was always way too much drinking involved. Theia would watch the kids and was understanding about it, but I knew it was horrible. I figured since we were at the church, they were safe, and they were. But that didn't make it okay.

There were a few different times where guys would talk to me and even ask me out. We would exchange information and chat on Facebook or by text. But when I would discuss it with Gail, she would get upset because it had been a guy that

she liked. This happened several times. I was starting to feel overwhelmed and like she was too controlling and intentionally trying to sabotage me. I was also starting to feel lonely and was no longer connected to God, at all.

I was still taking the kids to Church (we lived there), praying, and reading my Bible, but I knew that I was backsliding and didn't know how to control it. I didn't know how to handle all of these different things that were happening and I didn't have solid, Godly support. Most people couldn't handle the stuff that I was going through. It was way too heavy. I also was starting to feel like I was never going to be able to find someone who would love or want me in my situation. I had lost all hope that there was a Christian man that would even want anything to do with me.

1 Peter 5:8 (ESV) says, "Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour." Well, I was not entirely sober at this point, nor was I being watchful anymore. I had thrown all caution to the wind and just like the Word says, it was open season on me to be devoured. The irony here is that the new guy who is about to enter the picture literally had a nickname that

was a synonym for Satan. I can almost see God rolling His eyes at me. Funny, but not funny. I can laugh now, but it was no laughing matter.

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I received a message on Facebook from another high school friend, whom I had not spoken to in at least 20 years. I'll call him Andrew. We were excited to catch up. It started with him letting me know that he had run into my ex-husband at Starbucks and they sat and talked. My ex had told Andrew his version of the story: that he left me and the kids because I was a religious freak. I, of course, proceeded to tell him my side, but it was just too long. There was no way I was going to get it all out through messenger.

Somehow, we decided to meet up with Gail and go to a movie and dinner. We did that, and then we were invited to a show on another night. We did that too and it was great. We chatted online here and there in between and I managed to get some of my story out, but we were distracted. I was flattered

that he wanted to hear it all and couldn't believe how much we had in common at the current time. I had just gone through my divorce with my crazy ex, and he was going through the same. It seemed that everything that I shared with him, he was somehow going through as well. We also had kids the same age. Everything seemed almost too perfect.

It started to get weird with Gail, again, when she started to get jealous about this one, too, and made unnecessary comments. I was getting frustrated and wasn't going to argue about it. He and I were talking, and she wasn't going to mess it up for me. Plus, it had nothing to do with her. However, if I didn't have all of that on my mind, I may have been able to see more clearly and make a wiser decision. But now I was getting impatient and honestly, I was scared. I had never been completely alone, and my kids were rebelling. I felt stuck at the Church and still didn't have a job. I couldn't see a way out and I was starting to believe that I was no good without a husband.

This guy said everything right. He even started copying and pasting the Scriptures that I would post on Facebook and post them on his wall. Mind you, he was a member of one of the metal bands that I used to see regularly when I was younger.

But years had passed and we were grown up now. Or so I thought.

I suppose there were many red flags right from the beginning. But my mindset was that he wasn't as bad as the first guy. He never got violent. He wasn't crazy jealous and didn't mind having me around other human beings. It was actually quite the opposite, most of the time. There were some times, though, where we would meet somewhere and he wouldn't sit next to me, or didn't want to eat the Thanksgiving meal that I cooked for days, or something like that. It did trigger me and I was hurt, but he told me that I was overreacting and that my previous relationship was causing me to behave like this. Again, this felt all too familiar and I was starting to question if it really was all me. As time went on, the mind games continued to worsen.

Our relationship escalated very quickly. I helped him get his motorcycle business off the ground and we would take all of our kids to shows or events on the weekends. At first, we would go out to eat, take them to amusement parks, etc. It seemed like things were going well, enough. Not perfect, but I wasn't expecting perfection. Of course, the kids had to get used to

everything, but I knew that it would take time for them to get to know each other, regardless. That is always a risk. But I still didn't know what I was doing and should have never gotten into this. I knew that I was unequally yoked, and now I was backsliding so bad that I couldn't see any way out. I ended up thinking, just like before, that I was stuck and needed to somehow make it work.

Within a year of being together, and me spending less and less time with my kids, being gone all night, etc, he had said that his roommate was going to move out and he wanted to know if the kids and I would move in. He was living in a house that his dad owned that he had been living in since he was a teenager. He knew that I didn't want to move in without being married, so we agreed to get married asap, but this moving situation needed to happen at the first of the next month to cover the rent. (I was going to have to pay rent). He also wanted me to agree to getting my tubes untied, because he wanted a baby. (Remember what my doctor said?)

There was another issue. He had another roommate that was also supposed to leave so that our boys would have their own room, and the girls could have a separate room. He

promised that all of this would happen and I, feeling stuck and pressured to act quickly, agreed. At least this way I would always be with him and the kids, not leaving to see him (yes, that is what I did) every night, and we wouldn't be at the church in one room anymore. It all sounded good on paper. But deep down, I felt it was not, and would not be good.

The first night that we moved in and got all of the kids' furniture set up in their room, they had brought me into the kitchen to huddle. Theia made a comment about this being the first night back in an actual house and out of the room. They were so excited. I said a short prayer and we hugged and went to bed. My poor babies. I will never forget that. It was all a lie.

Within days I started to realize that things were very wrong. On the second Sunday that we were there, Andrew got his son up early and began to do yardwork with him for what seemed like hours. I had made breakfast and was trying to do stuff and relax with the kids. There was no discussion about it, but he began walking in and out and stomping all over the place. He was also ignoring me, and I wasn't quite sure what I was supposed to do. Later that night we ended up arguing about it because he had expected me to get everyone up and working

too. I explained that it was Sunday and we needed to rest before the school/work week. I also let him know that he needed to discuss things like that with me and not just expect me to read his mind, but that became a whole other argument.

Then, he started hiding our stuff all over the house. I would go to grab my cinnamon for my coffee, and couldn't find it for days. Then, when I was cleaning up high, I would find it at the back of the highest cabinet shelf that was up against the ceiling at a much later date. This guy was 6'3" … I am 5'2," or maybe less by now (ha ha). When I pointed it out to him, he insisted that it was my kids, even though they were looking for it too. We also had to take our own toilet paper rolls to the bathroom with us, the roommate was never told to leave and David ended up staying in the girl's room until he eventually was moved into a side room that had a door to the outside and was freezing and drafty. I had to permanently live out of boxes because there wasn't enough room for me and there was no closet. Back to no closet…

I need to back up here and say that this house was painted red inside and had demonic decorations all over the place. Yes, I know. But I talked myself out of it because the kids

thought it was cool and it was just his old, Mexican style, or whatever. I had been to the house when I was young and it was nostalgic to me, and I was trying not to be a prude or a "religious freak." But the kids started to have nightmares and hear things after we moved in. We all started fighting all of the time and were continually pitted against each other. Andrew even treated his little dog badly and the kids would take over to care for it.

On and off his mother would stay with us. She was very troubled, but had a lot of the same issues that my own mother had. Since Andrew and I had this in common, it felt so familiar that it was easy for me and even the children to deal with. It was uncanny the things that we had in common. But I got along with his mother well and truly wanted her to be saved. We would have long talks about the Bible and she would really listen. But the medication and addictions would cause her to go in different directions until one day she left and ended up not coming back.

Chapter Seventeen

Another Wedding, A Shattered Windshield

About 2 months after the kids and I moved in, Andrew and I got married. The church that we went to would not marry us because they said that the Bible instructed me to go back to my first husband. I stopped going to church after that. We got married at a little chapel in East L.A. No, I did not wear a wedding dress, but I did wear a dress this time. All of the kids were involved. Everyone smiled and appeared happy. It was toxic and it was our normal, but it was *not* good.

We had taken two cars to the wedding and headed home after we went out to dinner. On the way back, someone threw a spark plug at the back window of Andrew's car and shattered it. Our sons were in his car and the girls were with me. I felt that it was a bad omen. I still do.

Things quickly spiraled out of control after that. The fights got worse, the children were beginning to have more trouble at school, and none of them were being treated well at

home. I fought hard for things to change and I always stuck up for them, but the only real solution was to get out and I didn't know how I was going to do all of that, again. I didn't have a job that paid well, yet. I didn't have any family to help, and I wasn't going to ask the church again.

I had never been introduced to passive-aggressive behavior before this. My mother, brother and first husband were more blatant. Yes, they twisted things, but they didn't necessarily lie for the sake of lying and then laugh about it secretly. I could not pinpoint what was happening because it was so utterly confusing.

This guy was charming and said all of the right things at the right time, but then would flip a switch in an instant and all of a sudden you were wrong about everything and the stupidest person, or his favorite word, "dumbass," in the world. He would hide people's things or move stuff around and then lie about it, just to be able to say that you did it and then laugh about it later. I started to notice it everywhere, even with people that he worked with, or his roommate. It was surreal. So much so that I questioned if I was even seeing it correctly.

Somewhere in between this literal chaos, where I was

cooking, cleaning, working, paying rent in my husband's house, trying to raise kids who no longer respected me; as well as the younger ones who were innocent and caught in the middle, getting put down and berated regularly, and now dealing with way bigger problems than before, I was scheduled to get my tubes untied. A promise is a promise. We had almost broken up and gotten back together so many times by now, that it almost felt normal. But he convinced me that bringing a little baby into the mix might make everything better. I know how this sounds, but it happened.

On the day that I was scheduled to have my tubes untied, Theia sat outside with me on the porch. It wasn't even an hour before I had to leave, when she told me that she was having a problem with meth. I was shocked, and also in denial. We talked for a bit until it was time for me to go, and I prayed with her. But I didn't understand how bad it was. Things had been so hard for her. When we were at the church, she used to go out a lot. Again, I didn't have boundaries and still didn't understand how to implement them. I felt guilty for all that she had been through, so I used to tell her yes to almost everything.

But now, living here, there was all of a sudden a curfew

and militant rules (not out of love, but strictly for the sake of having control), and it was all too much for her. She had been hanging around with new friends that were doing worse things than the previous group (just as I had) and now she was in trouble. I had told her that we would discuss it when I got home, but that she needed to stay near me all of the time until we got this under control. She agreed. Then, I was off.

The surgery was brutal. I had no idea that I was going to experience that sort of pain for so long. It took a week before I even remotely began to feel better. The doctor had said that it was the easiest surgery she had ever done, because the doctor who tied them did it loosely (just like I had told her not to). It was outpatient surgery, so I came home the same day.

Theia nursed me back to health and stayed with me the whole time. The other kids helped, too. Oddly enough (or not), the husband avoided me like the plague. He was gone as much as possible and didn't lift a finger to help me. He even made comments about the kids not being able to go out and get me food, even though they couldn't drive and did not have licenses. I did what I could to keep the peace and make sure that everyone was at least not dealing with that, although it was

nearly impossible.

I had not told him about what Theia and I had discussed until I was almost healed. He was very angry with me for not telling him, but I didn't know how he was going to react or if he would even be able to help. Of course, he was able to spin it and make it like I was enabling her and said that she needed our help, etc. So I took it as a good sign that he wanted to help her. It was my mini glimpse of hope that always seemed to string me along. I didn't need much, just a smidge.

Eventually I healed up, and it was back to work, cooking, cleaning, etc. After a short period of time, maybe 2 months of drug testing Theia and trying to help her on my own with her addiction, it became too much. Rehab facilities wouldn't take her because she was 17 and a half, unless she volunteered to agree to a year, and I didn't know what else to do. I also didn't understand how the tests were coming back positive, even though she was always with us. It wasn't until David, who was now 13, ended up telling me that people were coming to the window at night and that she had stuff hidden in the room. He was actually afraid that she was going to die and hadn't told me that he knew until that point. One of the

agreements with Theia was that the kids could not know.

Once that information came out, I went through her stuff. I then miraculously found a local Victory Outreach Rehab center for Women. It was free and they had an available bed. It was a 1 year program, but they would only accept her if she agreed to it. The day that I found this place Theia had been out applying for jobs, and when she got home we, Andrew and I sat her down to let her know what the ultimatum was. She needed to go to a facility for help, or she needed to leave.

She was already 18 by now, and we didn't have any other way to deal with it. I was hopeful, but as soon as I told her she got irate and started looking to my husband for help. He stayed quiet. She was upset that it was a Christian place and said that they were going to brainwash her. Looking back, I understand this now. Hypocrisy does not fly with kids (or adults) and God will not be mocked. I was not representing the real Jesus to her and she was now indifferent. So she packed up, I asked her for the house key, and she left.

I was devastated. The kids were devastated. David felt guilty, even though I didn't mention him or what he had told me. My younger daughters cried. My world was spinning and I

had no idea which way to turn. My brother, my mother, my nephew and now my daughter. My baby was gone and I didn't know what to do and had no control over it.

The next day I received a call from my husband's mother. She asked me how everything was going and then told me that she had spoken to Theia. I need to back up and add that during the previous year or so, my first husband had not been having his supervised visits with our kids because he had gotten into trouble and had been charged with drug possession. He also owed the visitation facility money, so they canceled him until he paid in full, which never happened.

Well, when my current mother-in-law spoke with Theia, she learned that she had gone back to her father's house. The one that I had to give up. The one where he abused that young girl. Yes, she knew the whole story, but she wasn't sober and was not thinking straight. It was also brought to my attention that her friend who was 16 and also using, had run away to go there with her as well.

The first thing that I did was panic. I was thankful for my mother-in-law. She calmed me down and stated that she would keep in touch with Theia. I then notified the parents of

the 16 year old. Her mother said, “I cannot make her do things” and that was pretty much it even though I explained literally everything. So I let her know that I would report them if they didn’t go pick her up because 1) he was dangerous and 2) it was going to get my 18 year old daughter into more trouble. At some point they did just that. But years later I did learn that my first husband was, in fact, using meth with our daughter. Praise God, she made it out of there after years of hardship, manipulation and abuse.

Within just a few more months, things had all but completely unraveled at home. There are so many things that I can talk about here, but it would take up way too many pages. The last straw while we lived at that demon infested house, was this. David had an electric pencil sharpener that we all used for homework. There was a desk in the hallway, but the plug did not accommodate it, so I had moved it to the kitchen. Prior to this, I had put his electric toothbrush in the same spot because when we had put it in the bathroom, Andrew moved it to David's room and said it was gross to have it in the kitchen. Yes, we fought about that too. Nothing made sense.

Now, the pencil sharpener was missing. I looked all over

for it to no avail. I finally called Andrew at work and asked where he had put it. He raised his voice and said that we weren't looking hard enough and that if he had to come home and find it, there would be trouble. I challenged this, he came home and instantly found it behind the desk on the floor in the hallway. When I pointed out that he put it there on purpose because it was in the kitchen, he insisted that it was there all along. He then yelled at me and David told him that he needed to stop. Andrew acted like he was going to go do something to my son and I don't remember what words I used, but it was profanity, and I told the kids to pack up and that we were leaving.

I didn't care where anymore. We had lived in that house for a total of 9 months but it had seemed like a lifetime. The next day when I went back with the kids to get some things, he had put all of our stuff out on the street; furniture included. Not the sidewalk, the street. The neighbors came out and said that he was being really loud during the night and they had thought that he had lost his mind.

Now, Gail lived in the next town over. She only had a 2 bedroom apartment for herself and her son, but I called her to explain what was happening and she told us to come. She had

cleared out a room for us and we made it work. We were very blessed to have somewhere to go and I needed to clear my head.

I felt horrible for Anne, who was about 5 at the time. She cried and kept saying that now she didn't have a dad. This messed with my head a lot and I felt guilty. But my intention was to stay in that town, get the kids into the local schools there, which were good, and get us our own place and move on. I wanted to send David to a private charter that some of his friends were going to go to for high school, but now it would be too far for me to drive him. So they all were enrolled in this new district and things were on the up.

We stayed at Gail's house for about a month. Andrew came by once or twice to try to talk to me. I think the first time I said no, but maybe the second time I said yes. I honestly don't remember. What I do remember is wanting to draw closer to God and read my Bible again, pray, listen to worship music, or whatever I could do to try to change the path that we were on. It worked for awhile, but it wasn't long until I got distracted with life again and started falling behind.

We rented an apartment in the new town that was on the 3rd floor. I had to work pretty far from home, so a lot of times a

neighbor would bring the kids home from school for me, or they would have to walk. Before too long, maybe a few months, Andrew was coming around again and we were back together. He wouldn't move out of that house, and I refused to ever go back. This caused some trouble, but I also didn't mind that we didn't live together for awhile.

We did go to marriage counseling. The counselor had told me to, "hold my guns" and wait it out. He even met with me alone twice, and once he knew a large part of my story, he really didn't want me to go back with him. But I already had, and at this point, he wasn't leaving me alone. I was getting worn out. I was also hoping that him knowing that the counselor felt that way, might change his behavior. But no. Doesn't work like that.

Chapter Eighteen

Kathleen, Death and Birth

There was a time when my husband had asked the kids (Grace was 12, my step-son also 12, and David, 14) to help him with something at work. In exchange he promised to take them to a concert that they wanted to go to in San Diego. Mind you, that is 4 hours from Los Angeles in traffic, but that was the agreement.

I thought it was nice and that maybe they would all bond over it. The kids did their part, but when it came time for the tickets to be purchased and the arrangements to go to the concert to be made, he backed out. I was so furious, but hid it from the kids. Then I basically forced him to give me the money for the tickets and agreed to take them myself and made up something along the lines of him needing to work and me having more time to be able to do it.

On the day of the concert, we also scooped up two other girls that were the daughters of an old high school friend that

was part of the same metal crowd. They now attended the Christian School that my kids were going to. I was happy that they were friends. But I did find it more than ironic that we were headed to a metal concert. It felt like way more than a coincidence.

We arrived in the evening, right on time. The lady at the ticket booth made the kids come over to the window and thank me for driving them there from L.A. When we got inside, I just sat in the hallway. I didn't have a ticket and there were a few other moms doing the same thing, so I sat on the floor near one of them. I will never forget her. Her name was Kathleen.

We got to talking about our kids, our family lives and then our stories. As it turned out, her situation growing up was identical to that of my 6 year old, Anne, at the time. Her mother had been married twice, first to a psychopath with a similar story as mine, and then to someone who matched the description of my current husband. They had the same amount of kids as we did at the time and almost the same story. I was so intrigued that I kept asking her questions about what happened to them all when they got older, what happened to her mother, step-father, etc. It turned out that Kathleen's mother stayed with

the man until they both got old, but she lost her mind and died in a mental hospital. The step-dad was all alone and Kathleen would visit him to check on him every so often, but no one else would have anything to do with him. Her siblings didn't talk to each other and didn't follow God.

Right before it was time to go (this talk went on for hours), she asked me if I was a Christian. I told her that I was but that I was horribly backslidden and felt I had lost my way, even though I was still reading, praying and going to church on occasion. She then told me to lean in on Jesus, that our meeting was a divine appointment and that she would be praying for me. Even though I did not leave Andrew right after that night, I have always remembered that conversation and it is seared in the back of my mind to this day. It was truly prophetic.

I'll let you take a wild guess as to what you think happened next. I'll just say it. I got the news that I was pregnant. Andrew was elated. I was not surprised but kind of numb. My kids were not happy, except for the youngest. She was excited to have a little baby sibling. David was in high school while Grace and my step-son were both attending the local middle school. Grace had been pulling out her hair and

struggling in many different ways. I was working full time and trying to come home, pick them all up, cook, and do everything else while I was now pregnant and had this husband who didn't live with us. He would come over, but didn't stay often. I don't remember a whole lot about how we spent time together during this phase, because it went by quickly and so much happened.

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At the very beginning of my pregnancy, while I was at work I received a message from Andrew about his mother. It was Halloween. They had found her body under very questionable circumstances. I asked my co-workers if I could leave and told them why, and they immediately knew of the story because it had been on the news the night before. I hadn't seen it.

I called Theia to let her know and she was distraught. This all came as a very heavy hit for our family and it was tragic and devastating.

The funeral was held at the church that we had lived in right before what would have been her 64th Birthday. It seemed

as though one thing after another kept happening. Throughout my pregnancy we dealt with a lot of issues pertaining to this matter, in addition to me trying to raise kids and plan for the new baby. One thing that Andrew and I agreed to after that, though, was that we wouldn't celebrate Halloween. It seemed appropriate and it wasn't my favorite holiday anyways.

When I was about 9 months pregnant I began putting pressure on Andrew about our living situation. Toward the beginning of the pregnancy, he had said that he would find us a place in the new neighborhood that I had moved to and where all of the kids, including my step-son were going to school now, but that never happened. Finally, I gave him an ultimatum and we looked at a few places.

We ended up finding a large apartment, big enough for the whole family, at a decent cost for us to split (though, he ended up never helping with the rent.). He very reluctantly gave me the deposit and didn't even make eye contact with me that day, and I went to pay it. Then we moved in. Again, at first all seemed well. It was a lovely place and there was a lot of space for everyone.

Two weeks before my due date, I had a scheduled

ultrasound. Everything was fine with the baby and my vitals were all normal. But I had a low amount of amniotic fluid and the doctor wanted me to go to the hospital to get evaluated. Andrew took me to the ER and right away, the on call doctor came in and said that he was going to give me a cesarean. I immediately protested, as the baby was not in distress and she still had 2 more weeks to go. (This WAS my 5th baby!) He got upset and said that I needed to stay in the hospital for a week if I wouldn't agree to the C-section. So I agreed to that. They could monitor me and I would hold off as long as possible.

This began the worst nightmare of a hospital experience that I could ever tell. I was given my own room and set up. All was well, at first. I called the teenagers and told them that I needed to stay in the hospital and they were worried, but understanding. There was some food in the fridge and it was summer, so they were on break from school. I didn't expect that Andrew would want to stay at the hospital the entire time and not help with the kids, but that's what happened.

After a day I began to question whether he was going to go home and I expressed my concern over the kids being home alone. Yes, my son was 15, but they were not prepared to be

home alone for a week and I didn't want that at all. But little by little, it became an issue to the point that he told me more than once that I was raising "f*****g disabled kids" when I told him that they needed food. He somehow expected them to come up with money, walk down the hill, and a mile or two away to a grocery store, and come back to cook it, as well as to take care of the 6 year old. Not that they weren't already preparing and eating the food that we had, but that wasn't the point. This was not okay.

Four days in, on August 9th, it was Grace's 13th birthday. I already felt terrible for being in the hospital, but now there would be no celebration because of all of this and she was babysitting. I told him that he needed to go take care of business or that I would yank out my IV and go myself. I also called my friend Farrah, who was not happy, and she offered to go and help them.

Once my husband knew about that, he hurled obscenities at me and stomped out angrily and went to go take them to the store, get a cake and celebrate her birthday. I was so shaken and infuriated by the whole thing that I didn't want to see him again. To make matters worse, Andrew's buddy from high school, who

was paralyzed from the waist down, came to the hospital to visit the next day. He really wanted to see Andrew. I called him and told him to come and he said that he would, but he never showed up. This guy waited for hours, but Andrew stopped responding and never showed up. I felt horrible. Eventually he left. This same scenario had happened with the same friend at a motorcycle show that we had attended months prior. Andrew gave no excuse. I will never understand. That man died within a year of this incident.

Once it was time for the baby to come, they had to induce me because the fluid was too low and the baby's heartbeat was slightly elevated. I was in active labor for about 5 hours. Within that time the doctor, the same one who wanted to give me the C-Section, had done 3 different procedures on me without my consent, including breaking my water. After the third event, I told him that he needed to leave and that the nurses could deliver my baby.

Apparently he was a problem because the nurses chuckled and were happy that he was no longer going to be there. The nurses were great. They helped me relax and deliver with ease. I never saw the doctor again. Once it was time for me

to be checked out of the hospital, he wouldn't come to do it and sent the nurse.

My baby, Isabel, was beautiful and perfect and I was so glad to see her little face. After all of the turmoil, she was a light. After the baby and I were settled, the kids wanted to come and visit us at the hospital. Theia was at home with them all, my step-son included. When she called to get directions on how to get to the room, I handed my husband the phone and he wouldn't give them to her. It was like he had to make everyone feel stupid for not knowing everything automatically or not being able to figure everything out. They hung up and the kids made it, somehow. I was trying every way that I could to control my anger. We took a family pic together, smiling, but I was miserable. I knew that the kids were, too, and I had no idea what to do. This was all my fault. I just kept digging this hole deeper and deeper and was in a pit that I could not climb out of.

We brought Isabel home and life moved on. Right away my husband was projecting things onto me that didn't even exist. He wanted to go to a metal concert with his friends and automatically got mad at me because he had said that I wouldn't want him to go. When I encouraged him to go, (I literally just

wanted him gone), he then got upset because he said that I didn't really mean it and would blow up on him later, which did not happen after he went.

He also no longer had interest in me. I was fat and had just had a baby, so I guess I was no longer appealing. This triggered me and caused me to change my diet and exercise too much, to the point of getting gout in my foot.

When Isabel was about 3 months old, I needed to go back to work because money was tight and even though Andrew owned his own business, somehow he never had money to help with rent, or literally anything, unless it involved a meal that he wanted to eat at the restaurant of his choosing. Then we would be able to all go out and eat there. Oh yeah, or a motorcycle show that he wanted us all to participate in.

I had a hard time finding work right away and ended up taking a graveyard shift that was 4 days, 12 hours per day. Our rent was a lot and we had 6 children at home, but I told myself that it would be temporary and eventually things would pick up.

One day I received a call from David's high school. The Vice Principal wanted to talk to me about David being involved

in drugs. When I went to meet with him, he was very nice and told me how much he loved my son, but that he was very troubled and on his way to getting into serious trouble if an intervention wasn't done immediately. Normally, they would expel the kids for what he was involved in, but he wanted us to all go to family therapy instead. If we agreed to it, David would get a second chance. I was actually thankful for this, more than this man understood. I knew that we all needed it and now we were being forced. Little did I know what an answer to prayer this would be.

Andrew was not happy, but it turned out that people from his shop were involved with what David was doing and Andrew knew about it all along. So I gave him an ultimatum and he agreed to participate. After maybe a month and a half of weekly family therapy and me taking the teenagers in the house separately, I finally got a call from one of the Counselors wanting to talk to me alone. Her name was Angel. This was appropriate.

I took Isabel, now about 6 months old, and went over to her office to meet her. At first she discussed how pleasant and smart all of the kids were and she commended our family for

being involved and participating. But that quickly shifted. She had asked all of the kids to write her letters explaining what was going on at home and how they felt about it. The boys opted out of writing and chose to speak with her individually instead. But Grace, still 13, did write a letter. Either way, they all gave the same information and confirmed the same thing. My husband was abusing them.

He would wake them up at night to do chores when I was at work, challenge them to do stupid things like eat too much food in exchange for 20 dollars until they threw up, hide stuff, pit everyone against each other, get drunk while I was gone and even had the 7 year old up writing standards (an old fashioned way of having children copy sentences over and over on a piece of paper, in this case) for almost no reason until the wee hours of the night. At one point, David went into her room to do them for her.

One time he gave my Grace money for a chore and then took her, 13 at the time and Anne, 7 at the time, along with my step-son, to the movies. He ended up making her use her money to pay for her and her little sister, but paid for himself and my step-son. Then he had them lie to me about the movie. They had

all told me that they saw The Hunger Games, but they had really seen A Wolf on Wall Street. I was ashamed and livid at the same time. I remember actually feeling dizzy due to how fast my heart was racing as I was hearing all of this.

Angel showed me the letter and then said, “One of two things need to happen. You can agree to an intervention with your husband and he needs to agree to a long list of things, or I will have the children removed from your home.” I instantly agreed to the intervention and quite frankly, at that point I don’t think I even wanted to try anymore. But it still needed to happen. So I called Andrew and asked him to come down there to talk. I don’t remember what I said, but he agreed to come. He came in with a large drink in his hand, and sat in the room. Angel then proceeded to address all of the things she had discussed with me and more, and he looked down and laughed.

I will not add in this book the words that I used in that office. But let’s just say that I told him to leave in the worst way possible. As he got up to leave, Angel followed him to the door and let him know that he could not have access to any children until he completed parenting classes and a few other requirements. He stormed off in his car and to my knowledge,

called a family member to let her know how he had just been sabotaged.

Prior to his arrival I had made arrangements with my step-son's mother for her to have him, since I knew that my husband would probably take him, and I had let her know about everything that was going on. Later that evening I dropped him off with her. That was sad for everyone, but it needed to happen at the moment.

Andrew ended up going back to his haunted house that he grew up in and set himself up there. I still had to go to work at night and manage to get all of the kids to and from school in the mornings and afternoons. The first night I was able to take Isabel with me because the family that I was working for was trying to be supportive, but they quickly changed their minds. Isabel didn't fuss, but they just didn't like the idea. I understood.

Another few nights Farrah watched her, but that couldn't continue every night because she had to work during the day. Eventually, I ended up having to take her to her dad at his house because custody was now going to be an issue and I couldn't afford to pay anyone for childcare. On top of this, he was not giving me any money, and I was barely holding on by a thread.

Chapter Nineteen

An Empty Dining Room, A Godson, And A Fresh Start

About a week after he left, even though he was completely ignoring me, he texted and said that he needed to come to the apartment to pick up his furniture and belongings. I agreed to it and made sure that myself and all of the kids would not be home for a matter of hours. As it turned out, Isabel had a fever that morning and this posed a problem, but he didn't care and wouldn't reschedule.

It was a Saturday so most people in the apartment complex were home. After a few hours, my apartment manager who lived upstairs called me in a panic. She said that she could hear the "men" downstairs banging, hammering, stomping and shaking the building with everything that they were doing. I told her the whole story about everything that was going on and let her know that Andrew was there getting his stuff. She knew him to not be the nicest guy as he would give other tenants trouble with where he parked his motorcycle, or just being rude in

general, but this had her rattled. After they left she walked down there with me on the phone (I had asked her to make sure they were gone so that we could come home) and she said that he had left the door wide open and had ransacked the entire apartment. She was so freaked out that she ran back up to her apartment.

Needless to say, that is what we came home to. A completely destroyed apartment with a huge mess. Isabel had a cold and fever, and the children and I had to clean the entire mess. The kids all looked defeated. I was so furious and exhausted but had no choice other than to try and push forward and get everything done. I kept telling myself that at some point this would all be over. At least he was gone. But this was all so evil.

I should interject that when we first had moved into this apartment, we (as a couple) had discussed getting a big dining table for the dining room. I was excited about it, because I wanted to eat as a family instead of scattered the way that it had been for so long. But on the second day that we had the apartment and I had come home from work, Andrew had filled up the dining room with his old bar, a futon, and some stereo

equipment. He was upset that I was upset, but he won and got to keep his furniture there since he always came first. Now he was gone and my dining room was empty…

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My mother and I had started to grow distant again because she was back on some of her medications and I couldn't tolerate her. One night, one of my aunts called me to let me know that my mother was in the ambulance on her way to the hospital because she had overdosed. I thought that this was strange because I knew that she wasn't suicidal, especially living alone. A friend of hers who was in charge of her money had reported the overdose. I'll call her Emma.

I ended up having to call off of work to head to the hospital because I was the one that she had listed to sign all medical documentation. When I arrived, I was greeted by a doctor that told me that she had her stomach pumped and that they would more than likely discharge her to a skilled nursing facility within a day or two.

In the meantime, my aunt and I went over to her apartment and discovered that Emma was more than likely behind my mother's overdose and we ended up having to deal with the police. My brother came over and also tried to help. At that time he had been living with a girlfriend who encouraged him to go back to college and tried to help him get his life together, so he seemed to be doing okay.

A few days passed and as expected, my mother went to a nursing facility to recover. During that time, due to the overdose, they didn't give her any of her other medications except for one. But all psychotropics and antidepressants had been discontinued and she was completely weaned off of them within about two weeks.

One evening she called me from the facility, crying, just as I was getting ready to drop off Isabel at Andrew's house and head to work. She had said that the place was driving her crazy, people were talking to themselves in the hallway, and they had given her a co-ed shower. She begged me to pick her up and take her home.

I, being a nurse who had done clinicals at such facilities,

called the charge nurse to discuss these issues and asked what her discharge plan was. They didn't currently have one, as my mom still had IV fluids and a few other things that they were monitoring. But she couldn't confirm or deny the co-ed shower. I was not okay with this.

I called off of work, again, dropped off Isabel and headed over there. I discussed with my mother that if she came home against medical advice, she had to agree to 1) take only the medications that they currently had her on, 2) go to the MD follow up visit at the beginning of the following week and 3) allow someone to stay with her around the clock for at least a week until the MD cleared her for everything. Theia agreed to stay with her for the first night and one of my aunts who lived in New Mexico agreed to fly out to stay with her for the week. My mother agreed to everything, I signed the paperwork, and I took her back to her apartment. We set everything up, including her pill box with instructions, and I went home to sleep.

The following day, my aunt arrived from New Mexico to care for my mom. She wasn't even there for a full day when my mother began to be intolerable. She said that no one was going to tell her what to do and she wanted all of her meds back. She

gave my aunt such a hard time that my aunt called me crying. I was so angry that I chewed out my mother over the phone, but then my aunt didn't want me to upset her. It was a hot mess. In the end, my mother won. We assisted my aunt back to the airport and she went back home.

My mother's doctor appointment was scheduled for 3 days after the day that my aunt left, and I was the only one who could take her. I had worked my graveyard shift the night before, picked up Isabel from Andrew who was still ignoring and not making eye contact with me, picked up all of the kids from different schools and got them settled at home, then went to pick up my mom 25 minutes away to take her to her appointment which was another 30 minutes away. I was running on adrenaline and my patience was wearing thin.

The appointment actually went really well. The doctor said that for the first time that she had ever seen, my mom was standing up straight, speaking clearly, not twitching her head, and she didn't see a need to give her back all of her medications. She made sure that everything was in my mother's chart regarding her orders and told us that we could go.

Toward the end of the appointment my mother did

mention that she had diarrhea for at least a week, but refused to do any testing when the doctor asked. My mother also did not argue with the doctor that day and we left. But in the car, she said that she needed to see her Psychiatrist and that she would call to schedule an appointment with him. I was so tired that it went over my head and told her that I was so glad about everything that the doctor had said.

A day later she told me that she had an appointment with the Psychiatrist and wanted me to take her the following afternoon. By then, I knew what she was up to and that she was just trying to get her meds back. So I agreed to take her, but I called him first and made him aware of everything that was going on and of what the MD had said. He agreed that he would speak to my mother and coordinate with the primary doctor so that they could be on the same page when he met with my mom.

So, again, I did my crazy routine and picked up my mom for her next appointment with Isabel in tow. But now things were different. Throughout the whole drive there she yelled at me and projected her entire life onto me. I was horrible, rude, controlling, condescending, selfish and didn't know anything about her. She was going to get those medications and I

couldn't do anything to stop her.

She never thanked me for everything that I was doing, never acknowledged any of the sacrifices and could care less about my second failed marriage or my children. It was all about her. I did lose my temper at some point during the drive and then she stayed quiet the rest of the way there.

When we arrived and she went in, I stayed outside with Isabel in the stroller and called my brother and then one of my aunts. I told them both what was happening and that if she got back on her meds, I was finished. They could take it from there because I didn't have it in me to do anymore. They all understood. Within an hour and a half, due to my mother not taking no for an answer, she came out with a paper prescription and marched right next door into the pharmacy. Another 30 minutes later she came back out, ready to go.

I ignored her all the way home, even though she continually tried to drag me into an argument. When we got closer to her home, she asked for Taco Bell. I silently went through the drive-thru, ordered, paid and drove her home. As she got out, she took the bag, told me, "Have a nice life, bitch" and slammed the door. That was that. I was done.

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Life moved on and I continued working my graveyard shifts, dropping off Isabel with her father who was ignoring me, and leaving my other kids at home so that I could work. I'd then pick them all up in the morning and drop them off at school. That whole season is a blur to me because I hardly slept. But I was up at night and had to stay on the computer to stay awake when I was at work.

While all of this was happening, I met a boy from Haiti on Facebook who was almost 17. I'll call him Pierre. He had asked me for money for school, and I instantly didn't believe him and thought it was a scam. But after some discussion and me asking how much he needed ($15.00) I sent it to see what he would do. He ended up sending me pictures of the woman making his school uniform, his school enrollment certificate, etc. I honestly couldn't believe that 15.00 would stretch that far, but it did. I was convinced that this kid was strategically put in my life to get my mind off of my own insanity and realign it. It

was a blessing in disguise. To this day, I call him my godson and helped put him through law school in Haiti. Though he still struggles due to what is going on in his country, I am so proud of him and so happy that God brought him into my life. I'm not saying any of this to toot my own horn, but sometimes we need to see that things can always be worse, and redirect our focus.

About 3 weeks after the last incident with my mom, I received a strange phone call from one of my aunts. She asked if I was at Disneyland with my mother and my children. Of course I wasn't. She said that my mom was delirious and insisted she was with me. I wrote it off as her being back on her meds and we hung up. A few hours later she called back, this time from my mom's apartment. It turned out that my mother was very sick and the evidence was all over the apartment. The ambulance was called and she was taken to the hospital.

I went to work, but shortly after arrival I was asked to go to the hospital to sign for consent for surgery. They ended up removing her colon, but couldn't complete the surgery because she was losing blood. To make matters worse, the resident doctor that assisted with the surgery admitted that she had resected (cut a piece of) her small intestine and had to repair it.

The plan was for them to get her stable and complete the surgery the following morning. The problem with that was the internal bleeding never stopped and they couldn't figure out what was wrong. So now, here she was with no colon, no colostomy in place (an opening over the abdomen stool can come out of the body) and something going on that they could not figure out. She was then put into an induced coma to try to stabilize her.

Meanwhile, I'm still trying to work and juggle the children while needing to go back and forth to the hospital frequently, still running on adrenaline. At one point, almost 3 weeks into her coma, Isabel had a fever and I had to take her to the ER where she was diagnosed with an infection. Then I called a meeting with the hospital staff to see why my mother was still in a coma and clearly in pain which was not being controlled. I felt like I was losing my mind.

The staff was very kind and tried to reason with me, but in the end I told them that they needed to make a decision as to what needed to be done because she was visibly suffering. It was interesting because at the time they stated that the current treatment was absolutely necessary, but by the middle of the

following night they were calling me to let me know that they would be inserting a tracheostomy (a surgical procedure to create an opening through the neck into the windpipe). I advised them to do no such thing until I arrived there the next morning. They agreed. I don't remember what arrangements I made with all of the kids, but I ended up at the hospital that morning after work.

When I walked into my mom's room, she was sitting up in bed and had been taken off the ventilator. She looked perfectly fine and was breathing on her own. I was shocked! The resident doctor (who botched the surgery) and the other MD who had been tending to her were both in the room. I must have sounded surprised because the MD went out of his way to bring my tone down. Then, in medical terms, he told me that her small intestine was necrotic (dead).

Trying to reason this in my mind without making a face in front of my mother and knowing that she also no longer had her large intestine, I asked him what the next step was. "There is no next step," he said. I looked at my mother, who clearly had no clue what was happening, and asked him if he had discussed it with her. "No, we were waiting for you. And she will need to

be a NPO" (meaning she cannot have anything by mouth– no food or water).

Giving myself about 5 seconds to figure out how to handle this, I asked both the MD and resident doctor to please leave the room and give us some time alone. Before they walked out, the resident (who was a young woman of maybe 28 years old), touched my mom on the shoulder and said, "We're going to starve you, okay?" No, I did not reach over and rip her head off. I, very, very quietly, told her to leave the room. The MD looked mortified, as he should, and they walked off and closed the door behind them.

I pulled a chair over to my mother's bedside and sat down. I explained that the needles and medications that she was hooked up to could not stay in for much longer. I explained what was happening with her digestive system and that there were no other procedures that could be done.

"Do you understand what I just explained, Mom?" I asked.

She nodded and said, "Yes."

"What did I say?" I asked.

"I'm going to die," she said.

I had to get up and walk to the window. I explained how I really thought that she was going home that morning and I had no clue.

We both cried.

Then I told her that she had two options. I could ask the staff to remove everything now, and I would have them give her Morphine for the pain and stay with her until the end. Or, I could call the family and ask whoever could make it that day to come and then we would remove everything after that. She chose option B. I made 2 phone calls, one to an aunt in California, and one in New Mexico.

That evening there were about 12 of us in her room. The priest from the hospital came in at her request to read her last rights, and everyone who was there said their goodbye's. Ironically, the aunt who had stayed with her when she came home from the hospital the first time, was now sick with a brain tumor and had invited everyone to visit her that same upcoming week, as she was making plans for her own passing! Needless to say, after they pulled out all of the IV's, hooked up the

Morphine pump and everyone else left the room, nothing happened. My mother sat up and got a second wind. She wasn't even tired.

At about 6am I told her that I needed to get back and take Isabel to a friend's house, check on the kids and rush back. I had also called my brother who was on his way with his girlfriend. I rushed around, taking care of all the things, and headed back to the hospital. I have no idea why, but Andrew (who was still ignoring me), really wanted to come with me to the hospital to say goodbye to my mother. I was so delirious that I said yes, and off we went.

When we arrived at the hospital, my brother was upsetting my mother and stormed off. On top of that, the MD was trying to transfer her from the ICU to the regular Med Surge floor because she wasn't hooked up to anything anymore. She was really suffering, not being able to have ice or anything, so I told the doctor to send her home with me on Hospice and to have the equipment delivered immediately. He agreed, but it took all day.

Very long story short, I had to go back home and wait for all of the deliveries and Andrew stayed with her, giving her

whatever liquids she requested (I mean, why not?) and the ambulance brought her back to my apartment that night at midnight. Do you remember that I now had an empty dining room? Yeah….

Still ignoring me, I took Andrew home (so weird), and picked up Isabel from Farrah's house. Over the next 5 days and nights, I would work, come home in the morning, change and clean up my mother, and the kids would rotate staying with her in the dining room at different shifts when I was at work. A few people came to visit her and at one point my brother tried to get her to sign a notarized document, which I told her not to. But other than that, the people that came just spent a little time with her while she still knew who they were.

During the last 2 nights I was actually off, so I had a little more time with her. As she deteriorated, the children and I would sit by her and read the Bible and pray over her. We would listen to the old Catholic prayers that she repeated (that I had never heard before), or the conversations that she was having with people who were no longer with us.

On the night of May 26, 2014 just after midnight, I had set my alarm for every 2 hours. I needed to lay down with Isabel

for her to fall asleep and was planning on going back to the dining room after she was down. But at 8:17am I jumped out of bed. Apparently I had turned it off and all of us slept through it. I began walking down the hallway. The oxygen concentrator was on, but I couldn't hear her rattling anymore. She looked so peaceful.

I called the family, who were now in New Mexico visiting my other sick aunt, and then called the mortuary and made all of the arrangements. The kids all handled it very well. Neighbors asked questions as she was being taken out, but they were all very kind, too. I was so disappointed that I wasn't there when she went. Just like what happened with my dad, I missed it and they were alone. But I was still thankful, even after everything that had happened, that she was there, in my home, with her family.

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Over the next few weeks the kids and I ended up having to empty out her apartment and bring almost everything back to

ours. She was a hoarder, so this was extremely difficult. It took us 23 trips in the minivan and then I ended up having a yard sale and then had to have the Salvation Army pick up almost all of the rest. I even gave a lot of her furniture to her neighbors. However, I did take the dining set that I had grown up with and brought it back to mine. Oh, the irony.

On the first day at her apartment my brother came. I thought he would help, but instead he gave David a few hits off of a blunt (I found out years later), took her vacuum, and left. No one else came to help us. Some of my mother's sisters did come to my apartment after everything was there and took some of her things, which I welcomed wholeheartedly, but I (and my children) still had to do the rest of the work. I was so used to being high strung and overworked that I didn't realize how bad this all was as it was happening. I had never known how to truly rest or not have a million horrible things going on that I needed to be anxious about. I knew that Jesus said to "be anxious for nothing" and it sounded good to me, but I could never seem to get to that point for myself.

Within about 5 or 6 months of all of these previous events, I was starting to wither and grow exhausted. David, now

almost 16 years old, was still struggling and eventually we decided together on the Teen Challenge Program, which was affiliated with the US Army on a Military Base. It was a 6 month program. He did very well and I was so proud of him.

On the day of his graduation, Andrew showed up to his graduation ceremony, unannounced. Farrah and her family also came to support David and were weirded out by his presence. We all were. After the ceremony he also went home, changed and came to our apartment for the after party. I have no clue how he found out about any of it.

He was unaware at that point that I was in the process of making arrangements to move 90 miles away because he was now begging me to come back to him and wouldn't leave me alone no matter how much I told him to. That day I let him know that we were leaving, firmly and assertively, and he stormed off.

While David was in his program, I had been required to go to parenting classes and learned a lot. Andrew had been required to do parenting and anger management classes after the intervention, but ended up going briefly, dropping out and somehow still managed to get the paperwork signed. Needless

to say, I was beyond finished and could bear no more of the deception. I couldn't even lie to myself anymore. It was all wrong from the beginning and the kids and I needed to get away altogether.

Chapter Twenty

A Miracle, Lily, And Secret Societies

Things were looking up. The kids and myself had made a trip to our new town about a month before the move, to go and meet the new baby-sitter. The most interesting thing about all of this at that time was that God didn't intend on me going with a job in place. It was all backwards. Find a babysitter, then a place near her, then move. God will provide the job.

I can't tell you how I knew deep down in my soul that those were my instructions, other than it was the Holy Spirit driving and speaking to me. But that is the order that it all happened. We all Theia included) drove out and met the new sitter, whom we all loved, then looked at some luxury apartments and put down a deposit that day because it was insanely cheap! Then we went back home and started packing.

David didn't know since he wasn't finished with his program, but by the time he got home, we were pretty much ready to go. He didn't dispute it at the time, but did say later

that he had wanted to go back to his previous school. I just thought that it was better for everyone to get a fresh start and get away from everything and everyone. So off we went.

We ended up in a beautiful apartment with all amenities, a pool, all appliances in the apartment and only a few blocks from the baby-sitter (who I didn't even need yet!). The rent was less than half of what I was paying in L.A. and with the leftover money we were able to decorate and get comfortable right away. My step-son who was back living with his dad (and being abused) ended up coming and living with us after I made an arrangement with his mother.

Then a miracle happened.

I applied for a nursing office job nearby, was asked to come in for an interview, and got hired on the spot. Not only that, I was going to make more money than I did slaving away at my graveyard job, it was during the day and only a 10 minute drive from home. The Lord had parted the sea, again! I was unworthy and undeserving, but He still did it.

The beginning went so well. I had a good job, the kids were all enrolled in the local schools, the town was beautiful

and we even found a nice non-denominational church and got involved right away. Grace and I watched babies during one of the services while Anne was with the kid groups. David got involved pretty quickly with a girl who was a children's Sunday school teacher. All of the teenagers attended the youth group during the week and I even started attending a divorce group/Bible study. Things were finally settling down.

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Unfortunately, within maybe a year of us being there, the kids were in toxic relationships and so was I. I had met someone in the divorce group and we got involved way too fast. David had his heart broken and Grace was ending up in one bad relationship after another (one of which I ended up intervening in because it was dangerous).

I knew that these things were happening because of what they had seen with me. I then started to almost panic and feel like I needed to be with a good man and show them that it was possible to have good relationships. But that didn't happen.

Instead, I went from one guy to the next– all Christian (2

of them narcissists)– and they were all wrong. None of them lasted too long. But after three tries, I shut down and asked God to just help me realize that I *can* be happy alone with Him.

As you can imagine, all of this still had an impact on the children. I did spend all of my time with them outside of work and household duties which still took up the rest of my time. We went out and explored new places almost every weekend and sometimes daily. Watching the sunset is one of my favorite things to do and we frequently went to new places nearby for that purpose. But even with everything that we were able to do, there were so many deep rooted issues that hadn't been dealt with and would eventually surface.

During this same time frame, another bizarre event took place. I had received a few calls on my cell phone that I didn't recognize and I didn't answer. Then a few days later, Andrew's step-mother called me and told me that a detective from my new local county Sheriff's office was trying to reach me and had reached out to her to get ahold of me. Odd. I never spoke with her, but whatever. I called and was basically told that my name and all of my information was on an ISIS kill list.

Yes, you read that right.

Funny, because I had just learned who the Egyptian goddess Isis actually was, during some research.

This started an unusual chain of events. Militia members on Facebook that were friends of my friends began disputing why they were not on the list and in turn telling me that I needed a gun. I panicked and agreed (which was silly, looking back) and ended up borrowing money from David to buy one.

It was a long process to get the license in that county. By the time it was all said and done, I realized that I was probably being played. I won't say by who, but nothing came out of it, other than fear, and that is not from God. The Sheriff who called me was legit and so was the list, but the rest was all some sick propaganda.

Needless to say, out of sheer rebellion toward this bunch I ended up getting a tattoo on my right wrist of the Arabic letter *N* (called a *nun*) to show that I was a Nazirite/follower of Christ…just in case there was any confusion. Militants of ISIS had tagged the *nun* all over the homes and doors of Christians in Iraq in 2014 as a threat. Ironically, it began in the city of Mosul where my first husband was stationed when I had our 4th baby.

Mosul is also the physical location of Nineveh where the prophet Jonah had been sent to preach.

Within 2 years I had taken the gun and sold it.

At one point after the divorce group guy and I parted ways, I remember sitting in my room crying and asking God what on earth He wanted me to do and asking specifically for Him to show me the truth about everything; the good, the bad and the ugly. I used those words. I didn't realize what I was asking for at the time, but this was a pivotal moment.

Within days of my request, I met a few friends in an online bible study group that would change my life. The studies were deep and more spiritual. Meat, not milk. I began to learn truths in the Word that changed the way that I thought and understood everything. This was only the beginning, and of course the enemy wasn't going to allow it all to happen easily.

I had decided to fast and pray and during that time I had prophetic dreams. Once God revealed the meanings to me, I clearly understood that He wanted me to start opening up about the truths He was teaching me, without fear. And He wanted me to post about it on Facebook to educate His people.

This was terrifying, but I knew that I had to obey.

The morning after my fast ended, I had 78 friend requests on Facebook. After that, I received multiple requests every day until it maxed out at 5,000. Mind you, I had a restraining order on my first husband and was afraid of my family thinking I was crazy, etc. But I continued in obedience and made many good friends along the way who became more like family and we all continued to learn together.

Parallel to this, I also began going down every possible conspiracy rabbit hole that I could find or be pulled into. Looking back, I'm still thankful, because most of it was the truth. But I shared it all online and with the kids. I have always been outspoken about what folks call conspiracy theories, even when I was very young. But it was always geared toward trying to expose the lies that I could see through instantly.

I never understood why people couldn't see things from my lens. Now that I'm older, I realize that it's because children who go through severe abuse are hyper-aware and hyper-alert to things that most people are not. For many years I was in denial and had cognitive dissonance as a defense mechanism. But once

I got to the point I wanted to see, that all changed.

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I met Lily on Facebook and within a few days I was in her Bible study group. Within a few weeks we had become very close and we quickly realized the Holy Spirit would walk us through similar issues that we needed to overcome, at the same time. We were like peas and carrots. We shared a lot in common and were close to the same age. I shared everything with her about my life as she did with me and as I did, she would say things that would help me understand things differently.

One of these things she had helped me to realize was that my dad had been a bigger problem than I had been willing to admit. But now that he had been gone for many years, I didn't talk to my brother and my mother had passed, the Lord wanted to reveal things to me that I wouldn't have accepted before. Now, I was ready to receive them.

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One day, after praying and begging God to please show me why I felt like I was stuck on a ferris wheel that I couldn't get off of and why it seemed that no matter how hard I tried, I always ended up back at square one, Lily sent me a long prayer to print out that was aimed at people who came from bloodlines of Freemasonry or other secret societies.

The purpose of the prayer was to assist people with breaking family bloodline/generational curses. At Aslan's Place (founded by Paul L. Cox), a generational curse is defined through a biblical and spiritual lens as an inherited pattern, spiritual bondage, or legal claim handed down through a family bloodline from ancestors. I had heard of this in passing, but it never made sense to me since I had only understood (through my own cognitive dissonance) that being saved in Christ washed the slate clean and these things didn't happen to Christians. I absolutely had never heard of such things in church. I actually went back and forth with Lily about not needing this particular prayer because I didn't see how it could help me since none of it applied to me. I let her know that I would pray about whether or not I needed it.

Boy, was I in for a surprise.

I don't remember the reason, but I was still in my scrubs after work one day and my youngest was sleeping. I was sitting alone at the dining room table (the one that I had grown up with) and decided to at least read the first two pages of the prayer to see what it entailed.

I began to read out loud and came into agreement with what it was saying. It was like a curtain was opening right in front of me. I looked up and saw the crossed swords in the gun case, the Knights Templar pirate ship on top of it, a flag with 48 stars that my dad didn't let me wash. I looked at the spoons from the backyard of the house that I had grown up in, my dad's award plaque for winning first place in Aikido, trophies from the Cherokee Nation, and many more odd objects I have never really paid attention to.

As I continued reading, the Holy Spirit brought conversations that I had with my father to my mind. Discussions about Rosicrucianism, shamanism, witch doctors, psychics, yoga, etc., and how he had a pass to get into the World Trade Center in Los Angeles. I remembered how he had an office at the Parsons (intelligence) building in Pasadena, an office at Cal Plaza and how he used to take me to the Shrine Auditorium

because he had gotten free tickets to the circus, or whatever the heck. I was also remembering that he admitted to being recruited by the CIA to go to Laos. My entire life I thought that he had simply worked as an engineer for the state.

So what was I now dealing with? What on earth was being revealed to me? All of the meetings that my dad attended at night, the secrets, the misogyny, the relics, the secret knowledge of things that no one else talked about. I felt overwhelmed. I still had so much to learn, but now I was starting to understand. And yet I didn't know how to handle it.

Chapter Twenty-One

Witchcraft And Jealousy

I said the prayer in agreement and shared the information with my closest friends. But even then, a lot of people didn't believe me or thought that I was being paranoid. Either way, I started researching Freemasonry and anything connected to it. The symbolism, the knock off organizations, Hollywood, the media, everything. To say that this became all consuming would be an understatement.

All of a sudden I realized that my whole life had been a lie and there was so much more to discover. To make matters worse, the people that I needed answers from were dead. I was filled with fear, trauma, shock and fury. The Lord worked with me and had appointed people that were there for me, but it was still just too much because instead of leaning on the Word, I was becoming consumed by all of these new things I was learning. I was also studying the Bible and going deeper into the metaphors, ancient languages, etc. but I was not at peace or

trusting in Jesus.

In my mind, I thought I trusted Him… but I didn't. I believed, but I did not trust.

After about a year of this, everything in my life once again started unraveling.

My rent had gradually gone up every 6 months and was becoming more than I could afford. David and Grace both had jobs and helped out, but I couldn't see how we could sustain living there and we were outgrowing the 2 bedroom apartment. I had begun to look into moving out of state to a place where I could make almost the same amount of money as an LPN, but pay less on rent and bills. My good friend Lily who had helped me with the bloodline prayer lived in North Carolina and we had other friends out there, too. After some research, I had decided that that was a perfect option. Take note that I said "I."

I don't know if I actually sat down, prayed and waited for God to answer me about whether or not we should move there. In hindsight, I will say that I absolutely did not. I made arrangements and told everyone, but I did not specifically get God's permission. On top of that, I also discussed it with

Andrew and he actually supported the idea. We had mutually decided that we didn't want to go to court anymore and agreed on the child support remaining what it was. He even watched Isabel for me for a week while I flew to NC to scout the land, secure a job, etc.

While in North Carolina, I met with a friend and her daughter for lunch. Both were in the online Bible study group that I was in and we had grown very close. We were all so excited to meet in person and make arrangements for the future with us all residing in the same state. Our lunch date was set for a few hours prior to my job interview.

As we sat and talked, maybe 20 minutes in I started to feel anxious. The conversation had taken a weird turn and my friend's daughter (who was maybe 20 years old) began to try to argue about differences in theology and insisting on specific dates that Jesus would return. It became very uncomfortable and I changed the subject so that I could leave on a good note, since it was time to leave for my interview.

As I was preparing to leave, my friend gave me some homeopathic medication to take to Lily that evening because she knew that her dog was sick and I was going to meet up with

her for dinner. We snapped a few pics, hugged good-bye, and I walked out. But as soon as I got into my car I could feel a heavy presence and I knew that something was very wrong.

I began to drive, but within less than 5 minutes I was having extreme tightness in my chest and literally felt like something was sitting on me.

I pulled over and called Lily but she didn't answer. Then I tried calling another close friend who was following my endeavors, and told her everything. She confirmed what I was already thinking, that this was an attack from the enemy and that something had *attached* itself to me when my friend hugged me after lunch! So we both prayed and immediately I felt the presence lift. Crisis averted!

I went to my interview, got the job within 15 minutes of talking with the sweetest lady I'd ever met, and headed over to Lily's so that we could go out to dinner.

I was praising God all the way, since it seemed like everything was falling into place. I wrote this whole event off as just an attack, but it wasn't over. Lily and I headed to the restaurant and then back to her place to continue talking. I'd

forgotten about the medication until I saw that her dog was wheezing. It had been in my pocket the whole time. Lily had been expecting it, so neither of us had any sort of feeling about it. But as soon as she administered it to the dog, he began hacking and urinated on the floor. I ended up leaving so that she could tend to it all (and it was about 2am) and we agreed to catch up in the morning.

The following morning I had planned to drive out to look at more properties, but Lily called and we decided that her dog needed to go to the veterinarian. This took nearly all day and my flight was scheduled for the next morning. Our other friend who'd given me the medication was very upset that I didn't spend more time with her and became visibly jealous about the whole situation. She even called me when I was at the airport and asked what I was doing, even though she had known when my flight was. Even more strange was the fact that the bottle of medication was never found again after Lily gave the pills to her dog. It literally disappeared into thin air.

Within a few weeks of these events, we had a falling out with this friend and her daughter. They admitted that they were actually running a group full of 200 witches and warlocks and

would meet with Christians to “talk about Jesus” but in reality were attempting to curse disciples of the Lord. We’d known these women for years and shared many things.

It was at this point I realized that it was very true and real that there was still witchcraft being done against me. I also realized that I could absolutely be attacked by items that were in my vicinity which had spells or curses on them. As a young Christian I had believed that since I was saved none of these things could ever happen to me. This was another huge lesson.

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The process of preparing to move went on for maybe 6-8 months while I was still working and the older kids finished up with high school. However, about 4 months in, things took another dark turn. One night, Anne and I went to pick Isabel from her visitation with her father.

According to Andrew, everything was fine and he handed her off as if nothing eventful had happened that weekend. But as soon as Isabel was in her car seat and we were

about to drive she said, “he took a shower with me.” Anne looked at her and then me, silently and I turned around and asked, “do you mean he gave you a shower?” She replied, “No, he took a shower with me, naked.”

To cut to the chase, he did not touch or molest her. But he did get into the shower with her. This had never happened before and was not a “thing” in our family. He had always had a drinking problem and refused to accept correction, even from the courts, for any of his addictions or behavior. Now he had gone too far.

I drove us back home, which took 45 minutes, and tried to call him. He didn’t answer so I sent a long text explaining that he would no longer be able to have overnight or unmonitored visits with her and I proceeded to remind him that both of our mothers were not only molested by their family members, but that it began with showers. He responded with the simple word, “agreed” and didn’t so much as offer an explanation.

The next day I contacted Child Protective Services and opened a case. They took what felt like forever to do an investigation and ended up saying that it basically wasn’t a big

deal and I was overreacting, even though he was violating what the courts had told him on multiple occasions with many other issues as well. But from that point on, if he wanted a visit, we would meet at a park halfway between his home and mine (we still lived 90 miles apart) and he didn't dispute it. All of this was documented on our cell phones because we only texted and never spoke on the phone. This went on for a few months until it was time for us to leave for North Carolina.

All of this was happening as I had two almost adult teenagers (Grace and my step-son) going through their own stuff and David, who was already an adult, working and doing good (but I was definitely driving him crazy) a 10 year old (who was doing amazing, even though…) and a 4 year old. When it got closer to us getting ready to move, my step-son went back to live with his dad because he didn't want to come. Grace was about to turn 18 and decided that she would stay in the town where we were, keep her job and live with roommates but David was planning to come with us.

A few weeks prior to leaving I had trained a nurse to take my place at work, began to get rid of the stuff that we wouldn't take with us, and packaged everything up. I had

already put a deposit down on a 3 bedroom house that was a fraction of the cost that I was paying for our apartment. I had become friends with a family in town that owned a lab and offered to pay for the shipping for our stuff.

It all seemed to be coming together, but I still felt like so many things were wrong and I couldn't understand why. I wrote it off as being overwhelmed and believed that once we moved and got settled I would be able to breathe. I didn't want to leave my 18 year old behind and that was causing me some stress, but I thought that once we were settled she would maybe choose to come and live out there too, if she saw how much easier things were. Theia was already in her mid 20's and living with her boyfriend, so I wasn't as worried about her and thought we would visit as often as we could.

Andrew and I hadn't really discussed the visitation schedule because he was only talking to me when he felt like it and he had a new girlfriend to keep his mind occupied. We had gone for pizza after a park visit one day and I tried to bring it up, but he changed the subject and we discussed his current problems that he was having instead. I knew that I didn't want her to go for overnights, so I had told him that I would fly back

in a few months to visit my kids and bring her then. We had left it at that.

A few days prior to us catching our flight as we were packing up our last few things and doing our final walk through. I received a call from Andrew. I hadn't been near my phone and missed it, so he left a voicemail. Mind you, he never called me, so this was strange. The voicemail said something along the lines of, "I've filed an emergency order and I expect you to bring Isabel to my weekend visitation tonight. Our court hearing will be on this date."

This was a Friday. Isabel had not spent the night with her father in months and was terrified of him. When she did have to go before for the whole weekend, Anne would go just so she wouldn't have to go alone, but at one point she didn't want to go either and I wasn't going to make her because he wasn't even her (Anne's) biological father. He still had all of his demonic decorations, red walls, dark lights, etc., but then would also make her watch scary movies, rub his feet all of the time, listen to scary music and had zero empathy for her feelings or the fact that she was always afraid to go to sleep or just be alone with him in general. Then the shower incident happened. Now I

was being told that 1) I had to take her and leave her with him for the weekend that very night and 2) we now had an upcoming court date that was after our scheduled flight.

I tried to call him. No answer. I tried calling my previous lawyer from our divorce case, she was on vacation. I tried calling multiple other lawyers, they were in court. I finally got a hold of one who would accept my case and meet with me the following week, but he ended up saying that it would be best for me to take her to her visitation that weekend.

Chapter Twenty-Two

Lost And Homeless, Again

I cannot tell you how distraught and low I was. I couldn't believe how stupid I was for trusting him. I couldn't believe that no one was willing to help me protect my child, not even the courts who had repeatedly admonished Andrew at numerous mediations and court hearings. There were never any consequences for him and I just did not understand. Why was God allowing this and what was I supposed to do?

In the end, even the police told me that I had to take her to the visit. I was numb. I explained everything that was going on to the kids. I couldn't get a refund for the plane tickets but after the court hearing, we would drive if all went in our favor - which I expected to happen since I had proof of everything on paper.

I had gone to the courthouse to try to get an extension on the court date but they denied my request. So, that night I drove my little girl out to our previous exchange spot. She was anxious, but praise God she wasn't crying or I'd have fallen

apart worse than I already was. Andrew's adult nephew was there (it was good to see him) and we exchanged hugs and he served me court papers. I wouldn't dare read them at the moment because I had a long drive home. I drove home crying, praying and yelling.

After I was settled at home for a bit and everyone was in bed, I opened the envelope that I had been served. I knew that it would be bad, but I had no idea how bad. Andrew had been going to the police station every Friday for the last few months, ever since the night Isabel told me he had taken a shower with her. He was telling them I was withholding her and that he hadn't seen her since.

Remember, we had still been meeting on his weekends, usually for a few hours at a time and I had all of this all documented, but we were no longer meeting on Friday nights. He had also added to the documents that I was not stable, a crazy Christian who was trying to flee persecution, not in my right mind, I didn't celebrate certain holidays anymore (Halloween included, which we had previously decided to do together when we were still married) and was brainwashing our daughter, trying to keep her from his loving family and her sick

grandfather, etc.

I sat in bed that night, paralyzed. I've never in my life been suicidal, and I wasn't then. But if there was a time that I seriously thought about how I would never be able to get through a situation, it was that night. My whole world came crashing down. I felt ashamed, embarrassed, betrayed, and terrified. I couldn't feel God's presence at all and I couldn't wrap my brain around any of the things that were happening.

I reached out to friends and let my Bible study group know what was going on. Everyone was praying for me and thought for sure that once the judge saw all of the evidence that everything would go well for us. I wasn't so sure of that. I was terrified and didn't know how to feel. I went the following Monday to meet with the new lawyer but even that didn't feel right. They accepted my case and friends donated money to help me pay for it because I was down to nothing and we were now in the process of moving into a hotel until the court hearing.

On the morning of the emergency hearing, my older kids and I arrived at the courthouse on time before 8am. For some reason the lawyer didn't get there until 1pm. I called the office several times to see what was going on, but they just said that

the judge was aware that he had another hearing in the morning and that our case had been pushed to the afternoon. However, when we finally got in there, the judge was upset that the lawyer was late. That set the stage for how everything went.

Even though there was an ample amount of evidence showing what we had mutually agreed to and how Andrew had still been seeing Isabel regularly, the judge didn't want to hear any of it. I was not allowed to speak, my lawyer was all but silent, and the judge said that my daughter could not leave the state until we went to mediation and came back to court in 2 months. We were now homeless and lost everything, again.

Back at the hotel room there was thick tension in the air. David was upset with me and had arranged with Theia to go live with her and her boyfriend in L.A. I wasn't aware of any of it until then, but I understood. Grace arranged to go stay with her friend until they got situated and got a place to rent. My two youngest girls remained with me.

After the kids left I went into the bathroom and sat there, almost catatonic. I cried and cried. I was angry and numb at the same time and felt completely helpless. I got angry with God. I distinctly remember saying, "Where were you today?! WHERE

ARE YOU?!"

He answered– clearly, but not with words. In my spirit I felt a stern, "Shhh!" and then I felt His presence in the same way that I'd felt it when I was getting beaten up by my first husband. He was right there beside me. I had to accept that all of this was happening for a reason and I wasn't going to understand why right now. I had no choice but to learn to trust Him.

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Eventually, I was reminded of the advice that the therapist who'd encouraged me to go to nursing school had given me years before, "The children need to see you growing and moving forward." So, we tried to enjoy our hotel stay and figure out what to do next. I had no money, couldn't get my job back, no home and still had to manage to get Isabel to another city every two weeks to go with her dad for the weekends.

I decided to turn all of this into a mini vacation. I couldn't sit around and cry all day. Not to say that I didn't stress about every detail, I did. But I managed to find a cheap hotel out

in Joshua Tree and we headed out there to get away for a bit. I had no idea how we were going to pay for anything after about 2 days.

The first night that we were in Joshua Tree, the girls and I drove into the park at night to see the stars. It was so hot during the day that we had to stay inside of the hotel, but the sky was mesmerizing at night and the temperature was perfect. While I lay out on top of a picnic table just staring into the sky, a nearby campsite began to play guitar and sing the old Hymn "As the deer." I sang along and cried. I couldn't believe what I was hearing and where we were. It was as if the angels themselves were singing from the sky. When it was over I clapped loudly and they all laughed. We couldn't see each other, but they had no idea how special that was to me.

Then a huge miracle happened. A friend encouraged me to start a GoFundMe, just be honest, and post it to my Facebook page that had thousands of followers. I was horrified by the thought, but at that point I needed it for the kids. Within hours of posting it I had thousands of dollars.

There came a time that I had needed to turn in my vehicle to the dealers because I could no longer make the

monthly payments, but I was able to come up with enough to buy an old, used minivan. When I say that this whole ordeal was going to be a test in trust and patience, I'm not playing. This thing would turn off on the freeway. A mechanic even told me that the brakes weren't even on right and he fixed them for free. It seemed as though every last thing was an attack, while at the same time I was being blessed in ways that could only be explained as being done by God and no one else.

Even more interesting was the fact that the people that donated were not family or people that I knew in person except for 2 people. All of the donations that came in were from people all over the world that I'd never met in person, and from what I could tell, they were all believers in Christ. God moved His Body in His perfect timing.

After about a month, I ended up back at my friend Farrah's home in Los Angeles. School would be starting in a few weeks as we were nearing the end of the summer and I started to feel overwhelmed with how and where I was going to enroll them without having an address. After a few weeks staying with her, and many job applications later, we searched for apartments near an area where I believed I would be

working. I did not want to move back to Los Angeles, yet my hands were completely tied and we still had about another month until the court hearing.

Prior to all of this my relationship with Farrah had grown very distant. My posts on Facebook made her very uncomfortable and we hadn't been on the same page about most things for a while. She had mentioned during one of our conversations that she thought that I hadn't been well, but she had never expressed that to me during the time that she thought that. I took it with a grain of salt and even agreed with her. Not about what I was learning and sharing, but in regards to me feeling like I was losing it for a while. I brushed it off and was thankful to still have a friend.

I had a few interviews in L.A. that went well, and Farrah co-signed for an apartment for me. Another friend, Marcus, (also from the Facebook Bible study group) sent me the money for the apartment deposit (another miracle!) and we moved in and started over. All that we had at first was an air mattress and some camping gear that Farrah had lent to us, but it worked out. Within a few weeks I had gotten free furniture from Craigslist, OfferUp and neighbors. You'd have never known that we were

homeless before. As bad as it all was, we were starting over and I appreciated every blessing. God had moved mountains in ways that I didn't expect. I had never wanted to return to Los Angeles but I quickly felt like I was home, even though I expected this to all be short term and temporary.

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As we settled in, I applied for multiple Home Health agencies in order to get work. The original position that I had thought I was going to have fell through because they wanted me to work full time in the office, but I now had a Kindergartner to pick up at a certain time and then a middle schooler to pick up a few hours later. There was no way for me to juggle all of it on my own and even though Andrew was now only 15 minutes away, I couldn't rely on him to help.

Work was very sporadic and slow getting off the ground. Most days I had no idea how bills were going to get paid and I was always stressed out. On top of that, I was now under a microscope by the courts and had to make sure everything was

perfect or I risked the children possibly being taken from me.

The visitation schedule for my little girl was now back to every other weekend from Friday night to Sunday night. She used to cry daily, had nightmares, counted down the days until her next weekend with him and begged me not to make her go. I would continually let her know that everything would be fine, we would pray and I tried everything that I could to get her mind off of things and even change the subject, but it rarely helped. My hands were tied.

When it was time to go back to the first mediation at court, I drove an hour and a half to get there and he didn't show up. I wanted to have mediation again because I was desperate for someone to hear our story and advocate for my child, but it didn't happen and he bought himself more time this way.

Prior to our upcoming court date I received an email from Andrew's girlfriend that had just broken up with him. I knew that he had a young girlfriend, but I wasn't aware of any details. I did have a feeling that she was being abused, though, simply because of who he was. I ended up calling her because she wanted to talk and she gave me all of the details. I could hear the pain in her voice and I resonated with every word she

said. I couldn't be mad at her.

It turned out he had previously been leaving Isabel alone with her (he was ordered by the courts to not leave her with anyone during his visits), and recently he had left this poor young woman (only 26…my oldest daughter's age at the time!!!) for dead in the middle of the desert after a drunken argument at a motorcycle show. He had also lied about his age and told her that he was 10 years younger than he really was.

She then admitted that he filed the court order because she didn't agree with him allowing me to take Isabel out of state. She also admitted that he was still drinking during his visits, was completely unstable and stated that she would write a letter of witness for court. Honestly, none of these things surprised me at all and I felt horrible for her. But I did hope and pray that with her testimony the court would see the truth and that it would help our situation.

Fast forward to our court date. I had been in fellowship with multiple people that I had met through our Facebook bible study group over the years and they were all praying for us. But on the morning of the court date, I called two of them and after both conversations I felt horrible and couldn't explain why. It

almost felt like what had happened in North Carolina when I went to lunch with the mother and daughter. I tried to brush it off, listened to worship music in the car for the rest of the almost two hour drive and of course, I prayed.

Court was a disaster, again. No matter how much evidence I admitted, there was always something wrong and it always seemed to be blamed on me. They took the new evidence as just being from a disgruntled ex-girlfriend and I was a crazy Christian and making things up in order to not let the father have time with our daughter.

The fact that my ex didn't show up to mediation for his own requested order did upset the Judge, but he ended up just dropping the order that was filed against me altogether and at that point I had already lost everything so nothing more could be done. The ship had sailed and Andrew got what he wanted.

What I said and admitted as evidence about my child's nightmares, his shower, drinking, previous history of being ordered to parenting and anger management classes, etc. meant nothing. I asked if he could at least order supervised visitations, but I was ignored. In the end, the judge ordered for us to come back for mediation again in a few months and everything would

remain the same until then.

I couldn't understand why God was allowing all of this suffering, especially with my children! I was now back to scraping for money and barely getting by on top of still being under the control and abuse of a narcissist that could care less about anyone other than himself. Why!?

Chapter Twenty-Three

Covid And Bainbridge Island

During the first year of our new lives at this apartment in Los Angeles, things with the older kids took a turn for the worse. Theia and David would come to visit or we would go see them occasionally, but the tension was so high and things had not been communicated for so long, that it was just building up. They were angry with me about everything and at this point they didn't even believe in God anymore.

I'm not denying any of the bad choices I made, at all. I was still growing while trying to raise them and they got all of the fallout. But at one point it all came to a head and completely blew up. This led to my two oldest not talking to me at all and we were all completely estranged for about two years. This led me to feel so much shame and depression that I isolated myself from everyone even more.

Everywhere I turned I was hated and had to do everything alone. Grace was still living with her boyfriend in

our old town 90 miles away, was caught up in addiction and hardly eating. She didn't have a good relationship with her older siblings at the time, either, and was also isolated. My youngest two and I would go visit her when we could and I tried to convince her to come home, but she wasn't willing at that time. It was all very, very scary and at times I felt I would actually be crushed under the pressure.

Time went on and we needed to just live. We made the most of everything and still tried to get out all of the time to move on. Living in Los Angeles we do have the benefit of everything being out here, so we were either up in the mountains, at the beach or somewhere else. Any chance we could, we would get in the car and drive away for a few hours or a day. I tried to make it fun for the kids, even under the immense pressure I was under. God was so faithful and always helped us through. Whether it was me having just enough patients to see before picking up the girls from school or just enough money to buy groceries, we always had exactly what we needed.

Andrew and I had gone to mediation several more times. Isabel's complaints got worse and she needed to sleep with me

at night because she was terrified and constantly anxious. No matter how much we prayed or I tried to distract her with other things, nothing seemed to work. She did not want to be alone with him and said that he was scary. If I discussed the issues with him directly he agreed to work on them, change, take down the devil decorations, etc., but it never happened. During the last mediation that we went to right before Covid hit, we ended up receiving orders to go to co-parenting therapy. I thought it was insane since clearly there was no co-parenting at all. But that is what was ordered, so I began to look for anyone who may be able to help.

2020 was a nightmare on top of a nightmare. When everything shut down, no one would see us. I was at a loss. This meant that she still had to go with him every other weekend until the courts would reopen and there was nothing that I could do. So, by the Grace of God I turned it around. I prayed and decided to try to be friends with Andrew in order to hopefully make things better for Isabel. I would invite him over for dinner and to help with school projects or whatever, with the hopes that he would treat her better at home and she would be happier. This did placate him for a good period of time and though

things were not perfect, they did improve for Isabel. Until they didn't.

It just so happened that I had also hurt my hand and went on disability about a month after the shut down. This was convenient because the kids now needed to stay home and I had to school them. God was working things out in ways that could only be explained as miracles. I was on disability for more than a year and then right toward the end of the shut down, the owner of an agency that I worked for asked if I could take an at home position as a Case Manager. I didn't get the vaccine so I wasn't yet allowed to be around patients, so this was more than perfect.

I ended up keeping the kids at home because I had realized that they were learning more with me than they were at school. It turns out that my youngest was struggling with dyslexia, so I had researched different ways for her to learn in a way that fit her, as sending her back didn't make sense anymore.

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During this time my nephew, now in his 30's, had ended up in

the hospital due to using a dirty needle. It had caused a serious infection in his heart. When I received the phone call from his mother that he was on life support, Theia and I caught the first plane up there. He ended up needing open heart surgery. Thankfully, he made it through and things took a really good turn for him, as scary as that was. It was a true miracle and all of our prayers were answered. But he still had a long road ahead of him.

About 2 years after his surgery, and toward the end of the shutdown, I flew with my two youngest girls up to Washington to spend some time with him. The goal was to assist him with some doctors appointments and attend the cardiology appointment with him. It turned out that he hadn't arranged them properly and said there was an issue with the insurance, so it ended up being more of a vacation. Andrew was aware of the trip and even agreed to pick us up from the airport when we came home.

I sent pictures of Isabel from the plane and throughout the trip. This was me, still trying to placate him and make sure that I had proof that he was aware of everything.

I had rented an AirBNB for the vacation for two weeks

on an island that I had never heard of. I just loved the ad for the cabin: no TV, on the ocean facing the sunset, and occasional whale watching. It sounded like a dream and we were all so excited.

When we arrived at the cabin that night, my nephew had already gotten there in his own car. He had been living at an independent living home and was in the process of obtaining his Bachelor's Degree, so he needed to set up his computer in his room. The cabin was lovely. We spent the evening getting settled, caught up a little bit and went to bed. My nephew had the room upstairs and the girls and I shared the larger room downstairs.

That first night, as soon as I turned off the lamp and my head hit the pillow, there was a loud bang in the closet right beside me. It sounded like a pipe in the wall. I brushed it off, but it happened again and again and kept getting louder. It didn't sound like water. It couldn't be an animal because there was no puttering or scratching. I turned on the light– it stopped. I got up and went to the living room and the hall closet behind that wall, but there was nothing to indicate where the pounding was coming from. Since it stopped I figured that maybe it was an

animal after all, so I went back to bed. But as soon as I turned off the light and my head hit the pillow, it started again.

Anne asked what I thought it was and I just said that I thought it was an animal. Eventually the girls fell asleep, but it didn't stop. I prayed and talked myself out of whatever it may be and forced myself to sleep, too. It pounded all night long, like someone beating a drum. In the morning when the sun rose and I got out of bed, it stopped. I didn't say anything to the kids because they seemed to not notice. But something else was going on.

Anne (now 14) had brought up that she wanted to go home and felt a heaviness, almost depressed, being there. I felt the same. It was crazy because we were in the most beautiful place! It did not make sense.

The days passed. We went and saw many sights. We went to the Japanese American Exclusion Museum, an insect museum, took a ferry to Seattle, walked through the enchanted forest and watched many beautiful sunsets. But night after night, as soon as my head hit the pillow, the banging started. After three nights everyone was noticing and my nephew even said that the place was haunted. I didn't feel afraid, but I was

getting annoyed and wanted to know why it was out to get only my attention.

Finally, about a week in, I was sitting on the bed reading my Bible in the evening and the Lord led me to read Ezekiel 20. It had been a long time since I'd read the book of Ezekiel and I wasn't sure why I was being led to read it now, but I did and almost right away I understood. I saw what He was saying in a way that I had never understood before, ever.

I believed in Jesus. I believed in God. I believed that His Word was true– but I didn't trust Him. I believed that it was up to me to see things through, that I was unworthy and that He wouldn't do for me the things that He promised everyone else. I still did not understand the importance of complete obedience and surrender or how important it truly was. Friends and church leaders will continually preach of God's grace and mercy but rarely (if at all) discuss the blessings of obedience and the curses for sin.

Ezekiel 20:27 (ESV) "Therefore, son of man, speak to the house of Israel and say to them, Thus says the Lord GOD*: In this also your fathers blasphemed me, by dealing treacherously with me. For when I had brought them into the land that I swore*

to give them, then wherever they saw any high hill or any leafy tree, there they offered their sacrifices and there they presented the provocation of their offering; there they sent up their pleasing aromas, and there they poured out their drink offerings."

I had sinned horribly with my backsliding, fornicating, and trying to find a man to fill what only God could. I had caved into fear instead of trusting in the true message of the Gospel and it spilled onto my kids. Until this time, I had not fully acknowledged the error of my ways. I had repented and just moved forward believing that that was enough, but I did not fully understand deep in my soul that there would still be dire consequences for what I had done (see Deuteronomy, Chapter 28).

Father was removing the scales from my eyes and helping me to see, gently, mercifully, that I could not do all of the things that I had done, even as a believer, and just get away with it. You reap what you sow and trees don't sprout up right away, they take years.

The law is written and the consequences are laid out. Everything that was happening in our lives was happening

because I had removed His covering when I sinned and legally opened up doors to the enemy. I wept. It could have all been prevented if I had been obedient and stopped trying to do everything on my own.

Ezekiel 20:43 (ESV) "And there you shall remember your ways and all your deeds with which you have defiled yourselves, and you shall loathe yourselves for all the evils that you have committed. And you shall know that I am the LORD, when I deal with you for my name's sake, not according to your evil ways, nor according to your corrupt deeds, O house of Israel, declares the Lord GOD."

The two weeks wrapped up. The banging at night never stopped when I got into bed, but I knew that the Lord would eventually reveal it to me. I had looked up the history of the island and found that a lot of it was Native American burial grounds. I was reminded of how my father had dug up Native burial grounds in Hemet, CA when I was a child. The State agency that he worked for was in the process of building a dam called Diamond Valley Lake. My father was in charge of the engineering as well as letting people know that they were bought out of their land and needed to move. He was actually

not okay with it at all, but it was “part of the job.”

Having been a part of the Cherokee nation in Tennessee, he felt so guilty about the digging, knowing that the grounds were sacred to the local tribes. He would drop me off at my great grandmother’s house (she actually lived in Hemet) and he would go out for days and help the tribes dig and relocate the bones of their ancestors. I didn’t know for certain if this had anything to do with what happened to me every night in that cabin, but I assumed that maybe it did and left it at that.

Fast forward to 2025. During a visit with one of my mother’s sisters it was revealed to me that my uncle, who had passed away at age 23, was killed on that same island. To this day I cannot tell you which of the things mentioned above caused the banging at night that was directed at me. I still believe that I will receive clarity at some point. But this information definitely made my spidey senses go off.

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On the way to the airport to go home, I had a vision. Weeks

before our trip when we were still back at home, I had had a prophetic dream. Anne, Isabel, and I were driving in a mini van onto a freeway entrance bridge that went down into clouds. Since I couldn't see what we were driving into I felt afraid and prayed out loud in the dream, but when I looked out the driver's window to the left, there was a huge mountain peak before me that was covered with snow and the sky was a deep, dark blue. I somehow knew in my spirit that the mountain represented God and at that point in the dream, we drove down into the clouds and I woke up.

I had prayed for clarity and was only shown at the time that we were entering a new season, that God would be with me and I needed to trust Him. Now, as I was driving the girls to the airport to leave Washington, I was about to drive onto that same freeway bridge, in a rented mini van and Mount Rainier was to my left covered in snow with the deep blue sky behind it. I knew right then that we were in the completion of the dream and the closing of that season. I was speechless.

Chapter Twenty-Four

An Angel Returns

One night, after not having contact with my two eldest children for at least two years, I had another dream. In the dream it was nighttime and I was climbing down a large mountain made of boulders and rocks with trees growing out of the crags. I could feel that God was holding my hand to guide me down, but I couldn't see Him. As I got down to the ground, I was all of a sudden placed on a large, flat rock that was high up toward the sky with nothing beneath it. There were large, black, billowing clouds above and lightning flashes as they swirled.

As I stood on the rock, I wondered how it was being held up, but God gave me the understanding that it was stable. I looked to my left and there was a pack of papers full of colorful drawings that were flipping through with the breeze, all of Toy Story characters. I then looked up toward the sky again and felt a warm light over me, even in the darkness. There was a storm coming and heavy wind and rain was on its way. As I stood

there, looked up and closed my eyes in the dream I said, “The wind will blow me off and the rain is going to hurt me!” There was no reply, just a calm and warmth that came over me. The wind came and blew from the West (my right) and the rain came with it. It hit me but I did not move and the rain did not hurt. Then I woke up. It was 3am.

I sat up in a sweat and immediately started praying. I knew that something had happened. David’s favorite movie when he was young was Toy Story and those pages represented my children. I prayed and prayed, asking God to protect David and Theia and to show me what the dream meant, in full. I understood that He was the Rock and immediately the parable of the wise and foolish builders came to mind. (See Matthew 7:24-27) He had given me calm, peace and stability in the storm in the dream, but I was nearly frantic over the children, particularly my son at that moment. So I stayed up praying until I was able to fall asleep.

The next morning I received a text from Theia. She asked me to call her and I tried multiple different times throughout the day, but we kept missing each other because we were both at work. Within that time I had asked if everyone was

safe and she confirmed that they were, praise God! But when we finally spoke at about 11pm, the first thing she said was, “guess what your son did?”

I knew instantly without her telling me. I replied, “He went to live with your dad.” She was shocked. “How did you know?” she asked, assuming I had spoken with him. But no, I told her that I had a prophetic dream and was up all night praying. It was only at that moment that the Holy Spirit revealed the full truth to me.

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There had been an issue over the previous year where Theia and I were receiving strange text messages. I will not go into all of the details, but they would eventually lead to the two of us needing to get another restraining order against my first husband, along with an FBI investigation. The investigation itself led to a third party my ex was involved with who was stalking Theia. Remember, my ex-husband does not exercise wisdom, loyalty, or self-control. He is a child sex offender and

used to use drugs with his own daughter. This new situation was a huge problem, and it was nothing I would put past him.

The day after that conversation about David moving back with his dad, I met with David and we talked a bit. He still held a lot of anger towards me and didn't trust me. He did confirm that he was planning to kill himself but instead decided to go and live with his father. I tried to talk to him about my dream, but it was not well received. I was glad that he was alive and that God answered my prayers. Obviously, this drew a huge line in the sand between him and his older sister, considering all that she had been through, but all that I could do was pray at this point.

I had no idea what was to come, but God did and I had no choice but to trust Him. The shame that I felt over the division of my family left me in a dark place.

We were already isolated from our entire extended family and now I had to deeply feel, understand and live with what it meant for dreams to be shattered. Never, when I was younger, did I think that I wouldn't be surrounded by my children. I had always dreamt of having a big, happy family growing up. But here I was and my two youngest daughters

were also suffering as a result.

Grace finally decided to move back in with us in early 2021. I was very thankful and hopeful that she would be able to get the help that she desperately needed. When she first moved back in it took a while to get adjusted. She and her boyfriend were still together, but he now lived far away. At first he came over quite a bit and so did my step-son who is the same age as her.

Eventually, she began to work and got busy, so life began to settle down. But she was also having night terrors, lucid dreams and sleep paralysis. This was also an issue with the youngest, Isabel. I would pray about this relentlessly. I'd also read books, anoint the rooms in the apartment and even watch videos about how to battle against them– all to no avail. They both knew about calling on Jesus in their sleep and did so, but both of my girls still got attacked nearly every night and I was sometimes woken up multiple times per night. This continued for years.

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In October of that same year I had received a phone call from Grace and she was frantically crying. She said that she'd been in a car accident and her car was totaled. It was her first day at a new job and on her way home, a speeding truck ran a red light and hit her. The car beside her had honked to try to warn her but it was too late. The driver of the truck was going about 60mph and slammed right into her driver door. She broke the driver side window with her head and spun out of control.

That day, I had recommended she take my car, which was a 2013 Honda CR-V. I don't remember the reason, but she decided to take her car instead. It was an old 1970's Volvo Station Wagon– built like a tank. When I arrived, frantic, I took pictures of her car which was all but folded in half and realized that if she had been in my car, she'd be dead. Grace had already been in two other car crashes that were not her fault. This was the worst.

I took her to the hospital where they would not allow me to stay because of the Covid shutdown. Thank God, she did not need to be admitted to the hospital but the bump on her head

was huge and she was sore for weeks. In a nutshell, over a period of a year, we had gotten a lawyer, done physical therapy, went to multiple MD appointments and she won the case with the full amount that could be given. She had already purchased another car with money that her boyfriend's mother had lent her.

I cannot tell you how it felt to know, deep down, that the enemy was out to kill my children. Not one, all. I could see patterns going back to the very beginning and could see just how hard the kingdom of darkness was out to get them. I silently sat and prayed, in awe of God's protection over them and wanted real answers on how to make this all stop. Thankfully, Grace fully recovered from her injuries and God fully restored her body.

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Toward the end of the shut down, Isabel began to spiral because the visitations were getting worse again. Andrew had been distancing himself more and more and she cried every time I had to drop her off. No matter how many discussions I had with

him about following court orders, taking down demonic decorations for her visits, not forcing her to watch scary movies, not making her rub his feet for hours with a timer on, feeding her only junk, etc., he would not stop. He always said yes with a smile on his face but never meant it. Isabel was still counting down the days and saying she was afraid to sleep there. She was still having nightmares and couldn't sleep unless she slept with me almost every night.

We hadn't been to court because they weren't accepting cases like ours that already had orders in place since they were so backed up due to the shutdown. I was so distraught at times that I could hardly think. I felt like a horrible mother. So many people were praying for us and I was praying and trying to teach Isabel how to lean on Jesus during these trials while still trying to live a normal life, but I physically could not prevent her from going to the visits or I'd risk losing her. It was so unfair that I had to drop her off when she was clearly being abused. It was insane.

As things started to open back up, I was finally able to seek out a therapist to help us. I contacted several people, but halfway through the questioning process they would all shut me

down and say that the situation was too much for them to deal with, that they didn't work with the courts because it was too much trouble, or they didn't work with kids altogether. I was so frustrated and continued to cry out to God to lead me to the right person. I had left voicemails for several therapists, but weeks passed and hardly any had returned my calls.

Finally, one day I got a voicemail. A woman named Cathy called and stated that she had been sick and was just getting to her voicemails now. She did work with the court system and did work with children as young as 2 years old. I rushed to call her as soon as I could and of course, we ended up playing phone tag for more than a day. But once we spoke I felt a weight lift off of me that I had not felt in a long time. She was willing to help, willing to call whoever needed to be called and cared about what I said my child was going through.

The day came when I needed to let my ex know that we needed to start going to therapy and that I was planning to take Isabel first in order to get to know the therapist. If any of you have ever dealt with a passive-aggressive narcissist, you know that giving them any bad news that pertains to setting them straight is like biting off the finger of the devil. I prayed and just

did it. I could not wait one more second. He responded with a short answer; something like, “okay” and I moved forward.

Isabel and I first met this kind woman at a building in Pasadena, CA that I’d never been to. The first meeting was heavy, but went very well and I was starting to see a light at the end of the tunnel. The therapist did mention that she was there helping a friend who owned that practice, since it was growing and she needed more assistance and that she usually worked from home, but I didn’t care. The office was nice and I did not meet any other employees as we had the whole place to ourselves. I thought it was nice of her to help out her friend and we moved on.

At the next meeting we discussed how we were going to set up our group meetings and how she would see each of us individually at times to make sure that she had the full picture of what was going on. I was elated and agreed to it all. During our conversation in that second meeting, though, something came up that changed the trajectory of everything. Cathy had gotten up from her chair to get me a business card and adjusted some picture frames on a table. As she did this she was explaining to me how the owner's sister had recently passed and showed me

her photo. Then she stated the owner's name, Angel.

Now, I had discussed with her previously about everything that had taken place in our family. The family counseling that we had been ordered to do, the intervention, even that the previous counselor had written a letter for me for court during my divorce. But I could not, for the life of me, remember that woman's name or find that letter to show her. But now it was as if a lightbulb had been switched on in my mind.

"Did you say, Angel?" I asked. She replied, "Yes, she is the owner and runs this practice. She hasn't been here because of the death of her sister." I started to ask questions about what she looked like, if she had a son about 18, etc. Everything matched up perfectly. I was almost dizzy at this point. "She's the one!!! She is the one who counseled my older kids, assisted with the intervention and wrote me that letter for court! Isabel was a baby when that all happened and she KNOWS the whole situation from the beginning!"

All three of us, Isabel, Cathy and myself were all giddy with excitement and in utter shock! I actually felt like I might pass out! God was behind ALL of this! The waiting, the rejection by other therapists; all of it was positioning. If any of

the others would have accepted our case, we would not have been linked up with this woman. This would be imperative as time went on, because the spirit of Jezebel (narcissism) had reared her ugly head on multiple occasions and was even fooling Cathy at times, through Andrew. But when all was said and done, Jesus had the final Word.

Chapter Twenty-Five

Even If It Kills Me

During all of this and I mean, literally at the same time, I started to read a new book called “Overcoming the False Verdicts of Freemasonry” by Dr. Ron Horner. I was always on the lookout for different ways that our family could be delivered from all of these curses, cycles and demons, but I had never really read anything that actually described what the rituals in Freemasonry entailed or how the curses were laid out.

Well, as soon as I started reading it, and this was only about a month after we began therapy, things started to happen. I realized even when I read the forward of the book that this was going to hit home, but I had no idea how hard. Within five days of me coming into agreement with the first prayer and undoing the 1st degree, Grace’s boyfriend of 5 years abruptly broke up with her. It was on the day that she had received the money from the insurance company to pay his mother back for the car. He stated that that wasn’t the reason and that he just couldn’t be

with her anymore (he was a narcissist, too). But there was an exchange/transaction that took place.

I didn't understand this spiritually until years later, but transactions in the spirit realm are parallel to what goes on down here. A payment was exchanged and completed, and then God shut the door and pruned that part of her life. Though it was extremely painful, it was necessary in order for her to move forward.

This boyfriend of hers had the same last name as my second husband (as well as myself through marriage). We had tried to find a relation but didn't, even though his father was from the same town as Andrew. This breakup was huge. It shook our whole family and my daughter was heavily distraught. We ended up going on a mini vacation down to San Diego for a week just to get away and help her be able to grieve.

While we were at the AirBNB, I would wake up every morning at sunrise and go out into the backyard to read and undo more of the ritual curses. You actually need to act some of them out and I knew that if the neighbors saw me they would think I was crazy! But that didn't stop me. I could feel these curses breaking in the spirit and I knew that even if I didn't see

all of the evidence right away, it was happening. It took me about four weeks to finish the book.

Grace was really struggling. She was still getting heavily attacked in her sleep and was now sinking into depression and going out with friends every night to stay busy and drink it all away (along with whatever else). I was extremely worried and prayed fervently. I didn't want to make her move out because I felt guilty about what had happened with Theia and I was honestly afraid that she was going to die. She was always honest if I confronted her about anything and she was still working and trying to pursue other things, so I knew that I needed to press in and pray harder until something changed.

Grace was also able to meet with Cathy a few times. I was grateful that she was willing to seek help but as time passed things did start to spin out of control again. The enemy is relentless and not willing to let anyone out of his grip easily. I continued to pray and lean in. There was so much happening all at once that I felt like I couldn't get through a single day without spending time with God. It was very difficult, but I am thankful for this.

From the beginning, Cathy had recommended that my

daughter not have overnight visitations with her father and that they have group sessions in lieu of them until we had enough meetings for things to be worked out and for my daughter to not be afraid to go. Andrew agreed to this, on paper, and right away I was able to stop taking her to her weekend visits as Cathy monitored their time together for about an hour after each therapy session. This only happened 3 times due to the fact that as soon as he realized that he was able to manipulate the situation and continue to lie his way through it, he stopped coming altogether.

Due to all of these events unfolding at once and the history of what happened to me in the past, I also retained a lawyer. Remember, I was a single mother with only one income and was practically living off of credit cards at this point. Yes, this was going to be another expense, but I was so afraid of what would happen that I used another credit card to retain this new lawyer.

I was now having so much anxiety that I could hardly sleep. I remember replaying and rehearsing conversations in my mind constantly, so much so that I could barely concentrate. (Don't you hate that?!) I did pray all day long, but could not

control my mind or my heartbeat! It was driving me nuts. I was still working full time from home and was overwhelmed by my job, which was sometimes 10 - 12 hours per day, along with homeschooling and everything else that needed to be done. In order to keep my sanity I had Bible verses posted all over the place, even on my computer in front of me so that I could read them every time I looked up. I also had YouTube running with God's promises reading in the background or worship music playing.

I didn't want to do what I had done last time, which was to try to do it all on my own and assume that God would make everything go in my favor. I knew that I needed to be intentional in handing everything over to Him. Key word– everything. I would hear and see the words, "Be Still" everywhere, all of the time. I knew it was Him, but I was so traumatized and terrified that I felt I would melt away if I didn't have every detail of what was going to happen.

Court order requests had now been filed and the battle was getting extremely ugly. Andrew was messaging me every other weekend, requesting his overnight visits and acting like the agreement in therapy had never happened. He was also no

longer agreeing to therapy and not responding to Cathy.

I forgot to mention prior, that he wanted– and previously had rights to– daily phone calls with Isabel at 8pm. These were still happening and causing us both extreme anxiety. A lot of times he was drunk and erratic and almost always used his words to manipulate and break her down. I had also received a notice in the mail on college ruled paper, handwritten in bad cursive, from someone stating he was a lawyer representing Andrew and that he wanted me to call him. The letter looked so unprofessional that I wasn't sure it was real, so I forwarded it to my lawyer.

One night when I was driving Isabel to a trampoline park that we used to go to almost every night, I could hear her conversation with Andrew. He asked her, "Guess who I saw today?" Of course she had no idea. He had begun the conversation by speaking about his son (Isabel's half-brother/my step-son). But then he switched directions. He said, "No, your *other* brother!" (Meaning my biological son, completely unrelated to Andrew, who was living with my first husband). This meant that he had gone to my first husband's house.

Andrew continued, “I showed him pictures of you and he said that he misses you and that you are so grown up! The next time I have a real visit with you we will go over to their house so that you can go swimming. They cannot wait to see you!” The ‘they’ he was referring to was my biological son and first husband– the man who had beaten me within an inch of my life.

At this point, Isabel was shaking and crying. I told her to end the call nicely and they hung up. I comforted her, prayed with her and reassured her that she was not going to my first husband’s home to go swimming. I walked her into the park to play with her friends and then went back out to make phone calls, starting with Cathy.

This turned into a huge ordeal, considering the first husband's sex offender (of children) history and how this was all panning out. It also ended up only being a partial truth, as David ended up stating that it didn’t actually take place the way that Andrew had said, at all. The devil is a liar! *You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks*

out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies. John 8:44 (ESV)

As horrible as all of this was, it changed the course of everything for the better. The social services were going to come back out to assess my daughter, which ended up going in her favor. Cathy was now dead set on protecting her from her father since he was clearly unstable, and the phone calls stopped from that day forward. The lawyer ended up adding that they were detrimental to the child in the new request for orders, and the judge agreed.

Fast forward about two months as we were nearing our court date, I received a call from an LAPD officer. He introduced himself and explained to me how they had a civil case that was being filed against me with reports from every other weekend that my child was not taken to her visits. Was I surprised? No. Anyhow, I explained everything to him and let him know that my lawyer would be contacting him with all of the documents. He was very understanding of the whole situation, but did let me know that to his knowledge, I would have charges being pressed against me.

Was I afraid and struck with terror at that message being

delivered to me? Absolutely! Was I feeling the way that I had felt when I had received that call from the courthouse 7 years prior? You bet! But was God also showing me that the spirit of intimidation was at work and that He was bigger?

Yes.

But I had direct orders to *seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things would be added to me (Matthew 6:33)* and to *be still (Exodus 14:14).* This time, I was going to do what He said, even if it killed me.

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I forwarded all of the LAPD requests to my lawyer and prayed about the rest. Everything with the police department ended up getting dropped altogether once they saw the direction that everything was going along with the evidence. That was a huge win and relief, praise God! But now my lawyer was asking me for more money and we hadn't even finished the first part of what needed to be done.

Long story short, right before Christmas, I ended up

needing to apply for yet another credit card and pay her an additional retainer fee. I had now given her $10,000 that I did not have and was trying not to panic. Nevertheless, that is how it went down.

The response that was given by Andrew and his lawyer, to the court, was all about me taking Isabel to therapy behind his back without permission, taking her out of the state without him knowing (that one when I sent him pictures and he picked us up from the airport…), lying about my daughter being afraid of him, being a crazy Christian, homeschooling her and taking her to doctor and dental appointments without his knowledge or permission, and not bringing her to his legally ordered weekend visitations without reason. There was a lot more, but I'm sure your stomach feels the way that mine does writing this. Need I say more?

The first court appearance was an emergency request via Zoom with my lawyer. The judge initially ordered that our case could be moved to a closer location (which we had requested), but only after he had finished the initial orders regarding custody and visitation. He then pushed the court hearing to the end of January. It was currently mid-December.

Within days of this court hearing, I received notice from my lawyer that she had gotten a new job at a new firm and that hers would be shutting down. I panicked. I called and asked about what I was supposed to do and about all of the money that I had just paid. In the end, she laid out how the money had already been used and that if I decided to retain a new attorney to let her know so that she could send the proper transfer documents. At this point, as wrong and twisted as it all was, I could feel how God was making this all happen for a reason. There was no way for me to come up with more money. I had to do it alone, with Him.

January came and I appeared for our hearing over the phone since Isabel hadn't been feeling well. The connection was really bad and as I was defending myself, I could only hear broken conversation on the other side. My ex's lawyer asked me a ton of questions and I answered as well as I could, but I was afraid that I had missed something.

In the end, orders were given for Andrew, within 30 days from that court date, to find three separate family therapists for us to choose from that would meet the criteria of the courts. They had to work with children and families and be willing to

testify in court. Then, once I received that list from him, I had to choose the one that I agreed to go with. Within that time, the phone calls and visitations would remain on hold. I was extremely thankful for this! Isabel wasn't happy about needing to see a new therapist as she loved Cathy, but I could see that things were different than before and this judge cared about what was being done to my child.

Thirty days came and went.

It could have taken one hour, but here we were. At 9pm on the 30th day, I received a text message from Andrew with a list of therapists and their contact info. Clearly these were copied and pasted from Google as quickly as they could be at the end of the day, but he kept the law.

The following morning at 8am I called all of them for screening. They were all located more than an hour from where we all lived. The first one that I called, a male, stated that he had never spoken to Andrew and did not work with the courts or children. The second one that I called did not answer and I ended up leaving her 3 voicemails over 3 days. When I researched her, she was a sex therapist for struggling married couples and didn't work with anyone under the age of 14. The

3rd one did not have any openings and was not interested in our case altogether. She had also never heard from Andrew.

I responded to him with all of this info, via email, as well as numbers to visitation monitors that I had already screened, as a courtesy. I heard no reply until about a month before our court date, probably because his lawyer had more than likely told him that he needed to see Isabel or was going to lose in court. Months had now passed without any contact with our daughter or a therapist. Finally, he reached out to Cathy and said that he was willing to go back and do group therapy with her again. Remember, he had stated on the court docs that he'd never even met her before. Cathy agreed.

The first appointment didn't involve Isabel. I showed up with the court docs and basically went down all 38 lines and accusations, some that included Cathy, and pointed out with proof how they were all lies. He just sat there because there was no way to defend himself and sulked. We ended up having to do maybe 2 more sessions and then he would get a few moments with Isabel in the same room afterwards while Cathy and I stayed in the adjacent room. Even during this time he would say things to manipulate and upset her and she would end up crying

on the way home. When Cathy confronted him about it, he brushed it all off and said that we were all overreacting. All of this was now documented.

I now was able to file all of this in court. Our court date fell on the first day of Passover. When that day came I actually drove down there since what happened last time with the phone connection was so horrible. The night before I had received a bizarre email from his lawyer's office that was incoherent. In broken words, he had said that he had injured his hand, was on narcotics, and was asking to delay the court hearing.

I showed up, not believing the email that I had received and gave a copy of it to the judge. Andrew and his lawyer did not appear at the courthouse. When it was my turn to go up, I took my place and got sworn in. They appeared over the phone. The judge questioned me first and I gave my testimony. He looked at me very intently and I could tell that he believed and understood everything that I said. That, in and of itself, was a miracle.

Then, it was their turn. The lawyer began by stating that he had injured his shoulder (not his hand), was on narcotics and wanted to push the court date forward. As he said these words,

the people in the courtroom, including the bailiff, gasped. The judge raised his eyebrow at me and I just sat there and smiled.

The lawyer proceeded to say that he was currently at a clinic and that Andrew was with him. Immediately the judge reprimanded him and ordered supervised visitations with Isabel and no phone calls. This was disputed, but the judge wasn't having it. He ordered that we had to agree on the monitor, he had 3 hours every other weekend for visitation and court was adjourned. I had not won full custody yet, because the Judge wanted that part to go to the new courthouse in L.A.

Once again, Andrew was ordered to come up with 3 supervised visitation monitors and forward me the info within 30 days. They had to be professional, not family, as we had discussed in court. But he ended up sending a list of family members at the last minute, again. I, in turn, reminded his lawyer's office both of what the orders said and what Andrew sent to me. I then sent back a list of professional monitors. It was at that point that he fell off the map. We wouldn't have any contact with him for a year.

Chapter Twenty-Six

Cursed Cars

The next few months felt like a breath of fresh air. Finally, my child had some respite. However, she began to feel the rejection and was upset that it had all abruptly ended and that he wasn't trying to change for her. Abuse has a funny way of holding us captive, even when it stops.

Therapy continued on and off and we prayed and discussed as much as she could understand, as often as possible. Somehow, deep down, I knew that this was all training for her, too. I didn't like it one bit, but God was in control.

After a year I filed for full custody. We had been told at the previous court to take care of the rest back in L.A. When we went to court the judge immediately gave me what I was requesting since he hadn't been involved at all, but she also encouraged him to start seeing Isabel again and reiterated that she needed him in her life. I was puzzled by this due to the evidence I had presented about the abuse. Either way, within a

month he had done his duty of finding 3 monitors and I picked one.

It was now April of 2024 and Isabel was almost 11. The events that occur after this point all happened so rapidly that my head sometimes feels like it's still spinning. Bear with me. If you thought that there was a lot up until this point, we're about to hit overdrive.

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I need to first go back a little and fill in some gaps. In August of 2022 we celebrated Isabel's 9th birthday at a trampoline park in Altadena, CA that we had never been to before. We had invited my older kids, some neighbors and a few other friends from church. On that day I'd won a raffle for a one month membership which meant that I could now take her every single day. I was ecstatic because the place wasn't far from home and she loved it. From that day on, we went almost every day.

About a year after going there daily and meeting some amazing people, getting to know them, counseling and teaching

them about the bible, Jesus, conspiracy truths, etc., we had grown some tight friendships. At one point, after about a year, I became friends with a particular woman who brought her young son there to play. The night that we'd met I didn't remember ever seeing her, but she had stated that she'd been going for years. We must've missed each other with the times that we were going.

We became very close, very fast. Isabel used to act in the Christmas play at church every year and our new friends attended. We would also meet up at each other's homes or at parks to talk about Jesus, I would answer Bible questions, and we would compare notes on how much we had in common. It was actually uncanny.

We had both been movie extras on the show "The Wonder Years" when we were teenagers (at the same time), we both had our first daughters within 3 weeks of each other in 1994, and her daughter was born on my birthday. We also had backgrounds with narcissistic abuse, witchcraft, and Freemasonry. You could not make this stuff up. She even used to frequent my old street that I grew up on and would walk past my house when we were younger, yet I didn't remember her at

all.

Over about a year's time we seemingly knew everything about each other and I realized that I was on assignment to answer questions about God and also help her daughter, who had come out of addiction and a lot of trauma. But there was one thing, out of all of this, that stood out the most and still surprises me to this day.

Do you remember how I was told that I needed to baptize my baby by the Catholic Church but they wouldn't do it because of my long list of sins? Well, get this.

Since we both had our babies the same year and lived in the same neighborhood at the same time, she had taken her baby to the second church that I had called and they *did* baptize her baby. She was living with her boyfriend, had the baby out of wedlock, wasn't a member of that church, and hadn't been to confession.

I was mind blown. God did it all on purpose. I had known several other people who weren't given a hard time and had their kids baptized, but I was turned down 3 times. It was all orchestrated by Yahweh. If they would have said yes, I'd

have probably never read the Bible and all of these things wouldn't have happened the way that they did. He is faithful!

After nearly two years of fellowship, the Lord closed the door on this relationship. After the Eaton fire, the trampoline park closed and everything changed. It was all part of the transition period that had already begun. Warfare became much more intense and I had caught this friend lying to me on more than one occasion and many things about the relationship had grown toxic. It was at that point that God made it clear that I needed to pull back.

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I ended up having that Honda CR-V I'd bought right after the scary mini van, for 6 years. I paid it off on October 5th, 2023. When I first bought the car, I noticed that a sticker had been peeled off of the back. It was a Freemason compass. I didn't like it, but it was what it was. The car was mine, it worked perfectly, and was the only one that I had qualified for at the time. I was so relieved not have a car payment and be able to lower my

insurance. I had also been thinking ahead about my child support ending the following year when Anne turned 18 and felt that this would definitely help.

On November 17th, 2023 I received a call from Anne. She had taken my car (she had her license and was a very good driver) to a show that she had played as a drummer in a band. On her way home she got into an accident and nearly totaled it. Thankfully, she wasn't hurt and it was still drivable. The person that she had hit got out, looked at it, and then left. She froze. Since it was dark, I just wanted her to come home.

Within a few days of that happening, that same car got broken into and someone messed up the ignition. This was in my own parking space at my apartment. We didn't have cameras so we never found out who did it. I needed my car and ended up calling a locksmith. Since it was a weekend, they charged me nearly $800.00 and when all was said and done, not only did it fall apart almost immediately and not work after igniting the car, but the mechanic changed his number and fell off the map. A different mechanic that I trusted was then able to help out for an additional $300.00. Afterward, my car started to act up.

On January 16th, 2024, after Anne had been working for a year and saving for her own car, I took her to buy an old wagon. It was a great car, but a stick shift. We had agreed that I'd teach her how to use it and that we could share cars until then. I had broken down and applied for a loan and was able to order a car from Carvana. I didn't qualify for anything with anyone else. I was so bummed that I was being drawn back into this cycle of financial slavery, but I couldn't save a dollar to save my life and didn't have time to wait. So, on January 18th, two days later, my new car was delivered and they put my crashed CR-V, which was my down payment, on a flatbed to haul it off.

As the tow truck driver was backing out to leave, he ended up hitting the back windshield of Grace's car that she had only had for 2 years. Even though he didn't hit it hard, it broke the back windshield, cracked the front windshield, and damaged the body of the car. I prayed, silently. I knew that the guy felt bad and it was a total accident. But I also knew that this was all part of a long, drawn out attack and yet again, didn't know what more I could do.

Good grief, it felt like we were in the Twilight Zone. In the end, Carvana paid Grace and we were able to fix the car.

Praise God, it worked out.

Now, on January 24th (God forbid an entire week go by without something going insanely wrong), Anne needed my car for work and I had her wagon. It was the birthday of Isabel's best friend and we had her over for a tea party. In the late evening we got in Anne's car to drive her home. At the first intersection near my apartment, I was making a left turn with a green arrow when a big, black G-Ride slammed into us as it was making a right hand turn. The guy didn't even bother to stop. He looked right at me and then just sped off. I flashed my lights at him and went in his direction because that was the direction I was going in anyways, but he took off. I did get his license plate number and after we dropped off Isabel's friend, we went home and called the local Sheriff.

The officer arrived within an hour and took pictures of the damage. It got scraped up and dented the passenger side of the car. Thankfully, no one was hurt and since it was a sturdy wagon, the damage wasn't bad. But I still filed the report, they found out instantly who it was (a local Orthodontist!) and told me they'd get back to me.

Our insurance was now skyrocketing. All three of us,

Grace, Anne and myself, were on the same policy because we lived together. I filed the claim with this guy's insurance since I was told that was the best way to go since he would be responsible. After going to get estimates, filing documents, sending pictures and going through all of the motions, this guy denied that it ever happened and my case was completely dropped.

That was it. Even though there were two witnesses in the car and I had filed with the officer, I still “didn’t have proof.” Now, I cannot prove this, but I’m pretty sure this guy paid people off in order to get this outcome. He had also abruptly shut down his dental office years before and wasn’t practicing anywhere. It turned out a woman from church had been taking her son to his clinic for braces when that happened.

In April of 2024 (along with more that I will share in another chapter), we decided to sell Anne’s wagon and buy her an automatic car. She had learned how to drive it, but was still uncomfortable on hills and I really just wanted her to have something that I knew she wasn’t afraid to drive. So we found an old CR-V and bought it.

Now, I’m not a mechanic and don’t have a guy to take

with me. We had been so blessed by the almost perfect wagon and I had really believed that this one would be good too. The guy that we bought it from sold cars from home for a living. When we took it for a test drive, all seemed well. So we paid, signed and left. Anne drove my car home and I drove hers just to see how it felt. But not even 10 minutes from the guys house it started smoking. I ended up in a parking lot and called AAA. They showed up and told me that it needed coolant or water, did a few things and told me that it would now be fine.

While in that same parking lot, the guy parked next to me came over and said that he was a mechanic. When I told him that I had just bought it, he was shocked. He was trying to be nice but basically said that the guy shouldn't have sold it to me. At that point I had been trying to reach the seller but he wasn't answering and I needed to get home because I was about an hour away and my girls were waiting for dinner.

Here we go again. By the time I got about a mile from home, it was smoking and I actually needed to pull over off of the freeway and call a tow truck. By the time my mechanic got to it the next day, he told me to take it right back and get my money back. I paid to have it towed, but the guy would not

budge on the money. He only allowed us to pick another car. Again, I am not a mechanic, but surely not all of his cars could be bad! How would he get away with it?

I'm not going to give every detail because it would literally turn into another book. That guy from the lot, he ended up coming out to my home to work on this "new" car. It was *also* trash, and to add insult to injury, he didn't disclose the backlog of DMV fees on it. I did file a police report, report his business to BBB, etc. But no one could stop him. Laws in California are so, so special.

So, after months of trying to revive this dead car, all of Anne's money disappearing and me having to cough up thousands as well, we ended up selling it for under a thousand dollars to another mechanic. It wasn't until August of that year that we finally were able to get her a good car after she had worked to save more money. Praise God, she still has that one and all is well.

Chapter Twenty-Seven

No Way Out

In January 2024, after I'd been taking Isabel to acting classes for confidence and something fun to do, I was told she was good enough to sign with a Hollywood agency. First, though, she had to be prepared to go before a panel, which would cost a few thousand dollars, and I was given an ultimatum the same day my tax refund came in. I was told that if I said no now, I'd never be asked again. I felt pressured, talked to a few friends, and said yes. What I didn't do was ask God and wait.

Within three months, Isabel was miserable, the auditions were going badly, and I was having nightmares about the contract. I finally told the agency the truth: she wasn't interested, and I'd made a mistake. Thankfully, they didn't threaten to sue me. We were so relieved when it was over.

I also had to figure out what to do when Anne turned 18

in June and my child support ended. I already worked 10-12 hour days and was homeschooling, so a second job wasn't realistic. Instead, I began studying for my Domestic Violence Advocate and Counselor Certificate and took a life coaching course on the side.

Meanwhile, my credit card debt was so out of control that I couldn't buy groceries, even with the child support. I made too much for food stamps, but not enough to cover rent, the car loan, insurance, and my student loans, with Anne getting ready for college. I applied for a debt consolidation loan. The company told me to stop making payments to my creditors and pay them a fixed amount each month. It was a huge weight off my shoulders, and I was thankful.

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Do you remember that my first baby, Theia, was born on my mother's birthday, April 12th? Well, my mother was no longer

with us but this year was Theia's 30th birthday and we had tried to plan to get together as a family and celebrate. We didn't have anything specific planned, but wanted to at least get together for dinner on the day of.

Over the past month or so, my friend Lily back in North Carolina had been feeling sick. She was regularly battling health issues, but she had also been going through it with attack after serious attack. She was living with her daughter and 3 grandkids at the time and had been home babysitting while her daughter was at work. She also had a shoulder that simply did not work. This was all a bad situation.

I had called her on April 10th and it sounded like she had bronchitis, but hadn't been to the doctor. Of course I prayed and I know she did too, but this had been ongoing and she always got better, so I didn't take it seriously. However, that whole day and into the next, I felt like something was wrong with me. I could feel my blood pressure in my head and could almost feel it pump through my body. I checked my own blood pressure, but it was normal. I was growing more fatigued and anxious by the second. I couldn't explain it and didn't know what to do to make myself feel better, other than pray.

The following morning, Friday, April 11th, as I was working from my home computer, someone knocked on my door. I had been served papers by one of the credit card companies. I immediately called the debt consolidation loan company and asked how this could happen since they promised to negotiate with all of them. They then gave me instructions on steps that I needed to take and how to go file a response at the court house. This was a nightmare. I still ended up needing to go through all of this on top of paying them the amount that we agreed to. In the end the case would be dropped, but the timing surrounding all of this was additionally stressful and clearly an attack.

Later, that same day on April 11th, Lily's mother had made a post stating that she was in the hospital. It was late afternoon and I was driving my 2 girls to the beach to watch the sunset and just get some fresh air. Another friend called me as I was driving and said that Lily was now on life support! Anne and Isabel had said that I could turn around and go home, but I knew that we needed to get out for a bit and I needed to pray. I also knew that I needed to find a way to get to North Carolina and pray over her.

That same weekend, Sunday, April 13th, was Isabel's first supervised visit with Andrew in more than a year, and she was a nervous wreck. A friend from the trampoline park, who knew the whole situation, offered to take her for the weekend and handle the arrangements with the monitor so I could go to North Carolina.

Anne drove me to LAX on the evening of April 12th. We pushed Theia's birthday dinner to the following week, and I felt horrible not being there on her actual birthday, but I knew it was urgent. The girls pulled together and handled everything beautifully that weekend, and the visit went as well as it could have. I was thankful to God for arranging it all so perfectly.

While I was at LAX awaiting my flight, I developed a bad pain in my chest. I knew that it was either a pulled muscle or an air bubble. I absolutely could not get rid of it. I was so uncomfortable for my whole flight that I could hardly sleep or get into a comfortable position. However, as soon as I got into my rental car on the morning of April 13th, it instantly went away. The drive from the airport to the hospital was a little more than an hour and I watched the sunrise as I prayed all the way there.

I spent two days there. I laid hands on Lily, anointed her with oil, prayed and played her favorite worship songs. I also managed to help the nurses when I could be of assistance. I knew that this was an attack and the enemy was trying to kill her. I could not explain it, but I knew that deep, deep down. My physical body felt the sepsis (blood poisoning) that had been rushing through her body and I knew I needed to be there. Before I left, even though she had no idea that I'd been there, I felt she would make a full recovery and she did. It took months, but God brought her through miraculously.

I hadn't booked a hotel before flying out, figuring I'd sleep in the car or at the hospital. Lily's parents urged me to get a few hours of real sleep, but a big annual furniture convention had every hotel in the area booked. Then I called a place about 20 minutes away, in a town called King (ha!), and the man who answered said a room had just opened up because of a cancellation. He even cut me a good deal. It was a miracle. All of it.

After spending the whole day at the hospital on April 14th, I prayed over Lily for the last time and drove myself back to the airport. Once there, as I was waiting for my flight, I went

to one of the stores and bought a snack. As soon as I sat in my chair in the waiting area, that same pain in my chest….the one that I'd had at the airport in L.A., came back. It bothered me all the way home, until I entered my apartment.

The following week, we celebrated Theia's birthday, I finished my Domestic Violence certificate course, and signed a contract to establish my own LLC Coaching business. This was also the same week that, after more than a year of harassment by my first husband, Theia and I had to go file police reports and a request for a new restraining order. Then I needed to go to the civil court to take care of the credit card lawsuit. My head was spinning.

On May 18th, 2024 (my birthday) I had a coaching session with Shannon Savoy from Narc Free Living on YouTube. I was so excited to talk to her about my business plans and she and I seemed to be on the same page about everything she'd been teaching. She gave me some really good and important advice and I ran with it. But the one thing that took off in a way I never expected (as per usual) was the prayer book that she had recommended for me to read. It was called Generational Prayers 2022 Edition by Paul L. Cox, Brian P. Cox

and Barbara Kain Parker.

I ended up ordering the book on Kindle and starting right away. Anything to help break the cycles that were seemingly not going away along with my poor little girl who still could not sleep at night without getting attacked! I recommended this book to so many people for months after I began doing the prayers, but they were intimidated by how long the prayers were and just didn't have the time. I had looked all over for an audible version, even on YouTube, but there wasn't one. Then, on the evening of January 1st, 2025, I heard loud and clear, "You do it." Surely I had heard wrong. I only had a cheap cell phone and a 5 dollar headset. But no, He was clear and wouldn't let me rest or function until I started recording the prayers myself.

I did the first 2 prayers, uploaded them to YouTube and then a few days later realized that I needed to ask permission from the authors (haha!). But God had already gone before me. Within ten minutes of me emailing Aslan's Place, they got right back to me and gave me the go ahead. I couldn't believe it! I had already resolved to take them down and thought that I'd not heard from the Lord correctly. But I did. I finished the entire

book of prayers online on January 1st, 2026…exactly one year later! I had not planned this at all. Even *more* crazy, is that in February 2026 I had asked Lily for the name of the Freemason prayer she'd sent me originally back in 2016. Even though it was part of a Rob Skiba book, *Babylon Rising*, it was actually written by Aslan's Place! Tell me that is not the power of our God! I'm still floored.

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Now, regarding that business that I was trying to start, everything went sideways. I bought and passed out business cards, mailed them to churches, called ministries, and left voicemails. But nothing happened, and it started to feel more and more wrong as days, weeks and months passed by.

I tried to not be too hard on myself or negative, but I was losing confidence and hope. I didn't understand why God wouldn't allow me to do this thing. But in December of 2024, He very clearly told me to cancel it all. I, again, hadn't trusted Him to take care of me and was trying to do something that was

out of His will for my life. I hadn't really asked Him, I had just done it because it was something that I personally had experience with. But here I was again, out of thousands of more dollars, in even more debt with no plan or way out.

Chapter Twenty-Eight

Fires, Rehab, And When God Shows Up

From April to August 2024, Isabel had been going to her supervised visits with a professional monitor every Sunday for 2 hours. In a nutshell, she was never happy, always anxious, and it even got to the point where she wasn't comfortable with the monitor because she was (unknowingly I'm sure) gaslighting Isabel too. She was back to counting down the days and no matter how much I prayed for and with her, or tried to help her do other things to get her mind off of it all, nothing was working.

So I asked my step-son, now in his early 20's, how he felt about being the monitor. He agreed that it would be a good idea and was actually excited to spend time with his sister. So he agreed to discuss it with his father and let me know.

Now, nothing can just go smoothly with a narcissist (have I mentioned that before?). This ended up turning into a game for him. He said no to his son even though he had

recommended him as a monitor before. Then he called the current monitor and fired her, explaining that we were going to go with someone who doesn't "charge money."

I was not aware of any of this until she called me in a panic. I was still waiting for my step-son to call me back. I ended up having to calm down the monitor and explain how he was playing games but that we were kindly going to let her go at this point. A few weeks passed before Andrew finally agreed to let his son be the monitor.

Those visits began and continued on and off, every other week for 2 hours, until right before Christmas of 2025. So many things had gone wrong and there were so many events that only proved to Isabel that he wasn't even attempting to stop being selfish or to truly change. So Isabel told her brother that she no longer wanted to see her father. At this point, she is taller than me and I'm not about to try to force her to go (nor do I want to). Their father's response to all of this was, "if she doesn't want to see me, I can't do anything about it." And that was that. Thus, the visits stopped.

***

Going back to September of 2024, I was so burnt out with my 10-12 hour a day job that I considered going on disability. I had no idea how to get out of the trap of working so many hours for “never enough” money, while raising kids by myself. At one point I had given my one month notice to leave, but then about halfway through that 30 days I was given a 2 dollar raise.

I was confused because I felt like I should be happy and thankful, but I needed much more than that to survive. On top of that, a few days after I was told about the raise, my supervisor tacked on a long list of more work for me to do, including training other people. I didn’t have it in me and was distraught and didn’t know what to do.

But God…

The very next day after that list of new tasks was presented, a few things happened.

One, a co-worker that I worked very closely with was let go. This was a huge problem for me because it was going to

make my job even more difficult. Two, another co-worker that was no longer with the company had reached out to me and asked if I'd be interested in going to another agency that really needed my help, for much less work. A friend of hers had a new business and needed a Case Manager. I reached out to her and she made me an offer that I couldn't refuse. I would need to go to the office 3 days a week and work from home for 2. But at that point, I knew that I needed to accept it

On my second day at that job, on October 15th, 2024, I received a text message from my cousin in New Mexico wanting to know if I could talk. He and I kept in touch on and off. I didn't have contact with anyone else from that side of the family (my mothers) and it was odd for him to want to talk. I knew something was wrong but I was at work, so I told him that I'd call on my way home. Not the best idea to be driving when you receive bad news, but my commute was nearly an hour and my kids were waiting for dinner.

Once he was on the other end of the phone, I first told him that I wanted to know how he and his wife were doing before the bad news. We caught up for about 2 minutes and then it came. I had thought that he was going to let me know that an

aunt or uncle had passed. Not that that would have been okay either, but it was the thing that made the most sense.

But no, my 34 year old cousin had been brutally murdered by her husband and then he was killed by someone who came to her aid. They left behind 3 small daughters, all under the age of 10. I had to pull over.

Coming out of a situation like this myself and having survived, I was now beside myself. My cousin and her husband had been separated and were in the process of divorcing, and he'd been stalking her. He didn't get his way in court the day before and was waiting in her house after she dropped off all of the kids at school. I'm not going to give anymore details. It's not necessary. Suffice it to say this had to do with more curses upon our bloodline that were still in effect. I was distraught and so were all of my children.

When it came time for the funeral, all 4 of my daughters and myself drove out of state together. That was how we reconnected with the family. At that point, our own reasons for being estranged didn't matter anymore. We all wanted to see the children and get to know everyone again. It's a horrible way to have a family reunion, but unfortunately with a family this big,

it's just part of the drill. It was good to see everyone, regardless. God has a plan and a purpose for all things under the sun.

At one point, very shortly after it happened, I really thought that God wanted me and my kids to move out there and help my aunt, who had to uproot and move out of state to take care of the children my cousin left behind. We had gone back out there a few months after the funeral just to visit (and for me to pray about it) and I was able to catch up with another aunt and uncle at the time. It was a really nice visit.

I didn't really get confirmation on whether to move there or not, but I did know that one of my aunt's neighbors ran a hospice agency that I could work for if we moved. So that became my plan. I would get a job as a hospice nurse back home and get some experience, while I also tried to make arrangements to leave the state. It was perfect.

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Meanwhile, Grace had gotten into another bad relationship with another guy (who had my father's birthday) and her life was

spinning out of control. Even though she still lived with me and had a good job, she was hardly ever home and even after she'd broken up with this guy a few times, she was stuck in another loop. In addition to that, I knew that she was probably using harder drugs than she'd be willing to admit to me on top of the drinking. She was also still getting attacked in her sleep.

My prayers about all of this were beginning to change course.

One night, I was listening to a video of a woman saying that the person under attack had to surrender. It had to be Grace. I had recommended so many things to her but she wasn't yet willing. One night when she was gone, I went into her room and locked the door behind me. I anointed the whole room with oil and opened up my bible on her bed, got down on my knees and went to Court in the Spirit. When I was finished, I left the Bible open on her bed with a whole passage highlighted and then I went to my room to go to sleep.

She came home that night, walked into her room and then about 5 minutes later walked over to me weeping. Isabel woke up and put her hand on her big sister's shoulder but gasped and quickly pulled it back. She later said that she saw a demon

on her. I comforted Grace and she went to bed.

About a week after this, on January 7th, 2025 Grace had disappeared after work, again, and I was home alone with Isabel, our cat, and Grace's hamster. Anne had taken a road trip up north with a friend and would be gone for a few days. We'd seen on the news that a bad wind storm was coming, but this wasn't really new for us. What was odd about it was that they were saying that it could cause tornadoes and may be the worst wind storm that we've ever had.

By nightfall, the winds were clocking at about 100 mph and we had no power. I had already known that a fire had broken out in the direction of JPL/NASA a few miles up the road, but it still seemed pretty far. I tried to fall asleep, but the winds were horribly loud and everything was pitch black. I then started to worry because I couldn't charge my phone. In an odd event, an older phone that I had not been using and hadn't been charged, received an alert notice with an evacuation warning.

At first I didn't take it seriously, because when I looked outside I couldn't see anything. But shortly after that I received another one and heard my neighbors outside. This time when I opened the door, we were standing under a huge black and

orange cloud.

I went inside, woke up Isabel and told her to pack whatever clothing she could in a large trashbag. I had tendonitis in my shoulder so I was in pain, but worked quickly. I gathered a briefcase with our important documents, the hamster cage with food and all of the cat food. I got everything into the car as quickly as I could and Isabel carried the cat. I had never seen our town this dark and our cell phones didn't have service.

It just so happened (but I don't believe in coincidences) that Theia and I had spoken earlier. She had mentioned that she cleaned out David's old room and it was now empty. So I decided I would head in that direction toward her home about 20 minutes away and call her as soon as I had a signal.

There was a line of cars gridlocked in one direction that I decided to not be a part of. Instead, I wanted to actually see how far away the fire was, so I drove in that direction. Not surprising to me, it was still on the other side of NASA in Altadena. It wasn't surprising because I happened to know that JPL had their own Fire Dept and weren't going to let anything happen to it. But when I got just past the Devil's Gate Bridge, I saw all of the people parked on the side of the road and standing

outside of their cars. I still cannot put into words how I felt. It was a deep, dark sadness. We had just been at the Trampoline Park the night before and I had been discussing with other parents that it felt like something was “about to happen” and we were all in agreement. Here it was.

Once we got to Theia’s, I couldn’t fall back to sleep. I ended up driving back toward home at about 10am to get more stuff. Oddly, the skies above my apartment were clear because the wind had shifted, but the fire was raging and thick in the rest of the city. We stayed with Theia for a few days and I had told Anne not to come home yet and I was missing work, again, for yet another tragedy.

When it was finally time to come home, Anne was back in town but was sick with a sore throat and fever and I had gone to work, so we were going to try to get everything back to the apartment at night. I had called Grace but couldn’t get a hold of her. Then I texted her and asked her to come and help us take everything home because her sister had a fever, I had a bad shoulder, and some of the stuff was hers and we needed her help. Well, it didn’t happen. We made it work without her, but I had reached my limit.

Within two days of all of that happening, I had let her know that we needed to have a serious discussion and I was no longer going to enable her. She had come home in the middle of the night and by Sunday morning, after I got home from church, she told me that she needed help. I will never forget the look on her face and how she said it, shaking. She wanted to go to rehab, knew that she was out of control and she needed to go that day.

Ephesians 3:20 (ESV) "Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us..."

From that day forward, after we dropped her off that night, she was on the road to recovery. Many, many things happened. Theia even stopped drinking at the same time and many changes started to take place in her life as well. I was just so thankful. Even if I cannot see God at work and sometimes feel like my prayers are not being heard, or even that the answer may be no, He always shows up when least expected.

Chapter Twenty-Nine

Altars And Holy Spirit Tours

Eventually, that new job that I had gotten proved to not be good for me at all. It seemed an oxymoron because it was a very good paying job and I was finally paying off my bills and breathing, but it was just as stressful as the previous one in different ways. I had a really hard time making this new boss happy, no matter what I did. I knew pretty early on that I wouldn't be able to stay for too long, even though I tried. So in June of 2025, after 9 months, I gave my 30 day notice after being so anxious there that I couldn't stand it anymore.

I've learned that most times, this anxiety is the Holy Spirit pressing me to take action. I received several confirmations through Scripture and multiple different Christians who were going through something similar. Before I left this job, the same things began to happen that also happened at the previous job. It seemed like they just weren't accepting it. No one was hired for me to train and at the last minute I was

told to come to the office for the entire week, which made it very hard for me to apply for other jobs.

Toward the end of that week, I was made to seem like I was just trying to hurry up and get out of there, when I had clearly given my notice. They had even said that they opened up a side business that they wanted me to work at, but I was completely unaware of this until my last day. I really did appreciate these people, but God was being very clear with me even if it didn't make sense on paper. My last day there was 6/30/25.

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During the time from July to September of 2025, I had been reading the book of Joshua on and off, but also had read through the entire Old Testament. By September, I was doing a deep dive on altars because the topic jumped off of the pages at me. As I questioned the Holy Spirit about how they worked, what it all really meant, and why I felt so heavy about this subject, something profound happened.

I was researching and listening to a few teachings. As I listened to the last one, I heard the Holy Spirit say to me, “You had an altar in your room.” And then I remembered the altar that I had when I was a little girl, at the foot of my bed.

Now remember, I had several relics either from the Catholic Church where I had made my Holy Communion, or the Baptist Camp that I had started attending that same summer. I had a candle on it that I used to light regularly and would get on my knees and pray to God before it. For several years I kept it intact, even when I became a teenager and started hanging up Metallica and Slayer posters all over my walls. One way or the other, the altar was there until I moved out at 16.

Now, because I was learning that altars are the gateway for the spirit realm to come down to the physical realm with regard to entities they are dedicated to, I felt a sudden dread come over me.

That house I grew up in was riddled with demons. Between the drugs, Dianetics, yoga, occult relics, porn, bad movies (VHS videos back then), music of all kinds, and witchcraft paraphernalia, I was being shown that there was a

battle of altars happening the whole time I lived there. And I certainly didn't make things any better as I got older. I felt a mini panic attack come on as I asked God if my altar was bad!

This discovery happened on September 7th, 2025 when I was getting ready to take Isabel to her weekly 2 hour visit with her dad and brother. My spirit had a heaviness that I can only describe as an urgency. I didn't know, other than praying, what I was supposed to do but I knew that it needed to be done that day.

I drove Isabel to our exchange spot at the mall parking lot and made sure she was safe with her brother. As I got back into my car to drive away, I heard the Holy Spirit tell me to go to the house that I grew up in.

At first I questioned if I was hearing correctly because I really did not want to. It was only a few exits away from where I was, but I still tried to talk myself out of it until the feeling of urgency became so overwhelming that I couldn't ignore it. So I headed in that direction not knowing what I was even going there for.

When I was only a few blocks away from the house, I

heard Jesus minister to me very softly, “You were too young and could not fight them all on your own back then.”

I’m not one to have panic attacks, ever. But at that moment I fell apart in my car in a way that I don’t recall ever happening before. I could not stop crying. I apologized and repented for doing all of those things there and all of the many altars to other gods, even Satan, that were my fault. He just kept saying that it was going to be okay as I felt His presence wrap around me like an invisible hug.

When I got to my street and drove past the house, the road was packed with cars and my old house had an overgrown yard that was completely dead and brown. As a matter of fact, that whole side of the street was like that, but not the other side of the street. I heard the Holy Spirit tell me to park the car, but the nearest parking spot was 3 blocks away. When He then told me to park and start walking, I protested. I had not actually set foot on that sidewalk since I was a teenager and I got super triggered being there. But He told me to get out, so I conceded.

Once I was on the sidewalk, memories started returning to me that I had not remembered in decades. My car was now parked directly across the street from the Baptist Pastor’s house.

He had passed several years prior, but that was the side of the street that was green. When I started walking toward my old house, He told me to stop. Then I realized that I was in front of the home where the woman who lived there had taught me to sew. This was the home of the people who had the abortion that my father paid for.

As I stood in front of this home, I was ordered to pray in a way that I had just learned in order to set the land free. Trying not to look crazy, I walked by slowly and asked the earth for mercy for the iniquities of my bloodline and asked God for forgiveness for our participation in the killing of that child.

I then asked the angels to come and tear down every altar established for the kingdom of darkness on that property and for those altars to be replaced with an altar to Yahweh. Lastly, I canceled all demonic covenants and ordered the earth to rest and flourish. All of this in the Name of Jesus, by the Power of the Holy Spirit.

As I kept walking toward my own childhood home, I felt almost like I was not in my body. Like I was floating! But memory after memory flooded my mind and the Holy Spirit directed me on how to pray as I went. Once I got to my old

address, I walked slowly and did the same thing. This was very emotional for me because there was just too much to cover all in one walk. But Jesus was right there with me and I knew that things were happening in the Spirit realm that I couldn't see and I needed to be obedient.

After that, I kept walking all the way to the main street, praying the whole time. He then ordered me to turn back and head 4 blocks to my car. Once I got in my car and gathered myself together, I thought that I was going to either go home or maybe go to the cemetery where my father was buried since it was close by, but no.

As if Jesus had literally taken the wheel, I began to drive toward several other places where many, many horrible things had happened in my life.

I drove to old residences, the home that I lived in when I had my abortion, the home that my father lived in when his girlfriend had her abortion not too long before he died, another home where I used to stay with my friends as a runaway and all of them had abortions! My gosh! It was overwhelming! I even passed by an old college where God reminded me that I had stolen a wallet that someone left behind after a graduation that

my friends and I attended! I had repented for all of these things early in my walk as a Christian. But I had never tried to make it right with the land. I had no idea that was a thing, and would have written it off as witchcraft before now. But here I was…

All of the blood crying out from the ground. Now it was starting to make sense to me. *Genesis 4:10 (ESV) says, "And the Lord said, "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground."*

All of the things that happened, all of them, stemmed from these sins and even iniquities that happened with the generations before me that were passed down through my bloodlines. Over the past few years I had been praying against generational curses but I had not addressed the earth itself. I didn't understand that the earth was still crying out and trying to swallow us up as payment for breaking the covenant, which commands that we have dominion over the earth and love Yahweh and others according to His Word.

After driving to 18 locations and getting back to the mall at the exact minute that I needed to be there, I picked up Isabel and went home. I was almost silent for days. Of course, no one really noticed because I still got everything done. But I felt this

deep, almost grief and reverent fear at the same time. I knew that I was forgiven. I knew that things broke in the spirit. But it took me time to overcome the shame of realizing that things were so much worse than I had even dared to remember.

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A few weeks after my tour with the Holy Spirit, I realized that my Isabel hadn't been asking to sleep with me or waking me up at night due to her nightmares. The first few nights I had written them off as just being good nights and our prayers working, or whatever. But after more than a week I started to grow almost suspicious. In the 11 years that she'd been alive, she had always had sleeping issues and I never slept well because of it.

One day, I asked her about her dreams and how she slept. Not only did she say that she had been sleeping really well, but that she had been having dreams of us living in a beautiful home surrounded by trees. I praised Jesus and was thankful, but still didn't fully connect the dots.

However, I did call Grace to ask her if she had been

having sleep paralysis and asked how she had been sleeping. Not only did she say that she had been sleeping well and not having sleep paralysis, but she had also had dreams of me and Isabel living in a really nice house surrounded by trees. Then it hit me…

I was floored! This had to be the result of the prayers over the land. The funny thing is that I had been praying for my girls to stop getting attacked in their sleep for years, to no avail. I mean I tried everything! But it was this, asking the earth for mercy for the blood spilled and the iniquities of our bloodline, that finally shut the door and gave my girls rest! (And me!) Once again, I was in awe of our God and praising His Name!!

I also decided to go back to my old street and see if everything turned green. It did. My old home and street were now flourishing and green. The land was now at rest.

I want to make it clear at this point in my story, I could have re-opened spiritual doors to the enemy by continuing in sin. Obedience is key to maintaining the full protection of Yahweh and securing His blessings over yourself and your offspring. Please read all of Deuteronomy 28 for reference and understanding.

Chapter Thirty

New Gifts, New Thresholds

I need to go back in time again.

My girls and I had begun attending a local church right when everything opened back up after Covid. This was after we'd attended a fairly well known church. We left that one after 6 weeks, when the minister refused to repent for excommunicating a woman who had left her husband for domestic violence and molesting their children. That whole incident could be another book in and of itself, but I will leave the details out, as they are public information. What I will say is that I've learned over the years that we cannot be under the umbrella of any leader who is caught up in any false doctrine or sin, because it trickles down to everyone else. I had had enough experience with this sort of thing and God simply told us to leave.

The church that we did end up attending was a local Nazarene church. My kids and I both loved it. Anne had the

youth group, Isabel had the kids ministry, and I had the Mom's Book Club that my friend was running. It was there that I met Mindy and her husband Danny.

Mindy and Danny each had a daughter from a previous marriage that they brought into this now blended family. We all, children included, became very close, very fast. Over time, after getting to know each other, we realized there was a lot more going on than just things we had in common.

Both Mindy and Danny had been married previously. Both of their exes dabbled in different sorts of witchcraft and demonic lifestyles, and their marriage was continually being attacked. Danny was also suffering from ear ringing (tinnitus) and severe night terrors. They had been to the doctor several times to try to obtain help, to no avail. This not only affected daily life at home, but they were also trying to run a music school!

I had already begun to unravel the family curses for my own bloodline when we had met, and it was during our friendship that God had told me to begin reading the deliverance prayers on YouTube. We were also doing a lot of the Dan Duval prayers and studies. I could see that they were dealing with

strongholds, bloodline curses, and probably other issues that hadn't yet been dealt with. But the closer we became, the attacks started getting worse for all of us, especially when we started praying together.

It turns out that they were also going to court with Danny's ex wife for the exact same reasons I had previously been in court with Andrew. Literally, the exact same thing. Danny's daughter is not even a year younger than Isabel. But the most uncanny part is that his ex-wife was a proclaimed witch who openly practiced black magic, Santeria, and the worship of ancient Mayan and Aztec gods. Her name is even relative to Isabel's dad.

One day, when we all decided to go on a mini day trip up our local mountain, we stopped at Target to get Starbucks. Mindy and I ran in while Danny stayed in the car with all of the kids, since their month old baby was sleeping. While in the store, a man at the checkout line in Target began screaming, crying, and taking off his shirt. Mindy and I both waited for a second, but then she started walking over to Security. I had assumed she was going over to pray so I followed her, but passed her up.

Next thing you know, as she is standing beside me and we both start praying out loud in agreement. As the man who was clearly manifesting a demon continued screaming and silencing every onlooker– I snapped my fingers, and the demon came out of him. He instantly turned and made eye contact with me, covered his face with his shirt, and walked out of the store. We followed him for a moment and continued to pray until he was out of sight.

I didn't know what had come over me and I had never, ever done that before in public. We grabbed our coffee and headed back to the car, but we both knew that something profound had just happened. I'm not saying that I had never prayed for people's demons to leave before. But we both realized that deliverance was a new gift that possibly both of us had ranked up to.

About 6 months later, on February 22, 2025, after so much warfare that I would need to write another book about it, something profound happened. Isabel had spent the evening at Mindy and Danny's house while I ran some errands and read one of the prayers online. It was the prayer, "Renunciation for Hinduism." It took me almost an hour to read through and when

I was finished, I knew that it had also been for me. This happened a lot. My father and mother (and at times, my children and I) had all dabbled in different things that the prayer brought up. I felt drained, but I knew that it made a difference in the spirit realm and was thankful.

I also want to point out the date: 2/22. I have always been one to see repeated number patterns and know that it was God talking to me. When I was younger I didn't always understand what they meant, but as I've grown in Christ He will usually lead me to the Strong's Concordance to look up specific words in Greek or Hebrew or directly to Bible Verses. At this time 222 represented *Acts 2:22 (ESV) Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst …*

When I arrived at Mindy and Danny's to pick up Isabel, we got to talking in the kitchen. Danny's ear ringing was out of control and his night terrors were so vivid that they were ruling his day. I asked him to describe what was happening in his dreams. He had a recurring dream throughout that week, where a certain man with a black hat came to him and gave him

instructions, but he was always tricked. At one point, this man put his hand on and dug his nails into the left side of Danny's neck. I asked Danny if the left side was the same ear that was ringing. It was. I also began to understand at that point I had the gift of dream interpretation, because it was all coming out of me.

As Danny sat there in the kitchen talking, and suffering, Mindy and I were both standing on either side of him. I knew at that point we needed to pray, but since I had recently learned we were being watched in the spirit realm (especially at their house!), I didn't want to announce it. So I said, "prayer bomb!" and laid my right hand on his left neck where the guy in the dream hurt him.

Mindy and I started to pray, bind, cast out, etc. I honestly don't remember what all we said, but I knew that it was significant. So significant that by the time we said, "Amen" my right hand that was on Danny's neck swelled up and looked like it had a baseball in it! I couldn't even work that week! I actually told my boss the truth and she was very understanding. All Glory to God, because it sounded crazy!

That night, for the first time in a very long time, Danny

slept well and his ear was not bothering him. I had given instructions on how to speak the name of Jesus and rebuke the minions in his sleep and he slowly began to do it. They always fight back in the beginning. If you are familiar with this sort of warfare, then you know! But for anyone reading this who is still struggling, the demons are just trying to intimidate you. Fight back! Jesus already won on the Cross and they must come under the subjection and authority of Christ. Keep telling them to get out of your way in Jesus Name, and eventually they will.

Over the next few months Mindy and I tried to do a podcast and share our testimonies online because we really felt that this was what God was telling us to do. Danny was super helpful in setting up the equipment. Our videos surprisingly got a lot of views very quickly. But once again, for whatever reason, I felt this overwhelming dread and after much prayer and a whole lot of technical difficulties (the enemy…) we took everything down and decided to pray and wait until God gave us the green light. That still hasn't happened, but I believe it will in the future.

There are several additional things that happened with all of us over the course of the next year, but that is for another

time. On January 1st, 2026, after winning their court case and being hit with mountains of warfare, they were able to achieve their dream of moving out of state. This was the same day I finished reading the last prayer on YouTube. A few weeks later, Isabel and I drove up to visit them. They crossed their threshold and made it to the other side where they are now serving the Lord in a new community and being used in mighty ways.

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For several years I've had an account with Ancestry and traced my family tree. I've made it pretty far back on all sides except my father's father. For whatever reason I am stuck. For a long time I didn't want to get a DNA test because I was paranoid (lol) but I finally broke down and had one done in November of 2025.

I wasn't surprised to see certain family members. Having such a large family on both sides, I expected that quite a few of them would pop up. But there was one, in particular, that I didn't recognize and she came up as being a half aunt or first

cousin. Her DNA was so close on my ranking list that she was closer to me than many of my other first cousins. It was strange.

Scratching my head and doing the mental gymnastics necessary to figure this out, I quickly realized that she couldn't be my cousin because my mother was only about 12 when she was born, so she had to be my aunt.

Over the next few days I tried tirelessly to reach her, even messaging some of her friends on Facebook. She finally called me and after a few days of exchanging stories, we realized that she was a daughter of my grandfather who had been put up for adoption. She did not realize this at all and had been looking for her parents, believing that her biological mother's husband had been her father. This was very difficult for her and even more shocking for her to find out that she had 17 siblings!

When I drove up to see Mindy and Danny with Isabel, we stopped to meet her on our way home and spent hours talking. The things we had in common were uncanny and she looked so much like our family that it was shocking. It has been so nice getting to know her, in spite of the negative story.

It began to dawn on me after a few months, that the generational curses were not only being broken for myself and my own kids, but it was reaching the entire bloodline. This includes people that I didn't even know existed! Also, she and I not only share a name, but get this…. Her boyfriend is also one of 17 kids from the same city that my family is originally from! Talk about familiar spirits bringing people together! You could not make that up if you tried.

So many Scriptures were revealed to me during this time that God wanted me to understand that He was all over this! A few of them were:

Isaiah 43:5-7 (ESV), "Fear not, for I am with you; I will bring your offspring from the east, and from the west I will gather you. I will say to the north, Give up, and to the south, Do not withhold; bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the end of the earth, everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made."

Romans 8:28-31 (ESV), "And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he

foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified. What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?

Isaiah 1:17 (ESV), learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow's cause.

And lastly, *James 1:27 (ESV), "Religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world."*

I can positively say, without a shadow of a doubt, that God showed up and out proving His Word to be true in this whole situation. It has been nothing shy of miraculous and how He brought it all about is mind blowing. He shines light in the darkness, makes a way when it seems like there is no way, and works all things out for His Glory to bring not only justice, but comfort to those in need. I, of course, am also reaping the

blessing of having a new aunt to love and share life with.

Chapter Thirty-One

Bootcamp, Skid Row, And Swords

On July 1st, 2025 I began applying for work and eventually got hired at a few hospice and home health agencies working out in the field for a significantly higher wage per visit than I had ever made. That alone was God, because even though I would work less hours, I could get paid the same if I met a certain quota. Now my issue was getting that many patients to see. I could see at this point where God had gently weaned me off slowly. It went from a good amount of work in the beginning, to fluctuating and then eventually almost no work at all.

Beginning in July, when I was home, God had made it clear to me that He wanted me to study the Bible and spend more alone time with Him. I had recently discovered The Deep End with Taylor Welch, sermons by Apostle Isi Igenegba, Dr. Francis Myles, and a few others. I now realized that I was back in training and that God was telling me to rest. Resting is not

something that I do well. I had been asking Him for a Jubilee year for a very, very long time, but didn't know how it would ever be able to happen.

At the beginning of the 25'/26' school year I had written out the homeschool schedule on a whiteboard and placed it in the dining area of our apartment. Monday through Friday were filled with coursework and extracurricular classes that Isabel needed to attend, but for Saturday's I had written, facing straight downward, the word "Overflow." It landed directly under the numbers 25'/26'. At the time that I had written it, I didn't think anything of it. It only meant that whatever we didn't finish during the week, we could finish on Saturday. But this word began to pop up in nearly every video, sermon and document that I read and I began to realize that it was prophetic.

Oh, how I loved and so needed my alone time with Jesus! My soul had missed doing this, as there is nothing else that I love more than to study the Bible and draw near to Him without having to stress about work! When I did get hired through agencies to go out and see patients, I was now able to listen to podcasts, prophetic words and sermons in the car and pray at the same time. When I started to learn about praying to

the earth and winds (*not* witchcraft) and how we have dominion over them, this is when He would have me put these prayers into practice. The more He taught me, the closer The Holy Spirit felt and miracles began to happen.

But He still wasn't finished. As much as I told myself that what was happening would be temporary and I needed to enjoy it while I had the chance, the messages that I was receiving from Him during prayer and through every prophetic Word that I would hear on YouTube were the opposite. The Holy Spirit was reminding me that He was going to retire me and change my assignment altogether. I still had no idea how any of this could be possible. I was stuck in an apartment being run by a slumlord for 7 years and with all of the other legal issues I had, it didn't make any sense.

Matthew 19:26 (ESV) "But Jesus looked at them and said to them, "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

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In December of 2025 I had met up with a Skid Row ministry and joined the group to pray with the homeless and help clean up any wounds for anyone that was in need. I loved it. I had dreamt of doing that for many years but could never find anyone to go with me, so it was perfect. At these gatherings I had not only prayed with the homeless, but also cast out demons from a few people. It wasn't anything that I had planned and didn't ask for it. It just happened and people were delivered or even healed if they had faith.

After a few months, I met up with two of the women from that group for coffee, Mary and Tammy. Acknowledging that there was heavy spiritual warfare to make this coffee visit happen is an understatement. It took months for us to be able to get together. Phones wouldn't work, texts weren't going through, schedules kept getting rearranged. It was insane. On the date that we were finally going to meet, I got a kink in my neck and couldn't turn my head to the left! It hurt so bad that I had considered canceling, but I prayed and asked the Lord what He wanted me to do and I clearly felt that it was an attack trying to sabotage our visit.

I was correct. It turns out that the location of the coffee

shop that they wanted me to meet them at was the exact building where Angel had the intervention for my second husband and we used to do family therapy. The family therapy business had moved and now it was a coffee shop. That exact location was crucial to my previous season nearly 10 years earlier! I was shocked.

After coffee we moved across the street to a burger place to eat dinner. We were discussing many things that we had in common, including just finishing 3 days fasts..all of us. During a conversation that we were having about new things that we were all being taught in the spirit, I realized that the kink in my neck was gone. I was fully and completely healed right in front of them! I moved my neck and turned my head back and forth in shock and excitement. I don't know why I still get surprised about these things, but I do. I'm just in awe of Him.

Moving forward, we had amazing fellowship, prayer and deliverance at different times and became fairly close, pretty quickly. This went on for a few months and I attended several of the gatherings at Skid Row, until there was a fall out.

For more than a year prior, I had been planning on having a zoom gathering for several victims and survivors of

Satanic Ritual Abuse, also known as SRA. Of course, I was aware that warfare would follow. It did. Several people who'd attended the Skid Row gatherings attended, along with my best friend Lily and a dear sister in Nigeria.

Within five minutes of the start of the meeting, one woman took over. I'll call her Laura. Normally I'm pretty good with regulating and redirecting, but due to the sensitive nature of the discussions I wanted to be extra patient. This woman was a professed former witch who had an entire bloodline of witches that actually taught many practices, even in Universities. She claimed to have been delivered and continually pointed out how she was attending a school for prophets with a particularly well known Pastor, but it was evidenced that not only was she riddled with pride, but she was still not delivered from many of these things.

By the time the meeting was over, everyone in attendance seemed drained and I felt horrible. The amount of interruptions and redirecting toward herself had taken up almost the entire three hour call. I didn't even want to do it again and was questioning whether I had heard God wrong, done this all out of His will, or what?!

That night before bed, I decided to add Laura and Lily to a group text since they had a lot of things in common and I thought that maybe the fellowship would be good for her. This was not wise at all and man, did I learn my lesson. When I say that obedience has been a main point of focus during this training season, it's no joke. Praying to God with a request is one thing, but waiting for His answer is another and if He doesn't give a clear yes…walk away!

There was minimal chat in that text group that night and then we all went to bed. I was still drained from the meeting and still not sure what God wanted me to do about anything at that moment. The next morning I received a message from Lily about getting attacked in her sleep during the night by a witch. As much as we both had a gut feeling about what led to it and who it was, we decided to give her a chance and see if maybe it was an attack of the enemy trying to break her out of fellowship with Christians. We tried to converse on and off throughout the day with Laura, but her answers were very short.

The following morning, again, Lily had been attacked in her sleep but this time someone was actually astral projecting and trying to possess her. I had also had vivid dreams and felt

the Holy Spirit telling me to let Laura know what was happening. I'm not sure about you all, but when God tells me to do something it has to be done immediately. I've learned over the years that the longer I put something off, I actually become so anxious and sick to my stomach that I cannot function. This is what was happening.

I texted Laura in the group chat with Lily and let her know that the Holy Spirit had made it clear over the past few days that she had been operating under a spirit of witchcraft and I described the dreams that we both had. I really was gentle and used several Scriptures to back up why I was coming to her in that group and how we wanted to talk and even pray about it if she was open.

Well, she not only exited stage left immediately, but she went to Mary who was now running a large chat group (and was also an ex witch!) with all of the members of the Skid Row ministry. Then Mary reached out to me and brought other people into it who had nothing to do with it and it became a whole mess. I had pointed out Matthew 18 and how it was being done backwards. I also acknowledged Laura had been bombarding the Skid Row ministry chat with doomsday posts

all day long and that several people had noticed that she was doing things that resembled witchcraft practices, including Mary.

On the heels of all of this, the ministry had a separate meeting the following weekend, and I was called to be the head of the deliverance ministry. It wasn't something that was discussed and I wasn't asked. I knew that they meant well and honestly, I was honored. But if that were to be the case, I knew that I would need to stay in my geographical location and I didn't believe that was what God wanted me to do. I prayed and questioned it, then sat on it for a few days.

After a few weeks of back and forth with no progress regarding the Laura situation and more people messaging me about it who wanted to call a meeting but were never supposed to be involved at all, God showed me several Scriptures and even prophetic words that I needed to leave that ministry altogether and move forward. I didn't know exactly what that meant, but I had that urgent feeling again. This time I was very sad, though. I was so thankful to have been able to go out and do what I wanted to for so long, ministering to folks on the street. But the answer was no and I needed to be obedient.

Even though we had a falling out over what was a direct attack, I still love and care about these brethren. I was shown later that due to the different paths we were all on, and the levels of obedience and/or compromise that we were all walking in, we needed to be separated in order for God to work on us all.

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During the time I was involved with the Skid Row ministry, the Lord led me to dig further into my father's past history with Freemasonry. I was still reading the prayers online and certain things were being shown to me that I needed to address. I had called several different headquarters for different "branches" of different societies. I had even described some relics and different memories so that they could help me locate him on a list. Everything seemed to come to a dead end, until one day when I was scrolling through some current news articles, there was one about a particular building in Pasadena, CA that was listed for sale. They were announcing that the building was to be torn down.

My father had an office in that building and on occasion he would take me with him. It had nothing to do with the state company that he worked for. When I researched the building and landed on how it was used for several intelligence agencies, it hit me like a ton of bricks. If my father was hired by the CIA to go to Laos during Vietnam, then he was recruited. I began to research this topic and found several people who were recruited at the same time and were sworn to secrecy. They shared similar stories and confirmed what was being revealed to me.

My father had always told me that I would never find him on any sort of list when it came to Vietnam. Now God was revealing to me that he was in the CIA all along, and I felt stupid for not realizing it earlier. I did have friends who had suggested it before, but I always brushed it off. I honestly do not believe that I could have handled this information before the time that God showed it to me.

Now it was all starting to make more sense: the loaded gun in his drawer and car at all times, the secrecy (which we called "privacy"), the cover job alongside having access to major government buildings, the late night meetings, the friends in "high places," the isolation of our entire family, the

knowledge and deep involvement in the occult, hypnotism, yoga, and aikido– I dare include that my mother may have been an MK Ultra project. I cannot prove it, but if the boot fits… There are too many things to list here, but this revelation was a huge turning point for me.

My father had several relics that we weren't supposed to get rid of, yet he was very secretive as to where most of them came from. In his guncase, there were double crossed swords in sheaths that were never moved. Once he died and I had to move around a lot, stuff started scattering to different places. At this point, Theia had a lot of his things in her apartment, swords included. I eventually got them and brought them home because I was going to pray over them and break off any curses that may still be causing issues in our family.

As soon as I walked through my apartment door, Isabel asked why I had them and said that they were cursed and going to make her sick. I asked her if she wanted to pray with me, she said no and I assured her that everything would be fine. Another long story short, after I prayed I had placed them in my closet. I did pray and asked God what He wanted me to do with them, but I didn't get a direct answer.

I went back out to the living room to hang out with Isabel but she all of a sudden had a fever and told me that the swords needed to go! At this point I got them, wrapped them up and took them down to our parking structure. I was going to put them in our storage unit, but the Holy Spirit halted me and I heard Him clearly say, “throw them in the bin.” Then I remembered that the trash pickup was scheduled for the next morning. So that’s what I did. As soon as I got upstairs, Isabel’s fever had broken and the heaviness in the room was gone. It was all so surreal, but it happened. I am well aware of how all of this looks on paper. But the spirit realm doesn’t always make sense when we are only living in the flesh.

Even though all of this is so gut wrenching for me and unbelievable to most people, I loved my father. I was a daddy’s girl from the very beginning and in my eyes he could do no wrong. Watching him die, slowly, was one of the most horrible things I have ever had to go through and caring for him during that time, even with 3 small children and a very abusive husband, is something that I will never regret.

I wanted so badly for him to be healed, but I had no idea what he had been covering up and that it was consuming him.

Now, looking back, I realize that he knew and understood why he was dying. He intentionally continued smoking more than a pack of cigarettes per day, as if he was trying to speed up the process. Whether or not he truly repented, I won't know until I get to the other side. But one thing that I do know for sure is that living a life of sin will cause you to only reap curses (see Deuteronomy 28).

After all that he had worked for and tried to hold together on his own, there is nothing left. Nothing. He died at the young age of 54, without even getting to meet all of his grandkids.

Chapter Thirty-Two

Tithing And Technically Homeless

Back in 2017 when we were made homeless and then were forced to get an apartment back in Los Angeles, we settled into the first apartment that approved me. I needed to hurry because school was about to begin and I had to get Anne and Isabel enrolled.

We landed in a really nice neighborhood with one of the best school districts in the country. The irony was thick. I was well aware that on paper I didn't belong there. Not after just being homeless and with this minivan that literally died in the middle of the road on occasion. Prior to becoming homeless I had a new car, job, nice apartment, etc. Now I was starting over, again. This pattern was beginning to wear me out. But over time, God showed me that I was back in a wilderness season because I had fumbled the previous one by backsliding.

It took me years to realize what He was showing me, but once I understood I was humbled in a way that I never had been

before. This was no longer just me being victimized, which did happen. But I had sinned miserably in the prior season and still didn't understand what full surrender and trust looked like. This new season was going to show me in ways that I could not deny.

The apartment that we lived in was known in our town as the worst building with the worst landlord. At first I really didn't mind that they didn't clean it prior to us moving in or that it seemed fairly run down. I was genuinely happy and appreciative to be in such a nice area with good schools. I could handle the apartment, no problem.

But over the years things became progressively intolerable. There was a period of almost 3 years that my oven didn't work and I was refused a new one for reasons that don't exist. The roach and rat infestation was not addressed. Maintenance took forever to get anything done, if they did at all. Eighty percent of the time I did everything myself, even trying to deal with the roaches. But nothing seemed to work. I had even asked them if they could paint my apartment after 3 years since it was so dingy and I saw them doing it for another unit, but they said no. In the end, I also painted myself because the landlord had said that I could.

During this 8 year period, while I was also dealing with court and custody issues, spiritual attacks on my kids, the addiction issues in our family, a falling out with the older ones, complete isolation from the world minus about 3 or 4 close friends, and a full time job which didn't always pay the bills, I became increasingly depressed.

I managed to maintain my composure and press forward for the kids and usually people couldn't tell. I mean, I didn't really have time for that either! But there were moments that I would pray and ask God why He was leaving me like this for so long, especially after a few years. I eventually just resorted to the fact that I deserved everything that was happening to me and that Daniel died in Babylon so I would, too.

After the fires in 2024, the roach infestation became increasingly worse to the point that all of my books were destroyed. Mind you, by this time I had been homeschooling and this was a huge problem. I had all of my food in containers and we had to seal everything we owned. I had been referred by the office staff to call the health department and even they didn't get far with the owner of the building.

This was not our only issue, either. So many things were in disrepair, but we had also had a neighbor right next door who was diagnosed Schizophrenic and smoked like a chimney. I usually mind my own business with folks and would have done so had it not been for the smoke coming into Anne's room and out of his AC unit (which we had to walk past to get out of the building). On top of that, he used to yell and cuss at everyone, including the children. He was always nice to me in person, but would complain to the manager if I ever confronted him and asked him to stop. Then the manager would call me and take his side, yelling at me to mind my own business. I kid you not, it was like living in the Twilight Zone.

Finally, I got fed up and hired an exterminator company to help me with my unit and let the landlord know that I was deducting it from the rent. He protested, but didn't fight it until about 3 months later when he slapped a 3 day notice to move on my door. He did eventually tell my neighbor to move out due to the smoking violation, more than likely because the health department fined or reprimanded him. But now he wanted me out, too.

This ended up causing a whole domino effect. I

eventually hired a lawyer. But as this was all happening, I was also beginning to lose patients at work because California had begun to crack down on hospice agencies that were committing fraud. My agencies weren't, but this still affected our referrals.

This was also during the time that I was still in training with the Holy Spirit and was nearing the end of the book of Joshua. I sensed Him telling me that I was going to need to quit my job and leave, but for at least 2 months I talked myself out of it because I didn't see how it would all fall into place. I did trust Him at this point, but I was still afraid.

By March of 2026, I had run up all of my credit cards on bills, was shopping at the food bank for at least a year and didn't have any way to stretch my dollar any further. I had already asked my church to help with rent the month before (to which my landlord made the comment, "because you matter, are they helping you?" and I ignored him), and I now had hardly any patients to see.

In addition to all of this, my boss from one of the agencies began to treat me differently than before and called me out in front of the patients on things that were inaccurate, my mechanic started treating me differently and acting strange,

different friends started manifesting and showing either jealousy, envy or even pretentiousness in some cases, and going to church was not working out anymore as I had begun to feel extremely uncomfortable there, too. Isabel was even having issues with everyone at youth group and came home crying one night over a complete misunderstanding when she tried to point out that something was witchcraft. Clearly, God was moving us in a different direction and was pruning us both.

I finally understood that God was pushing me out. I had another notice to leave on my door because my rent was now late and there was no way I was going to be able to pay it unless a miracle happened. It was at this point that I gave my resignation to the main agency that I had been working for because the Holy Spirit wouldn't let me rest until I did. As counterintuitive as it seemed, I was instantly relieved when I obeyed and gave my notice. I did, however, hold on to another hospice agency until I knew for sure what was going to happen.

I decided to fast for 3 days so that I could receive instruction and hear more clearly in the spirit. The morning after I began my fast, as I was leaving my apartment to go for a walk and pray, a new neighbor caught up with me. He had just

moved in a month or two prior. He was very kind, tall, handsome, and wouldn't you just know it–he was holding a Bible? He spoke very nicely and asked if we could begin walking together in the evenings.

Now, in my past life I would have taken this bait hook, line and sinker! But I *knew* what it was and in my soul (not out loud!) I was yelling, "I am moving!" But I kindly declined, let him know that I was starting a 3 day fast to see where God was leading me, and went on my way. I know that he meant no harm at all, but I am married to Jesus and clearly saw how the enemy was pulling every darn string, thread, straw, whatever he possibly could, to throw me off. Lord have mercy!

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On March 16, 2026 (which automatically reminds me of John 3:16), I was asked to join a zoom meeting with Lily and our brother in Christ, John. For more than 10 years we had shared fellowship in our Bible study group online and we had all gotten to know each other very well. John is about 12 years

younger than me, so I see him as a baby brother. We had gone through stages of talking often and then drifting away at times when life caught up. Needless to say, I was happy to talk to them both face to face at the same time.

He had called this meeting because he said that The Lord had been pressing on his heart to begin tithing to Lily and me. As in, giving us 10 percent of his income. I was taken aback because I didn't feel worthy and it's not like we're a church or anything. But at one point, he mentioned that we *had* been his church and had been Apostles to many people over the years, so he felt this was something he really needed to do.

It was that day that I considered how God wanted Lily and me to partner in ministry. I had no idea what that meant, but it made perfect sense because we had gone through so much together over the years and had been on the same page with our learning for so long.

I let them take care of the money and account logistics because I was going through so much and they both lived in the same state. I hung up first and moved on with my day. Lily was aware of my rent situation and was hoping that the amount he gave up front would cover it, but it didn't. I didn't want to rely

or count on that because I knew that either way, God was moving us.

It was on this day that I sat down with Anne, who was now 19, and told her that we were going to have to move out. After explaining the whole situation to her, she understood and decided that she wanted to move to another town closer to her boyfriend. While I didn't like this idea, the place that we miraculously found within days was the most inexpensive studio in the entire state.

Do you remember that hospice agency that I was holding onto? Yeah, God then gave me multiple messages and prophetic words about how what I was holding onto was actually holding me up from moving forward. I wasn't even making 100 dollars per week anymore. So, I resigned from there too. Once again, I felt the relief that goes with obedience.

That same night (March 16th) I met with an old friend, Rocky, who is also the father of Isabel's childhood friend. We had originally met at the trampoline park and became good friends. He was a physician but also a property owner and had experience with landlord/tenant regulations and issues. He told me that my deposit on the apartment would pay for the rent for

that month and that since I had made a double deposit (back when that was legal), I would more than likely get a refund. I looked it up and lo and behold, he was right! I cannot tell you how relieved I felt!

Rocky then also proceeded to tell me that due to the amount of stress I was under, I could go on temporary disability until I got stable. I had considered this years before, but it hadn't crossed my mind since then. I knew that other people did it, and I had been on disability before for other reasons, but this was something that I could now look into as well. I could see now that by releasing what I was trying so hard to hold onto, things were now starting to move into position for me to get into alignment with what God was wanting me to do.

The following day, which was also my late father's birthday, I gave my move out notice and let them know that I would be out by the 1st and that we would technically be homeless. The office manager apologized and was sympathetic to my situation and left it at that. I was sure they were happy that I was finally leaving, and so was I. At this point I had already filed a lawsuit and some other neighbors had joined in. The manager downstairs also wanted nothing to do with me, so

this was all good news.

The Lord had made it very clear to me that he wanted me to take nothing. I got rid of almost everything except for clothing and pictures. A lot had to go in the trash, but whatever could be sold, did so very quickly. This was a hard time. I was feeling relieved one minute and the next minute I would cry. Isabel was happy to be leaving, but also sad to see everything go. Anne was also trying not to stress out, but of course, she was.

In addition, we had a cat that was almost 18 years old and needed to arrange to take him to Grace's apartment to stay until we got settled. He had started to lose a lot of weight over the previous months, was eating less and sleeping a lot more. Moving all of our stuff around and getting rid of things in the apartment was stressing him out.

On the final night that we slept there, he came and slept with me on the mattress that I had on the floor. He hadn't done that in a long time. The next morning when I woke up, he had his head on my chest and was just laying there staring at me. It hit me, then. He knew that this was the last time we would be doing this. I lay there and cried and told him that he was the

best kitty ever. I swear he understood, and I could hear his thoughts. I didn't know how hard this part would hit me, but that is one of the most special moments that I have engraved in my memory. It was the last night that I would get to spend with him.

Chapter Thirty-Three

A Passover Seder

On March 18th, I had to get a few things at the store for us to eat, so my youngest and I headed to the food bank that we always shopped at and I got to talking to a man that works there. He wore a yarmulke (Jewish hat), so I assumed he was Jewish. But somehow we got on the subject of demons (haha) because he had been dealing with some spiritual warfare. At some point in the conversation, he let me know that he was a Messianic Jew (a Jew who believes that Jesus is the Messiah). I had mentioned that at sunset it would be 1 Nisan and he was elated that I knew the significance of it. He then asked if I wanted to meet with him later on because he was going to blow the shofar.

Now, I had been in the book of Numbers and I had been following the Hebrew Calendar because God usually does significant things in my life on specific Hebrew dates. He had been showing me for months that He was doing a new thing and

the main verse that He had me in was *Isaiah 43:19 (ESV), "Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert."*

So, I knew that this particular day was 1 Nisan on the Hebrew Calendar. Nisan is the month that marks the beginning of Spring. Now, it springs forth! Blowing the Shofar is an announcement. It caused the walls of Jericho to fall and enemies to scatter at different times throughout history. Did I want to go to hear him blow the Shofar on 1 Nisan in the midst of all of this stuff happening? You bet I did!

After Isabel and I went home and put the groceries away, we went back and met with him at the park. I gave her a short Bible lesson on the significance of what was happening and she was enthralled. He blew the Shofar several times. I had chills. Then we all sat around for about an hour and discussed theology and Jesus– my idea of a good time! I had briefly discussed our situation with him and he shared a similar story, stating that he was in the process of needing to move as well. So we exchanged numbers, agreed to stay in touch, and went our separate ways.

A few days later he texted me and asked if I would be interested in bringing Isabel to a Passover Seder at his church on April 1st. He let me know that it would cost 65.00 per person but if I spoke with the Pastor, he said that they may be able to sponsor us. I had always wanted to go to a real Seder to experience it in person, but the timing was crazy. I needed to be out of my apartment by the 31st of March and Anne needed to be moved into her new place 3 hours away on the 1st of April. Somehow, I still knew deep down in my spirit that we needed to be there.

I agreed and asked him to give his Pastor my information so that he could call me. I was trying not to feel embarrassed about not having the money, but I did. The Pastor called and was very kind. He asked me a few questions to make sure I was actually a believer and then gave instructions on where, what time, etc. He even prayed for me at the end of the phone call.

At this point, I wasn't sure how all of this would be pulled off, but I knew that the Lord was orchestrating all of it. When it came time to move out, it was all done on time. The U-haul was rented, we had just enough money to get everything

where it needed to be. I was able to help arrange Anne's new place, get her situated and left on the morning of the 1st with the U-haul to head 3 hours back to L.A. There I had to return it and pick up my car.

My plan was to put a few items that were in the back of the U-haul into my car and then run to the store to try to find something to wear to the Seder. I hadn't had a minute to hardly breathe in between all that we were doing. But when we got to my car and after I turned in the keys to the U-haul representative, my car wouldn't start. For whatever reason, the battery was dead.

I went back into the store to see if the U-haul guy could jumpstart my car. He was busy and told me to give him 5 minutes. After about 10 minutes, a nice man who didn't speak English and had been driving toward me pulled over. He saw that I was standing by the car with the hood open and cables out. This guy jumpstarted the car and drove away within 3 minutes without saying a word. I dare say he was an Angel.

By the time we got to driving, I realized that we wouldn't have enough time to go to the store and get back to Grace's apartment all the way downtown so that we could get

ready. I was getting frustrated and was super worn out, but I knew that the enemy was trying to prevent us from going to the Seder that night. So I took a deep breath and prayed. We made it to Grace's and I found something to wear after all. It all worked out.

We arrived at the Seder right on time. It was lovely and I felt blessed to have experienced it. I knew that it was a gift from God, because He'd known that I'd always wanted to do that. He was also showing me that this was my most significant Passover yet, because I was about to Exodus in a way that I hadn't before. I had already made arrangements to go visit Lily in South Carolina at her parent's house for a few weeks, and then we were going to pray and wait for instructions. So the plan was to go to the Seder and then leave the following morning. Isabel and I would take a road trip cross country and arrive in about 4 days. I had just enough money for food and gas with the money that I'd made selling some of our furniture.

After the Seder was finished, we drove Moses home. He said that he had a gift for us that he wanted to give it before we headed out, so he ran into his home to get it while we waited. When he came back, he had gold and silver jewelry as well as a

ring that had a huge amber rock in it. He shared the significance of each one and told me how much they were worth, just in case we needed to sell them on our journey.

I was instantly reminded of the scripture: *Exodus 12:35-37 (ESV), 'The people of Israel had also done as Moses told them, for they had asked the Egyptians for silver and gold jewelry and for clothing. And the LORD had given the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they let them have what they asked. Thus they plundered the Egyptians. And the people of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about 600,000 men on foot, besides women and children.'*

I'm not saying that Moses was like the Egyptians. What I am saying is that God was showing me that I was in alignment with His will and that He was going to take care of everything just as He always did and does with His children. He is the same God yesterday, today and forever. At this point my mind was so blown that I'm surprised it was still in my head at all.

We said our goodbyes and went back to Grace's to sleep for the night. Our kitty was having a hard time adjusting to her apartment and I woke up the next morning with a horrible headache, so we decided to stay one more night to rest and

spend time with him.

That last night, as Isabel and I were about to go to sleep and after we had turned off the TV and lights, Grace's TV automatically began to play the song, "Give me Jesus" by Jeremy Camp. It was dark, the TV was not on, and it played on its own. Grace does not listen to worship music, so we were alarmed and wondering what on earth was happening…until we just decided to surrender. We both felt the Holy Spirit so strong in the room and just sang along. More worship music kept playing until we fell asleep and at some point during the night, it went off.

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On the morning of April 3rd, Isabel and I set off for a cross country adventure. We were excited since neither of us had done it before and she hadn't ever been outside of California. Surprisingly, the drive was very smooth and felt like it went by very fast. There was so much to see with all of the different landscapes that we went through. We mainly only stopped for

gas and food or at night to sleep at whatever hotel we landed at. It took a total of 4 days to get from California to Myrtle Beach, South Carolina.

We arrived at about 1am. Lily and her parents were gracious enough to wait up for us. When we got in and unpacked, Lily and I were giddy with excitement and couldn't stop talking. But right away a few strange, prophetic things happened. First, my left hip felt like it came out of its socket. I could hardly stand or sit and didn't know what to do. Before I could even say anything (even though I was thinking it), Lily mentioned that it was like Jacob in the Bible when he wrestled with the Angel. *Genesis 32:25 (ESV) When the man saw that he did not prevail against Jacob, he touched his hip socket, and Jacob's hip was put out of joint as he wrestled with him.*

It hurt so bad that I had to hobble upstairs to my room and try to lay down. I was praying that I wouldn't have to go to the ER. Nothing like that had ever happened to me before. I lay on my bed and prayed and decided that I would wait until morning to have it checked, if needed.

As I lay on the bed, I went through my phone to update my kids about arriving and sort through my emails. It just so

happened that right at that moment, about 3am, an email came through letting me know that I had been approved for my disability. I had applied a few weeks prior and had been waiting to see what would happen. But on top of the approval, it was nearly four times more than what I was expecting! It turned out that all of that hard work that I had done and all of those 10-12 hour days were taken into account for this approval! I knew that it was a miracle and rejoiced that I was being supernaturally provided for in a way that I never could have even considered! Oh, and when I woke up the following morning, my hip was fully healed.

…..I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert. Isaiah 43:19 (ESV)

Over the next couple of weeks Isabel and I got to know Myrtle Beach, the local food and hung out with Lily and her parents. It was beautiful and much different than the West Coast. At the same time, though, all hell was breaking loose back home.

Anne's boyfriend broke up with her and she was now stuck 3 hours from L.A. where her sisters were. My older kids were all fighting over whether or not God was real (you could

cut that irony with a knife), and our cat was nearing the end of his days. In addition, my older kids were all back to drinking.

I had only been gone for about a week and a half but I was already feeling like I needed to turn around and go back. Lily and I didn't have a specific plan, but had discussed taking a road trip down south to visit many friends that we'd known through our Bible study group for many years and had always wanted to meet in person. When I discussed with her that I was considering leaving, she was not on board. I did pray about it and felt God pressing on me to allow Him to work on my kids and plan the trip. So we did, but it was very hard for me.

For our first destination, we wanted to meet up with John (the one who was tithing to us). Lily had met with him a few times before since he was only a few hours away, but I had never met him in person. I was so excited!

As I began to search for places in North Carolina, I had to make sure that certain accessibility accommodations were in place for Lily and that whatever I was about to book was within my budget. I had no problem paying because I knew this was God footing the bill. From the very beginning of my search there was one particular cabin that caught my eye. After looking

for a while, I realized that that was the one. It was available on the exact days that we needed it, not earlier or later, and was within my price range. So I began the process of booking it online. But as soon as I hit enter and the reservation was complete, my heart palpitations came back.

Having gone through menopause, I had pretty severe palpitations over the few years prior, but after the last time that I'd fasted for 3 days they had gone away completely. No hot flashes, palpitations, nothing. Now, all of a sudden, they were back with a vengeance!

Over the next week or so, before we needed to head to the cabin, I tried to eat differently, took potassium supplements, drank ice water at night, coughed, did deep breathing exercises….all of the things that I could think of or advice I could get, to no avail. And when I lay down to go to sleep it always got worse.

Now, as crazy as this sounds coming from a nurse, I *knew* that it was a spiritual attack. Yes, I had gone through menopause, but this began the second that I booked that cabin and I absolutely could not let that go! It did start to taper off and get a little better closer to when we needed to leave, so I

continued to pray for clarity and moved on with my life. Eventually it did go away and didn't bother me during our trip to the cabin.

Chapter Thirty-Four

Monitoring Spirits, Horse Flies, And Elk

We arrived at the cabin on a perfect day. The sky was blue, the creek was softly flowing and the air was pure. The plan was for Isabel and I to stay upstairs in the attic where there were two twin beds, Lily would stay in the bedroom downstairs and John would stay on the couch in the living room. So we all set out to put our stuff away.

As soon as Isabel and I got upstairs, she immediately said that there were spirits in there. There were flies and bees at the window which I managed to kill and clean up. It was almost dinner time and I honestly didn't want to think about it, so Isabel and I went to the grocery store, came back and prepared dinner.

Lily, John and I spent hours talking and catching up. We exchanged stories on what God had been showing us and all of the miracles that led me to being there in the first place. It

seemed like a dream! It was that evening that I began to see parts of the vision that Jesus had been giving me for more than a year, where I was sitting in a cabin on a rocking chair with Abba, in front of a fireplace, with trees and a creek outside. I knew then that we were in alignment, but I also wondered what it all meant because I had thought that that particular vision was where I was going to live. Anyhow, the night went on and I was thankful to see the fulfillment of part of the vision.

As it got pretty late, maybe around 11pm, rain began pouring down outside and then something peculiar happened. Isabel said that she could see shadows near the entrance to the attic and that she smelled smoke. Lily, John and I began to pray immediately and then I walked over to the hallway to head up the ladder.

Now, the light was on upstairs even though no one had turned it on. As I got up to the attic, the room was completely full of smoke, but not just any smoke, candle smoke. You know, the kind that smells of soot when you blow one out? I was very concerned and checked around to make sure that nothing was burning. Nothing was. John came up and was shocked. The air was thick with smoke. Once I confirmed that it wasn't

something natural or anything that would affect the home, I prayed out loud and then we headed down to pray some more.

I believe that someone was doing a candle spell. Having dealt with several ex-witches in the recent months prior to this, I had a few ideas of who it may be but I didn't want to assume. We were also on a Native American Reservation and I was aware it could have something to do with that, too. So we prayed and canceled any spellwork, magic, witchcraft, etc. in Jesus' Name. The smoke immediately cleared up and the air in the entire cabin lightened up.

Shortly after, we all prepared to go to sleep for the night but we obviously weren't going to sleep in the attic after that. So we decided to camp out in the bedroom with Lily where there was an extra twin bed that we could sleep on. As we were setting up, a giant horse fly suddenly appeared near our bed and began swirling around me. John and I both got up to try to kill it. We all knew that it was a monitoring spirit. We hadn't seen even one of those that day and there hadn't been a way for it to get in over the past few hours.

Once I called it out and told it that I knew what it was and that it needed to get out in Jesus' Name, my phone began to

ring as John continued to try to corner and kill it behind a curtain. The person that was calling me was Mary from the Skid Row ministry. It was almost midnight where I was, so it was about 9pm on the West coast where she was. I had not heard from or spoken to her in months and was not about to do so now. She had been on my mental list of people who may be doing this and now she was calling me.

Needless to say, I did not answer, prayed against any and all witchcraft coming against us, and we settled down to get ready to sleep. We were all stirred up about what was happening, but also not very surprised. At this point we knew that the enemy had been fighting hard to keep us from having fellowship and advancing Yahweh's Kingdom. Oh, and we never found the fly. It literally disappeared. We all did sleep very peacefully, though. Praise Jesus.

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During our visit we had frequently discussed how God was miraculously providing. John had shared on the first night how

he was low on money to pay a bill or two but was learning to trust God by stewarding well. Lily and I had both told him that he could take from the tithe to pay the bill, but he insisted that he didn't think that was what God wanted.

So I did let him know that his trust, faith and obedience would be rewarded and that God would indeed supply his needs right on time. This was a theme throughout all of my travels with everyone that I spoke to, since those were the main lessons that I was being taught, too.

When I woke up, that first morning there, I made coffee and went out to sit on the porch and pray. It was so beautiful. Once I got around to checking my phone, a few things happened. One, I received my first disability payment and it was way more than I expected. Before, when I received the approval, I knew how much I would get paid daily but I didn't really understand what date it would begin. Well, it 'so happened' that it went all the way back to my last day of work because that was when I had my appointment.

The next thing that happened was a completely unexpected miracle. Months earlier when I was still working and living in my apartment, I had received a few postcards in

the mail that stated that Isabel and I were part of a class action lawsuit that involved our health insurance. Apparently there was a HIPAA violation and our information was compromised. The only instructions that the postcards had given me were to add my email address and PayPal and/or bank information for payment to be sent.

Once I had filled them out and mailed them back, I forgot about them entirely and moved on with my life. But on this day, I had a notification from PayPal telling me that I had money. When I opened it up I saw that I had two payments of 175.00 each. At first, I had no idea who it was from. But once I did some digging I realized what it was.

I was so elated that I called everyone outside and shared the news with them! It was then that I insisted on giving one full payment to John, so I Zelle'd it over. This was God proving almost instantly that He is on the Throne and that our obedience opens the doors to His provision which is always more than what we are even asking for.

After I sent him the money and checked my bank account, there were *two more* payments! It turns out that the lawsuit had to pay different portions separately but they were all

disbursed at once! These were the first of many miracles on this day. Our God was to be praised!

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After dinner and taking communion together, we all decided that we wanted to go for a little drive around the town and to possibly watch the sunset. It's funny that I say, "little drive" because it ended up being about four hours. But the four of us hopped in my little Civic and headed out toward town.

Once we had seen all of the main sites and took a few pictures, we headed toward the Blue Ridge mountaintop to see the sunset. On our way, about maybe ten minutes in, Lily and John were discussing how the Elk should be coming out at about that time. We had passed an Elk crossing sign but hadn't seen any yet. Looking around as we were driving, there were none in sight. So I told them that we need to ask the trees and the four winds to send them and opened up my sunroof.

I began talking to the trees and asking the earth and four winds, in the Name of Jesus and by the Power of the Holy

Spirit, to send forth the Elk. Instantly they began to appear in the woods. Other cars that were on the road pulled off to the side to catch photos and we did, too. This went on for quite some time and we even saw a wild turkey! It may seem silly, but we were all so elated! None of us had ever seen Elk before and we were all witnessing God's miracles back to back all day!

As we continued on and drove up the mountain, I blasted worship music and we all sang and worshipped together. We got to the top right on time to see a magnificent sunset and then headed back to the cabin, in awe of what had occurred that day.

The next morning we said our goodbyes to John as he headed home and the rest of us decided to head towards Nashville for a couple of days. I had been wondering if God was going to make something stand out that would show me exactly what to do next and what my calling was or where I was supposed to live. He was regularly speaking to me through numbers, visions and prophetic words that multiple people would confirm, usually on YouTube or through Scripture, but for now I was to take everything day by day and I was enjoying every minute of it.

As we were driving away from the cabin, I decided to drive up the driveway a little further just to see the other beautiful cabin that was there and look at the view one more time. It was then that I noticed the sign. The name of the location was, “A little Piece of Heaven.” At that, we were off to the next adventure.

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The drive through Tennessee to get to Nashville was stunning. We passed so many pancake restaurants that I got to a point where I just had to stop! I’ve never seen so many pancake places in my life! They were delicious and so was the stuffed French toast. Wow!

We arrived at our hotel close to evening and got settled. Isabel and I were studying Greek History and I wanted to take her to see the Parthenon replica, so we decided that we would do it the following day after we checked out and had breakfast. I was also hoping that I’d get to see the mansion that my father lived in when he was young that was now a museum. When I

called to schedule an appointment, the gentleman that answered, who was the owner, said that he and his wife needed a 3 week notice. We got to talking and exchanged info, though. So I was satisfied and decided that I would come back another time and it just wasn't God's will right then.

The first night we drove through Nashville to see the sites and grabbed some barbecue on the way back to the hotel. It was a beautiful night and we all felt like we were being pampered. For years I had dreamed of going on a road trip and doing these things.

The next morning went as planned. We checked out, loaded up the car, got Starbucks for breakfast and headed to the Parthenon. Man, that is a sight to behold. I don't understand why we need a blasphemous replica right smack dab in the middle of our country, but understanding that Satan is the god of this world and that none of it is really as it seems, helps. Regardless, Isabel got to see a piece of Greek History without me needing to take her to Greece, so we were satisfied.

On the drive back toward South Carolina, we decided to drive through the beautiful Smoky Mountains. All the while, Lily and I listened to several podcasts or prophetic words and

discussed the Bible and what God was doing. God was continually confirming things for us through numbers, patterns and animals; especially birds. I was glad that Lily was able to see these things in real time because I used to talk about it all so much.

Several miracles happened on our way back. One being that I had passed a stop on the highway and decided not to stop for gas yet because my car still showed that I had about 150 miles left to drive. But as we began to climb in elevation and the mileage went down, there seemed to be no upcoming exit or gas station in sight. Finally, when it said that I only had 20 miles left and I found a truck exit, I pulled off to check the GPS again and even restarted my phone because it was acting up. Since I had arrived at Lily's home, my phone absolutely would not charge unless I turned it off completely and then plugged it in.

The GPS initially told me that I needed to turn around and go back 40 miles! But after I restarted the phone, it said that there was a gas station only 7 miles ahead. I saw clearly that the enemy wanted me to be stranded on the side of the highway and we prayed before I drove off. I got back on the road and continued forward, watching the mileage on my car go down.

When it got to 7 miles left in the tank, Lily and I asked out loud for Jesus and the Angels to get us off the road and straight to the right gas pump before we ran out of gas. When the mileage said 3 miles, we finally got to the exit and flowed right up to pump number 3! While I was inside paying, a nice gentleman walked up to Lily and offered to pay for our gas! She refused because I had already paid, but this was a clear answer to a not very nice attack.

Chapter Thirty-Five

Wrong Turns, Family Curses, And The Test

After the gas incident, we were back on the road for a few more hours. At one point the main highway broke off into 3 parts. I was in the center lane and according to the GPS, I was in the correct lane. So I continued straight, but as soon as it forked off, my GPS began to reroute us. I was frustrated because it had said to stay where we were and continue straight and now it was saying that we were going the wrong way. To make matters worse, we were now a few miles from the nearest exit. But I took a deep breath and realized that no matter what, God would lead us in the right direction.

When we got off at the next exit the GPS instructed me to go straight. I had assumed that we would need to get back on the main highway and turn around, but that wasn't an option. Instead, it took us down a 5 mile road through a very old town. The road had old brick houses and ranches and a couple of graveyards. We stopped at one of them to look around. Some of

the gravestones were from the 1700's. I tried to use every opportunity that I could to give Isabel a history lesson and this was one of those moments, but nothing could have prepared any of us for what would happen next.

We got back in the car and headed back down the road towards home. A few minutes later, we passed a sign that said, "Jefferson County." I looked at Lily and said, "Isn't this the county that you were born in?" She looked at me and responded, "Yes!"

Immediately I rolled down the passenger window where she was sitting and had her repeat after me. We asked the land for mercy for the iniquities of her bloodline, for the Angels of Yahweh's Throneroom to come and assist the local Angels with tearing down any and all altars to any gods representing the kingdom of darkness, and for new altars to Yahweh to be built in their place. We then prayed to the earth and four winds to break off all family curses and told the earth to now take a Jubilee rest from all of the iniquities that had been done by Lily and her family.

As soon as we said, "Amen," a Red-tailed Hawk appeared over my car and hovered while fluttering its wings.

This was significant for Lily because she has a long history and many stories having to do with hawks. After that, within not even 2 minutes, we approached a bridge. There was a sign on the right side of the road that I read quickly, but it took a second for me to register what it said. When it hit me I screamed! The sign had the initials and last name of Lily's father! Since Lily and Isabel didn't see the sign, I pulled over when we reached the other side of the bridge and sure enough, there was another sign!

I knew at that moment that we were once again in alignment with God's will and that He was answering our prayers in ways that we couldn't even understand. You could not make any of it up if you tried. We looked up who that particular person was on the sign and didn't find a relation to her, but that was still a literal sign. I'm still amazed by this as I'm writing it. How awesome is our God?!

When we got back to Myrtle Beach to Lily's parents home, we continued with fellowship, night drives, homeschooling, and going to the beach. It was during this time that I also began to read the new 14 prayers online that had recently been added to the updated edition of Generational

Prayers 2026 Edition by Paul L. Cox, Brain P. Cox and Barbara Kain Parker. Someone on my YouTube channel had reached out and asked me if I could add them and I agreed.

One day I went to the beach alone, early in the morning, to record some of the prayers in the car and go for a walk. As I stood with my feet in the water, I prayed and asked Father what was next and where we were to go. He gave me a vision of Him carrying me as He walked. He was covering my face with a veil and kept saying, “It’s a surprise.” Our God has a sense of humor! I kept asking and he kept repeating the same thing, so I decided that whatever it was, it was exciting!

From there, I prayed over the waters of the Atlantic ocean and asked for mercy for the iniquities of my bloodline that had taken place in those waters. I had never had the opportunity to do that before. Even though I didn’t have any memories to drive my prayers that day, I knew that they were received and felt a deep reverence, again.

When I got back to Lily’s, we decided to plan a trip to go visit several friends that we had made over the years in our Bible Study group online. We had tried to arrange some sort of gathering a few times before, but they never came to fruition.

Now that I was there and we had the means, we were going to try to see as many of our friends as we could. So we reached out to several of them and began to map out our trip.

The goal was to go south and stay along the coast all the way around the Gulf of Mexico and then head back north and then east, back to Myrtle Beach. If we were careful, this could be accomplished in 14 days. It sounded crazy, but at this point what wasn't crazy?! Ha! If God wanted it to happen, it would happen. And hey, my 50th Jubilee birthday was coming up at the end of that timeframe and I considered this the best birthday present that God could have possibly given to me! So the planning began.

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I booked the first place in Savannah, GA for the date that we had agreed on. It was perfect. It was the only home available without stairs, a parking spot right near the door (which would make things much easier for Lily) and oh yeah, it had parking in general. These things were nearly impossible to find. It was also

available only on the day that we needed. Not before, not after. This was important because 1) Lily's parents agreed to watch her dog while we were gone and we didn't want to go over our planned timeframe and 2) She had enough medication to last until the day that we planned to get home. Once again, God had shown up and out!

Once I had booked the AirBnb and we began to plan our entire route and trip, it occurred to me that Lily really would benefit from having an electric wheelchair. It was difficult to find places where parking was right outside of the door to wherever we were staying and if we were going to be able to go to other places, it would really help. This was the nurse brain in me kicking in. I was determined to somehow find one that would fit in my little Civic, along with the 3 of us and all of our luggage. God was a God of miracles, right?

We searched online and even called several medical equipment companies. I had found quite a few that claimed to be light and would fit in my trunk, but they wouldn't arrive until after the date that we had planned to leave. We kept praying and searching to no avail and had about 7 days to figure something out. But after about 2 days of searching, Lily found exactly

what we were looking for online and it showed that it could be delivered the day before our trip! The only issue now was money, since it wasn't covered by any insurance.

Then it hit me. I asked her how much was in the tithing account. She checked and wouldn't you just know, it was maybe $2.00 away from the total amount of the chair! I was elated! I know that it's silly for me to keep getting surprised by God's miracles, but I was! So we discussed it for maybe 5 minutes and I assured Lily that this was most definitely God's will for the money because everything was aligned! She had said that she felt guilty using it, but then agreed that it was all Him and purchased the chair. This was going to make our trip so much easier and she would now get to experience more than she had been able to in a long time.

As the week went on we made our preparations, packed and got everything ready. On the day before our departure, the same day that the chair was scheduled to arrive, Lily came into the kitchen as I was cooking a late lunch. "You're not going to believe this," she said. I already had a feeling. "The chair isn't coming today?" I responded. "No, it may not come until next week, but I called around town and found a place where we can

rent one," she replied.

My mind started racing. Where were we going to get the money to rent one and how did she find a place in town so fast? I then asked, "Did you pay for the chair with the tithing money?"

"No," she replied. "I put it on my affirm card so that I can pay it off." I instantly heard in my spirit *Luke 16:10 (ESV)*, *"One who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much, and one who is dishonest in a very little is also dishonest in much. "*

I knew then that this was a huge problem and yes, I brought it to her attention. But there was also nothing that I could do at that moment to change it and I was staying with her and her parents. On top of that, I had already booked several places to stay with my own money (that God was miraculously providing for this trip) and I knew that we were still supposed to go. So, I brushed it off as best as I could even though I was very unhappy and we went to the rental place.

In the end, I had to pay several hundred dollars for a manual wheelchair and was going to need to not only do all of the loading, unloading, etc., but now I would need to push her

everywhere that we went. The nurse in me is used to this and it's not that I can't or won't. But the better way that would have benefited us both tremendously was no longer an option due to her disobedience and she wasn't willing to admit that at all.

***

I had never been to Georgia before. My gosh it is beautiful. Yes, it's humid and muggy in the summer, but Savannah was truly a sight to behold. Spanish moss hanging from the trees, old, detailed buildings and huge steamboats on the river. It may be one of my favorite places.

The home that we stayed at was absolutely gorgeous. Once we got everything in and unpacked, we went out to pick up local food. I'm not a big seafood fan, but I tried everything anyway. It was part of the experience and I actually liked everything! Isabel wanted to stick to chicken nuggets (haha) and that was fine, too.

We spent the evening at Forsyth Park walking around and taking pictures of what felt like every tree and all of the

beautiful scenery. Lily collected some moss to take back home. We named it (yes, the moss haha) and then went for a night drive all over town and saw every square inch of Savannah. The weather was perfect and the night was, as Lily called it, “magical.”

The next morning I woke up early and got ready so that I could load up the car and pack up our snacks and things. Lily had already been up for a while trying to use her nebulizer (a machine that is used for people with asthma or other respiratory conditions). It turned out her nebulizer was broken. This was a huge problem because not only did she need it, but you had to have a doctor's order and prescription to get a new one. We were now out of state and weren’t sure how this was going to work.

After several calls to pharmacies and medical equipment companies, I spoke with a gentleman who said that he personally goes to a holistic health shop 20 miles away that usually has nebulizers on hand for sale. I thanked him and hung up quickly so that I could call this place and ask if they had one. Mind you, It was almost 9am and we needed to be checked out by 10am. At this point my nerves were a hot mess.

The woman who answered the phone stated that she did

in fact have one on hand and that it was only $32.00! That's unheard of! I knew that it was God answering our prayers so I scurried off to go get it. As soon as I got outside to get into my car it began to rain. I have no problem driving in the rain, but it slows down traffic. Lord knows that I prayed all the way there and all the way back, blasting worship music as I went.

After I purchased the machine and headed back, I had just 25 minutes until checkout. At this point you know what happened. I got back, set up the machine for Lily to use while I loaded up the car and we left right on time.

But, God!

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Our next destination was supposed to be Orlando, Florida. We had an old friend that Lily was closer to, but we were going to visit with her and stay in her guest house for the night. I had already felt that it may not take place or fall through, for a few reasons. One being that I know other people who had attempted to meet with her before and it ended up not happening at the last

minute, but another reason was that I knew that she was in a bad marriage with a husband who was an addict.

I don't know all of the details, but having been in two marriages that failed due to abuse and mistreatment, usually visits or anything positive gets sabotaged. Well, we weren't even two hours from Orlando when we got the message that she had a headache and didn't think it was a good idea for us to come. Since I already knew in my spirit that it would go that way, I wasn't surprised. Lily was, but we talked it out and moved forward. We decided to go south as far as we could and get a hotel for the night. We ended up in Boca Raton. Since it was late, we just got food and went to bed. We were all excited because the next morning we were headed to the Keyes.

I had never known, until we started planning our trip, that there was a driving bridge to get to the Islands! I had assumed that it was like Catalina, where you need to take a boat. I had stumbled on photos of the bridge when I was looking up places to stay in Florida and I was astonished. I normally am a mountain girl and prefer the forest, but we *had* to go on that bridge! So, we did.

One thing that kept coming up repeatedly ever since we

left Myrtle Beach were the birds. We kept seeing either Blue Herons or Great Egrets. Not that we didn't see any other wildlife, but just like with the repeated number patterns and prophetic words that kept giving confirmation to so many things, these birds were everywhere and they were magnificent.

Once we got to the islands and explored by driving all the way to the end, we saw roaming wild chickens, roosters and even wild iguanas. But once we drove back toward Marathon Island where we stayed, three Great Egrets flew right in front of my car! Lily and I actually screamed and laughed! Three of us, three of them. We were in alignment and God was letting us know, again.

The resort motel that we stayed in was amazing and we had our own beach. I had no idea that ocean water was that hot! Isabel and I swam, even at night under the stars. One night I was able to wheel Lily to the edge of the sand and assist her down to the edge of the water where I'd set up chairs for us. We sat out with our feet in the warm water and stared at the stars for I don't know how long, quietly worshipping Our Father for taking us there.

The morning that we had to leave, I went outside early

and sat under some palm trees to pray. I thanked God for the best vacation I'd ever had, but I also asked Him if I was ever going to see any coconut trees. I had asked Him several times before and only saw palm date trees or these silvery palm trees that are in Florida nicknamed the Florida Silver Palm.

You know by now that He has a sense of humor. He said, "Look up." I looked up and there they were. Coconuts. I had been sitting under them for two days! I cried. It seems silly, but He left no stone left unturned.

Chapter Thirty-Six

What The Enemy Had Stolen

Our next destination was Fort Myers to have lunch with our dear friend Melinda, and then up to Tallahassee for the night. As we cut through the Everglades, we passed a detention center nicknamed Alligator Alcatraz. I wasn't following the news about it, but I knew we were on a surprise assignment. So we parked near the entrance, rolled down the windows, and prayed in the name of Jesus for mercy over the land and everyone inside, and for God's will to be done. We prayed to tear down all of the altars and replace them with altars to Yahweh.

The irony in all of this is that I still had not seen one alligator. It was becoming an ongoing joke, and Isabel kept tricking me and yelling, "Alligator!" to throw me off. It was actually hilarious.

We made it to lunch with Melinda and stayed a few

hours, enjoying a beautiful afternoon of fellowship, before heading up to Tallahassee to sleep. We were exhausted but exhilarated at the same time. What God was doing in our lives was unprecedented, and I was trying to soak up every second of it.

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In New Orleans we stayed in the most beautiful, colorful, old historic European style home for 2 nights. It was truly amazing. We enjoyed the local food and drove around looking at all of the sites.

One of the days we were able to go on an alligator boat tour out in the swamp. I finally got to see the alligators! When the boat tour was finished and I was already off of the boat waiting for Lily with the wheelchair, she had stayed back to speak with the tour guide. After everyone else had gotten off the boat she called me over, so I walked back onto the boat. She was holding a baby alligator! We were both so excited!

We sat there for a while listening to the story of how he

had gotten the egg and had been raising the little guy. Both of us were able to hold the alligator and relax while Lily and the guide both discussed how they had previously worked with animals, so they exchanged info in order to share pictures and updates. I thought it was hilarious listening to them talk. Lily now had a new friend and we headed back to our place.

That same night we decided to take a tour bus with a tour guide. Finding one that had wheelchair access was a feat, but I managed to find one and booked it for the 3 of us. We arrived before the scheduled departure time and had to park about 4 or 5 blocks away from the meetup location, which was outside of one of the bars in the French Quarter. Thankfully the roads and sidewalks were flat, so it wasn't difficult to push Lily in the wheelchair.

We were the first of our group to arrive and the tour guide got us onto the bus. I began to wheel the chair to the back, assuming the parking for it would be at the back of the bus, but he asked me to bring it back to the front and he set it up on the front seat that he said was usually his, but said that he would need to stand up anyways. I didn't question any of it and took my seat next to Isabel behind Lily. We were right across the

aisle from the chair, seated behind the driver.

About five minutes later, a woman stepped onto the bus and asked whose chair it was. Then, without allowing a full answer, began to say that she needed the chair off of the bus because that seat was already booked. She didn't have a badge or announce that she worked for an affiliated tour company or anything. At first, we had thought that she was just someone who was trying to sit there. After she and Lily went back and forth about how the tour guide wanted it there, I started to understand what was happening and that she was an employee.

The woman had said that they had overbooked the tour and wanted us to take the chair back to our room. When I assured her that we didn't have a local room and had driven far, but also that I had booked that tour specifically because it was listed as wheelchair accessible, she grew much more agitated and said that I needed to get it off of the bus. I then asked if I could leave it at the bar, assuming they had some sort of relationship with them since that was our meetup location. She then told me that I had to arrange that with them personally and that the bus needed to get going.

I knew this was an attack and quite frankly, due to where

we were, I expected it. So I got up, grabbed the chair and headed off of the bus. The tour guide, bless his heart, asked if my car was close and I said no. I could tell that he felt horrible. I forgot to mention that this all happened in front of a bus full of people, who were also visibly uncomfortable!

As I got off of the bus and began walking, I could hear the woman say that if I wasn't back in 10 minutes they were leaving. I just kept walking and prayed as I went. If they left, they left. I wasn't going to allow this to ruin my night and I knew that Isabel would be fine with Lily. Although, they would have probably gotten off of the bus anyway if that happened.

I got to the car, threw the chair into the trunk and speedwalked back to the bus. I was there in 9 minutes. Take *that* Satan (rolling my eyes as I type this). The woman and the tour guide were standing outside talking and when I boarded the bus, only the guide came back in. She looked embarrassed and walked off. Her demons had just failed their assignment.

This particular tour was not supposed to have any walking, according to the listing. But wouldn't you just know that about half of it was off the bus? Anyhow, Lily had to stay on the bus when we got off for different parts of the tour, but she

was a trooper and everyone on the bus was so nice to her. The good thing that came out of this was that Isabel got a good, fun history lesson and we all got to try warm beignets! Mmmm….

In the end, I got off of the bus first, ran to the car and came back to pick them up. Months later after I had left them a review (which I usually never do), I ended up getting a full refund. God was faithful to pay back what the enemy had stolen, yet again.

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We were now off to Texas to go see our friends Lance, Erin and their sweet children. Erin was pregnant with a little girl, too! We'd been discussing meeting in person for years and now it was finally happening!

We spent a few hours with them and caught up. Our kids played together and we even got to snuggle with their daughter. It was like we'd known them and hung out together our whole lives. This is what I believe Heaven will be like when we are finally all together in person. Oh, what a day it will be!

After we left their house we headed out to eat and find a hotel. This time I was having a hard time finding a place. I ended up booking a room in Spring, TX that seemed to be the only place available. But for some reason my travel app was acting up and it also booked another room for a different date before I could finish! This was the second time this had happened and it was impossible to get through to a human who could help me. Even though it was due to an error with their app, I still got charged.

I had no choice but to move on with the night. Once we arrived at the hotel, I confirmed with the guy at the check in counter that I needed the room to be downstairs and near our parking space. I had called to confirm this prior to booking. He then said that he only had a room upstairs, there was no elevator and my room was non refundable.

I stood there, silently praying and feeling defeated at the same time. I could tell he felt bad so he started doing something on his computer and then ended up saying that he did have a room downstairs but that it was non-smoking. I never asked for a smoking room, so I took it. That was God. The enemy was all over me and trying to get me to react. I didn't, but man I almost

did!

As soon as I opened the door to our room, the smell hit us. It was smoky, musty, moldy…I honestly don't know how else to describe it. But it was what we were stuck with and it was only for a night. The beds were clean and we didn't find any bugs (lol), so we settled in and eventually fell asleep.

I slept horribly. I've never been in a place where the smell actually kept me up. Lily was also coughing a little more than usual, even though she had done her nebulizer treatment before bed. We all woke up earlier than usual and just wanted to get out of there. I had a terrible headache and Lily felt something coming on in her lungs. Thankfully she had medication with her.

It was at that point that I heard the Lord speak to my spirit that I needed to stop limiting Him. I had looked for something on the lower end because I was afraid to run out of money. But He was footing the bill and made it clear that we couldn't do that again. I understood and was completely on board! As God is always right on time, He led me to book a very nice home that was available, once again, only for the upcoming days that we needed it. We then stopped at a

Starbuck's drive-thru and headed off to our next destination, Corpus Cristi, Texas!

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We arrived in the late afternoon. This place was so nice! It was on the beach, had its own fishing pier and even had a fig tree in the backyard! If you know, you know. That was highly symbolic for us as fig trees are all over the Bible. Also, the pier adjacent to ours had a large cross on it that was lit up at night and reflected in the water. You could see it from every window in our house that was facing that direction.

Our dear friend Karen came out to meet us and met me in the driveway as I was getting back from Walmart with groceries. She cried and cried and nearly ate Lily alive! We were all so excited to finally meet in person! When she found out that we would be there for two nights, she invited over another woman from our group, Darlene, who lived close by and a young man that she worked with for the second night.

It was truly beautiful to be able to sit, talk about Jesus,

the Bible, watch sermons and small video clips and just let the Holy Spirit flow. The funny thing was that Lily had really wanted to go fishing on the pier before we left. The only time that we'd have been able to do that was the evening of the second night. She was slightly irritated that we weren't going to be able to do it since our gathering went until almost midnight, but after everyone left, the Scripture from Luke 5:1 hit us.

Luke 5:1-11 (ESV), On one occasion, while the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God, he was standing by the lake of Gennesaret, and he saw two boats by the lake, but the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. Getting into one of the boats, which was Simon's, he asked him to put out a little from the land. And he sat down and taught the people from the boat. And when he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch." And Simon answered, "Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! But at your word I will let down the nets." And when they had done this, they enclosed a large number of fish, and their nets were breaking. They signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled

both the boats, so that they began to sink. But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish that they had taken, and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men." And when they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed him.

Do you see that? We had gone fishing….

Chapter Thirty-Seven

My 50th Jubilee

We checked out of Corpus Cristi and headed toward Lafayette, Louisiana for one night and then Montgomery, Alabama the next. This time I had booked nice hotels and just charged it on my Affirm account. I wasn't going to take any more chances with bad rooms and God had made it clear that that was what He wanted me to do. I was thankful because these places had all of the accommodations we needed, were super clean and very nice. Isabel and I swam in the pools and we all rested well.

The next day we headed to the final destination of our "excursion," as I called it. We initially had wanted to go back to Savannah, but I couldn't find anything with the accommodations that we needed. I ended up booking a home on a farm that was located on a marsh in a small place called Townsend, about 45 minutes from Savannah.

Even though it wasn't exactly planned this way

intentionally, it "just so happened" that this day was my birthday and not just any birthday, it was my 50th. This means that it is my Jubilee year. The Bible Project defines Jubilee as *"a sacred fiftieth year of total economic, social, and environmental reset."* You can read more about it in Leviticus chapter 25.

I had been asking God for years if I could *puhleese* have a Jubilee/Sabbatical rest where I could actually get away for a while and not have to worry about work. Well, He answered! I didn't think that it would actually fall on my birthday! But again, He is never early or late, but always on time.

After checking out of the hotel and driving for about 6 hours, we arrived at the farm a little before sundown. Lily had asked John to come stay with us since he was visiting his family not too far away. He got there right before we did and we got settled. But as we were talking we realized that there wasn't anywhere close by to eat or get food, so my youngling and I set off for the nearest grocery store 15 miles away.

By the time we got back and I cooked, it was getting late. Now, I want to make it clear that I'm not the type to have high expectations and I knew that we were all on this God

journey together, but I was starting to feel a little hurt that nothing was being done for me. At least on that day. Yes, I felt very blessed to be with my brother and sister in Christ and for everything– ALL of the miracles– but it was starting to dawn on me that I had been working just as hard as usual, even during this whole trip, and I was footing every bill. Yes, it was God but He was starting to make me see it all in a different light. But I brushed it off because I didn't want to think about it.

Anyhow, we hung out and talked for hours and sat outside staring at the stars while the tide was coming in and out of the marsh and we were being eaten alive by mosquitos. It was lovely. We all went to bed in our separate rooms and decided that we'd wake up early to watch the sun come up and then head to Savannah for the day.

We all woke up to watch the sunrise. There were huge Blue Egrets, White Herons and many other beautiful wildlife roaming and flying around. The pictures that Lily and I captured were absolutely stunning and the sunrise was phenomenal. I ended up throwing a kayak in the water and taking off for about an hour by myself into the marsh. It felt like a dream. God's mercies are new every morning.

After coffee and breakfast we ended up deciding against Savannah because John needed to leave kind of early, but we did end up agreeing to go to Jekyll Island, off of the Georgia Coast. If you don't know the history, I highly suggest looking it up. It was initially Native American land, then kidnapped slaves were brought there from Africa (after slavery was abolished!). It then became the epicenter of the richest club in the world and the birthplace of the Federal Reserve. Talk about wicked principalities. The place is as beautiful as beautiful can be, but oh, the irony!

After driving around for a bit, we found parking and John manned the wheelchair for Lily. We all walked around and saw the historical buildings and mansions (with Nephilim sized rocking chairs outside. Not joking.) and even got a last minute free tour of the "chapel" (this was God because they were about to close). This was clearly not a Christian chapel at all. I'll let you go look it up and do the math. It was so, so eerie.

After silently praying all over the place, we stepped out and faced the chapel. I picked up some soil and we prayed in the way that Abba had been teaching me for months. When we were finished, we loaded up the car and started off of the island,

but there was one place that we hadn't seen when we were coming in, and I stopped. It was an old fort near a creek that had a ton of dark history. I didn't want everyone to have to get out again so I just got out myself.

As I walked around the perimeter and prayed, I got bit by a mosquito near my elbow. This wasn't unusual because there were mosquitos everywhere we went and I usually don't have a bad reaction to them. But this particular bite left me a welt and a mark that lasted for weeks.

That night after we said our good-bye's to John and settled down for bed, out of nowhere a big, black rat was in the room that Isabel and I were sharing! When I jumped out of bed to try to find it, it was gone. I tore the entire place up looking for it but it was nowhere to be found. There was no hole in the wall for it to go through, no opened windows or doors. It had simply disappeared. We all knew that it was a monitoring spirit and prayed that all contracts, monitors, astral projectors, etc. lose access in Jesus Name. Nothing else happened that night, praise God.

***

After two wonderful days in Townsend, we checked out and headed North toward Myrtle Beach. Prior to leaving, the owner of the AirBnb texted me and asked me how we were doing in her "little slice of heaven." Do you remember that that was the name of the first cabin that we stayed at with John weeks prior? Yeah…

As we drove north, I stopped at a Georgia peach shop because I told myself that I was going to get all things peaches for my own birthday present. I got peach bread, jarred peach cobbler, some sort of almond pecan butter, and I forget what else but I'm full just thinking about it all! It was delicious, though.

I began to notice on the drive back to Myrtle Beach that I wasn't feeling well but I tried to talk myself out of it. My heart had still not been beating correctly this whole time and was also seeming to flare up more than usual. By the time we got home I really felt it starting to hit me. So I dropped off Lily and Isabel, got everything into the house, set off to the pharmacy to pick up

Lily's medication, and then went to return the wheelchair.

Lily's mother had made a delicious dinner and baked a *fantastic* pineapple coconut cake from scratch to celebrate my birthday. I felt so blessed that I almost cried. After enjoying that wonderful meal, I retired to bed to rest– but my heart wouldn't let me! I knew it was an attack and absolutely was not going to go to the E.R., but I was also losing patience and wanting answers.

I finally booked an appointment for the following morning, which was a Friday, for a nearby women's clinic. I woke up early, got ready and began to drive 30 minutes away to this place when my phone began to play a YouTube video on the Blue Tooth in my car. It was Nayanda from Foundational Truth's and it was titled, "You are being resuscitated."

Now, this video was already about a week old and I didn't click on anything, it just started playing. But right away I knew it was for me because it was about a vision that she had with Jesus using an AED (defibrillator) on a person's heart. Throughout the video she was sharing how Jesus was letting a remnant of us know that He was giving us new hearts.

I immediately started to pray and ask God what it all meant and if He wanted me to go to the clinic and drop $400.00 on this appointment with the labs. I didn't receive a direct answer, so I prayed for Him to make it clear if the clinic was not what He wanted me to do. But I also was desperate for relief and begged Him for answers!

At the clinic I filled out the necessary paperwork and explained my situation, again, to the woman that I'd spoken to over the phone. I had made it clear that I wanted to head back toward California the following week and needed my labs done, stat (right away). I wouldn't have gone to the appointment if they hadn't assured me that would be done. Well, after sitting there suffering for more than 30 minutes she came out and let me know that the doctor actually would not be able to see me for at least 6 more days and the labs wouldn't be done right away. So I canceled the appointment and walked back out, in the rain to my car.

As I sat there, wet and feeling very sick (at that point I had a pretty bad cold and body aches), I threw my hands up and said, "Okay God, what are we doing?" As soon as I started driving I knew. He wanted me to fast for 3 days and would heal

me. It had happened before and it would happen now. I also needed instructions on what He wanted me to do next in general, so this was how He was going to answer me.

When I got back to the house I let Lily and her sweet parents know that I was going to sleep, fast and pray for 3 days and asked them to please not take it personally. They were so gracious to accommodate us and I felt bad, but they truly were so hospitable that I didn't feel unwanted or anything like that, at all. So up to the room I went with some water and electrolytes. I slept for a few hours and woke up to pray. Then it occurred to me, only a few hours into my fast, that my heart was beating regularly again and I was able to rest.

On the third evening, even though I looked like Morticia from the Adam's Family, I was completely healed. My cold was gone, my body wasn't aching and my heart was beating normally. To this day I am still healed. An even greater revelation also hit me. That third day was Pentecost. I had left to go there at Passover and now He was ending my trip on Pentecost.

My instructions from Him were given with several confirmations. Isabel and I were anxious to see her sisters and

other family on the way back, and many prophets were confirming, with Scripture, that it was time to go. But something else was also being revealed to me. I was being told that I was taking on too much and trying to do something that God didn't ask of me. The more I brushed this off, the louder the messages got.

The day after Pentecost I came downstairs and spent some time with Lily. I had made it clear that we were to leave the next morning and she was very unhappy and started to cry. I understood. We had discussed making plans to do another trip going north to see more friends, but this wasn't God's will right now. She had also ordered a harness for her dog to bring along and had her hopes up for other things, including the possibility of us moving in together somehow and doing whatever ministry work God had planned for us. At one point she said, "I know you think that this is what you need to do…" but I quickly corrected her. None of what we did was me. None of it. It was all God. His planning, instruction, money, all of it. So she conceded and we agreed that the northern excursion would be at a later date and I needed to get home to see my kids.

That day we put together and set up the electric

wheelchair that had arrived while we were gone and took it out for a test drive. There were a few hiccups, but for the most part it was great! After we got back in, though, I heard a conversation between Lily and her parents about how the chair would be paid for. What I heard didn't match the truth, and it troubled me. I kept silent and asked God to show me if there was something I was supposed to do.

Chapter Thirty-Eight

"What God Does Next Is Going to Shock You!"

Later that day Lily also revealed something to me in front of her parents. She said that a friend of ours who didn't want to be named was going to send her a certain amount of money to put into my bank account. He had told her that the numbers were specific and that the Holy Spirit led him to do it. I knew that it was our friend Marcus (the same one who had helped me before). We are both into numbers and no one else would do that in the way that he would. But I kept my mouth shut for the time being.

Isabel and I hit the road at 6am and headed west. We arrived at our hotel in Tupelo, Mississippi for the night, had a nice meal and got very good rest. That night, Marcus had texted me and told me to make sure that I was checking the fluids in my car and my tires for air. Wouldn't you just know that the next morning I had a flat? I had packed up and headed toward the freeway entrance when I noticed something was wrong. God

did not skip one beat. I was able to get the car down the road to the best, most professional tire shop I've ever been to. We were in and out of there in 40 minutes.

We stayed in Oklahoma the next day and then we were off to stay with one of my aunt's in New Mexico. During the time in between I began to have more revelations, especially in my sleep. I was hearing the Lord say things like, "Judas kept the money bags" and "Saul was disobedient." At the same time, Lily was trying to put the money that Marcus sent her into an account to transfer to me and it wasn't working. In the end, after the weekend, she ended up asking her mother to deposit it at her bank and write two separate checks to deposit two days apart. Her mother was seeing firsthand how God was not only blessing me for obedience (I am unworthy!), but also how He paid for the entire trip! Everything that I thought I was having to pay for was now covered and I was able to pay off all of the debts that it racked up, including the money for the rooms that were booked in error!

Joel 2:25-26 (ESV) | *I will restore to you the years*
that the swarming locust has eaten,
the hopper, the destroyer, and the cutter,

my great army, which I sent among you.

> *"You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied,*
> *and praise the name of the Lord your God,*
> *who has dealt wondrously with you.*
> *And my people shall never again be put to shame.*

we years
that the swarming locust has eaten,
the hopper, the destroyer, and the cutter,
my great army, which I sent amon

Finally, after days of talking myself out of what God wanted me to do, I texted Lily and asked her if she had paid the wheelchair off in full, yet. Remember, we had discussed it before and at the time she had ended up agreeing that it was God. Well, I got crickets. I knew that she had decided to fast for the first time so I decided to leave it alone in hopes that God was dealing with it all in another way.

Days passed and crazy things were happening with both of us and our families. Still, the Holy Spirit wasn't allowing me to rest because I wasn't getting answers regarding the tithing money. Now, nearly every prophetic word that I listened to had

to do with Judas or Saul and I was growing almost sick. The final straw was when a woman that I had been in alignment with for months named Shannon Stevens on YouTube, put out a video titled, “What God Does Next Is Going to Shock You! You never suspected this person.” Even then when I heard it I tried to fight it off and say no, no, no. But it got to the point that things were happening simultaneously, and I could no longer ignore them.

In our group chat with John, Lily began to direct the messages more toward him and I could see that she was being manipulative. Then she sent me a long message that was also manipulative and when I tried to discuss going to God, getting permission for the things she was trying to do and even pointing out that we were in a new season where we weren’t supposed to be entertaining our old ways anymore, I once again got no response.

There were things that she said about wanting me to buy a trailer for all of us to live in, or that the people that we had visited ‘needed’ us to visit them. Yes, these things that we were able to do were wonderful, but God had been showing me that He was going to give me rest and living with Lily was not it.

The more I expressed that to her, the more desperate the responses became and I hated the way that I felt.

After weeks of this back and forth, I finally asked for the last time. “Did you use the tithing money to pay off the wheelchair?” I had sent the message at night. I could see that she read it, but did not respond. By morning, the Holy Spirit made it very clear that I was to go into the ministry group chat that we had with John, explain why I was removing myself and leave the chat. I should back up and say that John, after our trip, had set up a separate group chat specifically for ministry ideas. Lily instantly texted me privately and then paid the wheelchair off, but it was too late. Abba was not going to change His mind as far as I was concerned.

The following day they were in our other private group chat that I was still in, talking about their phone discussion from the night before. I was feeling so bad and went in there to say that we were still friends, just not a ministry. But John ended up saying that we were never a ministry and that the tithing money was really only supposed to be for Lily. Then he said something sarcastic and I paused and stared at the screen for a good five minutes. This was the end. I was shocked as Abba had warned

me I would be.

Pruning is always painful. I had now been through it so many times that I knew what it felt like and was getting used to it, but I truly wasn't expecting this and I was crushed. When I texted Lily personally to let her know that God had begun to show me that what she was doing was for her own gain (which is destiny swapping). There was no response. Not a word. That was the final message we shared.

To say that I was heartbroken is an understatement. But I am so familiar with being betrayed that I knew that I needed to trust in God even if I didn't yet understand the whole picture. I needed to move forward, so I did.

***

After Isabel and I had gone to New Mexico for a few days, we headed to Arizona for two weeks to visit more family. During the final week, I would wake up early to read and go for prayer walks. There was one particular tree that I would stand under to pray and get some shade since it was getting hot. One day, I felt

the presence of God so strongly when I was asking Him to show me where we were going to live and settle down. I specifically asked the tree to please lead us to our promised land. Then we set out for California so that we could finally see my kids.

So many other things happened during this time and I cannot list them all, but one was that Grace decided to check back into a rehab facility as I was driving to Arizona. Still praying over all of this, I was trusting that God was at work in her life and I laid it all at His feet. All of our blessings came with back to back warfare. No matter how close I felt I was getting to a sort of "finish line," more things were getting thrown at me and my family. But I now knew for certain that He did not bring me this far to watch me fall and I trusted Him in ways that I'd never dared before.

We arrived at Anne's home in the mountains at the end of June, right before her birthday. It felt like we'd been gone for years! It was 2 months but I'd never been away from her for that long before. During our stay with her, I was able (this is another miracle) to book a cabin in Yosemite National Park for her birthday for two days. Not near the park, *in* the park. It was the only one available and only on those days. Do y'all see the

pattern? I'm smiling huge right now.

This was a prophetic trip. God was revealing one of the most beautiful places in all of His creation for His children to see and spend time in. I'd been to Yosemite before, but this time He was speaking to me directly and showing me what the inheritance of His children actually means. *Matthew 5:5 (ESV) says, "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth" and John 10:10 (ESV) reads, "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly."*

In the past, anytime I went somewhere even on vacation, I wasn't happy or at peace. I was always stressed and had whatever was happening back at home on my mind, whether it was work, a court case, someone abusing me and my children, landlord issues, etc. For the first time in my life I was seeing all of creation and everything that God was walking me through in a different light. I could now enjoy these things. He was making all things new..

Revelation 21:5 (ESV), "And he who was seated on the throne said, 'Behold, I am making all things new.' Also he said, 'Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true'."

***

After Yosemite, Isabel and I were back and forth between Anne's and Grace's in L.A. I had picked Grace up from rehab and we were able to spend good time together. Her place in L.A. was temporary but in one of the worst locations possible due to high rent prices everywhere.

I'm pointing this out because it is significant. The meaning of the name of her street had to do with a castle and royal line, and she was walking-distance to a particular spa where you could go be treated like royalty for a full day. The apartment itself was absolutely beautiful, but it was also in the center of a drug hub with homeless encampments and rats outside all night long. It was beyond ironic. Regardless, this is what we were doing and I was seeing how even in the midst of what seemed terrible, God was not only providing but showing me how the physical may seem one way, but in the spirit it is entirely different.

2 Kings 6:16-17 (ESV) Then Elisha prayed and said, "O LORD, please open his eyes that he may see." So the LORD opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw, and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha."

***

Grace and Isabel both have birthdays in August and I had been praying that by the 1st of August we'd be settled in our new home. It was already mid July and I was beginning to feel like it wasn't going to happen. Still, I wanted to do something for Grace since we'd gone to Yosemite for Anne's birthday, so we planned a day at the spa nearby. Neither of us had done anything like that, so we were super excited.

On the day that we went, even as we were there, I heard the Spirit speak to me clearly. We were both there for a different reason than we'd thought. Esther had gone to "the spa" (for a whole year) prior to her elevation. The address number to the place was 711. Matthew 7:11 had kept being revealed to me

throughout the summer. *"If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!" (ESV)*

This was supposed to be a gift for only Grace, but it wasn't. He had brought us here in preparation and He was giving us royal treatment, on the street that was named after a part of a castle for a royal bloodline. It was also on the 7th day of the 7th month and I kept seeing 414.

Esther 4:14 (ESV), "For if you keep silent at this time, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will perish. And who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"

Now it was time to get settled so I could finish this book…

Chapter Thirty-Nine

With My Eyes Opened

The day after our spa day, I had received a message from a family member that really threw me off. I was so discouraged by it that I questioned and second guessed everything that the Lord had been telling me about where we were supposed to end up. I prayed and prayed. I knew that it was an attack, but I couldn't seem to shake it off.

I decided to call my old friend Farrah so that we could catch up and pray together. We were still in L.A. at this time and Isabel was at a friend's house swimming. So I decided to go to a park that I used to walk at and call Farrah from there. We spent at least an hour on the phone catching up like we usually do and I let her know what was going on, but this time our conversation felt different. I couldn't quite put my finger on it, but it wasn't flowing like it usually did and it felt almost tense.

During our conversation I had brought up obedience several times as I had over the last year or so due to everything

Abba was showing me and the miracles that followed. But I was getting push-back in a passive-aggressive way. I felt a dark presence hovering near me and it was actually making me feel sick and shaky. I tried to brush it off as an attack and hoped that when we prayed it would get better.

At the end of our long chat we decided to pray. This was usually the norm for us. We'd catch up for a long time and then pray at the end. We used to hardly talk on the phone and tried to meet up at least once every few months, but since I'd been all over the place we were talking on the phone more often.

I prayed first and did it in the way that I was led by the Holy Spirit with the new things that I'd been learning during this past season. My prayer, just like our discussion, focused a lot on doing away with the old and/or things that God doesn't want our families to be attached to, in order to come into alignment with Him and His will. I don't remember my words, but they flowed as I allowed Him to lead me.

Now normally whoever started first would pray for the other and her family, situation, etc. and then we would switch unless it was all covered by one person, which was fine, too. So I started and prayed for her, her family and whatever we

discussed. But when she started praying, it instantly began with something along the lines of, “Okay, so it’s what *lens* you see things through… If you feel like you already know everything and have a little bit of pride, then you aren’t seeing through the lens of love like the Holy Spirit has been showing me.” From there it continued for what felt like 10 minutes. It wasn’t, but I sat there on the other end of the phone with my eyes opened and my heart sinking.

The prayer for my family or my current situation never came. Instead, Abba was showing me a clear manifestation of what was in the heart of my oldest friend. I couldn’t even speak. I sat there and listened, silently, while she continued. I could tell toward the end that she was feeling uncomfortable, but I was so dumbfounded that I just waited for her to finish. When she said, “Amen” I did too, and we said goodbye. I’ve never hung up my phone so fast. I sat there in the car for a long time, stunned.

As the next two days went on and I tried to make sense of it all, I received several prophetic words from many different people and Scripture, who were all saying the same things: there are still people in your lives that are compromised and pretentious, they have jealousy and envy in their hearts, they are

trying to take your oil, their mouths speak of Him but their hearts are far from Him, you can't take them with you, and so much more.

James 3:13 (ESV) "Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good conduct let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom. But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice."

The attack and dark spirit that I had felt before our conversation only got worse. I prayed and even repented of doing anything wrong that I may have missed to have caused Farrah to treat me this way. Finally, I fasted for a day and asked the Holy Spirit what I needed to do. I was dreading it, again, but a few days later He made it clear that if I didn't do it now, I would not get to the next level. So I sent Farrah a message and let her know that we were being separated like Lot and Abraham and I didn't look back.

After this, doors began to open up immediately.

***

Less than a week after being pruned again, Isabel and I were headed to the Forest Frank concert in Los Angeles. Even though her birthday was almost a month away I'd bought these tickets as an early birthday gift. We were so excited!

The concert was on July 17th. Another number that the Spirit had been showing me over and over was 717. In Strong's Concordance of The Bible, the number 717 in Hebrew means to gather or pluck and in Greek it means Armageddon. He was showing me that I was finally in the season to reap my harvest and it was a season of judgment for those who had chosen not to follow Him. A separation of the wheat from the tares within the Body of Christ.

This was very heavy. The parable of the ten virgins kept coming to me and I realized that it was about followers, not the world and the church.

Matthew 25:1-13 (ESV) "Then the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. As the bridegroom was delayed, they all became drowsy and slept. But at midnight there was a cry, 'Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.' Then all those virgins rose and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' But the wise answered, saying, 'Since there will not be enough for us and for you, go rather to the dealers and buy for yourselves.' And while they were going to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast, and the door was shut. Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, 'Lord, lord, open to us.' But he answered, 'Truly, I say to you, I do not know you.' Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour. "

The five who were unprepared and didn't have enough oil were trying to piggy-back off of the ones who did the work. They were there, waiting with the others. They weren't outsiders from another town. This is a picture of followers of

Christ who grow tired and, let's be honest, lazy during their own walk or they refuse to give up anything or anyone that would hold them back.

Galatians 6:8-9 (ESV) reads, "For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up."

As uncomfortable as it was coming to these realizations, I was thankful for them and I knew that I had to continue to trust God and keep moving forward.

The concert was amazing. They announced that it was the largest one for Forest, yet. For Isabel and I, it was another little piece of Heaven. Being able to worship God with 18,000 families, not just teenagers– elderly folks, babies, children…whole families were there. It was so beautiful and I knew that this was a special day. Not just the concert, but also the fact that God brought Isabel and I there on 7/17.

***

On the morning of 7/18 after praying to the Lord to ask if we were even going to be settled by August, I felt Him nudge me to fill out an application on Zillow and start looking in a particular area again. I had looked there before, over the months, but my credit was bad and I was unprepared to move. Now, my credit was slightly better and I had the means. I was just starting to feel panicky about only having less than 2 weeks left in July!

I found a really nice condo for a decent price and sent the application. Then I moved on with my weekend and got stuff done with my daughters in and around L.A. I tried not to think about any of it just in case it fell through. God had been working on me regarding my thoughts and how I needed to wait in faith and expectation, but I still needed a lot of work.

Well, on Monday a few things happened. First, my phone rang with a number that had a prefix of 222. I didn't answer it because I assumed it was another spam call about my car warranty or loan application. But when I checked the

voicemail, it was a sweet woman on the other end saying that she received my application and that I was exactly what they were looking for in a tenant! I literally dropped the phone! Did she have the wrong person? Was she sure it was *my* application? Ha!

We played phone tag for half of the day until we finally got a hold of each other. I then asked if she had a downstairs unit and explained why it was important to me. I wanted to be close to my late cousin's children and didn't want noise or stairs to be an issue. Well, they did have another unit downstairs and it was much more beautiful than the one I'd applied for! Not only that, it had the water feature outside (a creek) that Jesus had been giving me in my vision over the last year. It was equipped with every appliance I could possibly need and even had two smart TVs and a wood burning fireplace! The cherry on top was that the address was yet another triple digit number that Abba had been showing me over the last year. I'm still mind blown!

It was now the 20th. Ten more days til the beginning of the month that I wanted to be settled so that I could begin homeschooling in a stable environment. Don't you know? God did it. He did all of it. He went before us. He prepared the place.

He showed me visions of it (yes, this is the exact place that He showed me) and He got us there on time. Even more, the landlords are Christians and had placed snacks and a "Welcome Home" sign in the refrigerator for us upon arrival. No more dealing with the evil landlords that I had before. I am still in awe and speechless to this day.

I arrived with nothing but what I had in my car. We were obedient and got rid of everything before we had left the previous place. Now I had ordered furniture and other household items to be delivered and within weeks we had everything we needed and more. I still feel like I am dreaming.

Psalm 126:1-3 (ESV), When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dream. Then our mouth was filled with laughter, and our tongue with shouts of joy; then they said among the nations, "The Lord has done great things for them." The Lord has done great things for us; we are glad.

Ephesians 3:14-21 (ESV), For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and

on earth is named, that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

Chapter Forty

The Chains Have Been Broken

So many other things occurred that are not written in this book. Miracles, big and small, are still happening daily. My story is not over, it is just beginning. I'm not starting a new chapter, I'm beginning a new book. The chains have been broken and He has led me through the new doors and into my promised land.

I don't know what comes next but I do know that I must live in communion with Him day by day, minute by minute. The ways that He has led me these past few years have not been conventional at all. But God cannot be kept in a box and if we insist on keeping Him in one, and holding Him to a certain standard, He can't work with us.

Can you imagine if Noah didn't build the Ark or even if he did, but didn't follow the instructions on how to build it and did it some other sloppy way? What might have happened? The possibilities are endless but one thing is for sure, we wouldn't

be here.

Obedience is key in reaping the harvest of blessings that are laid out all throughout Scripture. Jesus said, “If you love me, you will keep my commandments.” John 14:15 (ESV). Deuteronomy 28 gives a thorough picture of the blessings that come with obedience and the curses that come with disobedience. I am not talking about religion and rituals. I’m talking about obedience out of love and trust. There is no way around it, as you can see from my story.

If you are lukewarm, He will spit you out. If you continue to refuse Him and provoke Him by living in compromise, the Grace period will eventually come to an end– just as it does for you when someone treats you badly, is disloyal and doesn’t relent after countless warnings, forgiveness, chances, etc. At some point, you can’t take it anymore and you shouldn’t.

If we are made in God’s image, why do we insist on trying to make Him forgive endlessly with no consequences? It’s simply not realistic.

Jeremiah 7:16-18 (ESV) "As for you, do not pray for this people, or lift up a cry or prayer for them, and do not intercede with me, for I will not hear you. Do you not see what they are doing in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem?"

If we are going to elevate in God's Kingdom and be used for the purposes that He placed us here for, we must surrender our Isaacs and pick up our own crosses to follow Him. This includes many things that will be a sacrifice, including people. Handing over your children or friends that have been in your life for many years can be painful. Walking away from marriages that literally serve the kingdom of darkness can be devastating. But in the end, He is in control and doesn't ever ask us to do something that isn't for the greater good and furtherance of His Kingdom. Surrender doesn't live in a church building, denomination or organization. It lives in our hearts, actions and relationship with Jesus.

In closing, I will say this. I am in no way perfect. As you have read, my story was full of mistakes and dire consequences. I was lukewarm, compromised, riddled with sin and held on to

things and people that I never had permission to. In the end, it only reaped destruction and pain. Praise Jesus that He pulled me out of the miry clay! And I want you to know with certainty that if He did it for me He will do the same for you.

Matthew 11:28-30 (ESV) Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

Romans 8:38-39 (ESV), "For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Joel 2:12-13 (ESV), "Yet even now," declares the Lord,

"return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; and rend your hearts and not your

garments."Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love; and he relents over disaster.

James 4:8 (ESV), Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

Exodus 33:11 (ESV), Thus the Lord used to speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend.

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Lastly, I am very aware that many people will not be happy about me sharing my story. This is part of why the enemy held me down under the spirit of fear for so many years throughout my life. It has taken me 50 years to realize that if my story is not told, Yahweh will not get the Glory. No one lights a lamp and hides it under a basket (Matthew 5:15). He isolated me in order to train me. I didn't see it then, but I see it now. Everything that

has happened, all of it, was training.

So what was it all training *for*? I'm still learning the full answer, but here is what I know today. He trained me to obey even when I didn't understand, and to wait for a clear yes from Him instead of rushing ahead. He trained me to rest, which I'm still not good at. My entire life has trained me to see the patterns the enemy uses, so I can warn others and to pray and ask if something is from Him or a counterfeit. He has trained me to surrender, over and over, whatever I was holding onto that was coming between God and myself. Most of all, He has prepared me to tell this story, so that you'll know God doesn't waste anything and He always keeps His promises.

I'm not trying to hurt anyone or throw them under the bus. I can't change the choices others made that shaped my story, and there's no way to tell it without involving them. I'm releasing this in obedience, and it's all for Him. I hold no bitterness, and I truly forgive everyone, even those who caused the most harm. Just a reminder though, forgiveness is not trust and not everyone who has been forgiven should be given access back into your life. *Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life. Proverbs 4:23 (ESV).*

My prayer is for anyone reading this to understand that they are never too far gone to come to Jesus and that there is absolutely nothing impossible for Him. Nothing. He still speaks to us and parts the Red Sea for His people. No matter what you have gone through or may be going through now, He has the way out. He IS the way.

Matthew 16:24-27 (ESV), Then Jesus told his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul? For the Son of Man is going to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay each person according to what he has done."

Hebrews 13:8 (paraphrase), "*He is the same yesterday, today and forever."*

Numbers 6:24-26 (ESV), The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the LORD lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.

John 3:16 (ESV), "For God so loved the world,[i] that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."

Esther 4:14 (ESV), "For if you keep silent at this time, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will perish. And who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"

Esther 4:16 (ESV) …and if I perish, I perish.

God Bless You.

End Note

“If You’re Still In It”...

If you are being abused, believe you are being abused, or are unsure about whether or not you are being abused, do not ignore it. I’m not going to tell you it’s easy, because it isn’t. But I can tell you some things I wish someone had told me:

You’re not crazy, and it isn’t your fault. What happened to you is real, even if someone has spent years telling you otherwise.

Tell one safe person. Choose someone who believes you. Not everyone will, and that says something about *them*, not you. Be careful not to share with people that you cannot trust.

Safety is imperative. You will see more clearly when you get out of the relationship. Getting away is the hardest part and is most dangerous during the first few months after you leave. Reach out to Domestic Violence professionals for resources. Don't be ashamed or feel guilty. This is your sign.

Call a hotline before you make a move. Leaving is often the most dangerous time, so a safety plan matters. An advocate can help you build one for your situation.

Quietly write it down. Keep dates, photos, and messages somewhere he (or she) can’t find them, like a friend’s house or an account he doesn’t know about.

Gather what you’ll need: IDs, birth certificates, bank information, and a little cash, kept where they’re safe.

Look for a counselor or pastor who understands abuse. Some will, and some won’t. Keep looking until you find one who does. If

someone counsels you to stay for the kids, or tells you that you cannot leave because the Bible says so, etc., do not trust them. If you are in danger and unequally yoked, Jesus wants you to be safe.

You aren't alone. I was in that dark place, too. God was with me then, and he's with you now.

If you're in danger, call 911. If you're thinking of ending your life, call or text 988

If you need help right now:

Immediate danger: call 911; National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-7233, or text START to 88788; RAINN (sexual assault): 1-800-656-4673; Childhelp (child abuse): call or text 1-800-422-4453; 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline: call or text 988; National Human Trafficking Hotline: 1-888-373-7888, or text 233733

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A Life the Enemy Tried to Destroy. A God Who Had Other Plans.

What if everything you went through was preparing you for what God had planned all along?

Sarah Grant's life was marked by circumstances few could imagine. From childhood abuse and a family steeped in the occult to destructive relationships, domestic violence, devastating family court battles, and homelessness, she found herself fighting battles on nearly every front. But even when everything seemed lost, God was not finished with her.

In this gripping and deeply personal testimony, Sarah takes readers through decades of heartbreak, betrayal, spiritual warfare, and seemingly impossible circumstances. Through unexpected encounters, extraordinary provision, hard lessons, and a growing understanding of what it means to truly surrender to Jesus, she begins to see her past through an entirely different lens.

What once looked like a lifetime of setbacks becomes a journey of preparation and reveals the power of obedience, the faithfulness of God, and the freedom found in Christ.

The wilderness was never the end of her story. It was all training.



About The Author

Sarah Grant is a disciple of Jesus Christ, Bible scholar, mother of five, and stepmother whose life is a testament to the redeeming power of God. Her journey from survival to freedom has deepened her passion for Scripture, spiritual growth, and helping others recognize that no one is beyond the reach of God's grace.

Sarah is a Home Health & Hospice Licensed Vocational Nurse, as well as a Certified Life Coach and Domestic Violence Advocate and Counselor. Through both her professional experience and personal testimony, she hopes to encourage others who are facing seemingly impossible circumstances to find hope, healing, and lasting freedom through Jesus Christ.

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