

TESTIMONY

While growing up I was abused. I never told anyone. Instead I built walls to protect myself. I deadened my feelings and never let anyone get close to me. I had a lot of friends but not close friends. I also started to drink alcohol at a young age. I thought it was normal. As I got older, I still would not let anyone get close and I continued to numb my feelings. I still had a lot of friends but not close ones. I used alcohol to numb myself and to cope with things, lifted weights to protect myself.

The fall of 2002 I could feel and see my life spiraling out of control. It was like I was watching it be flushed down a toilet. I started seeing a counselor. I knew I needed to forgive my abuser but I had no clue how. The counselor told me I didn't need to forgive. That didn't set right with me. January of 2003, I attended a service at The Chapel. I didn't go back again until March. I remember praying the salvation prayer that Rick leads at the end of the service. Later that afternoon I found myself begging God to come into my life and change me. God slowly started working in my life. I had someone tell me I needed to get my Spiritual life in order. I started attending church at The Chapel more

frequently. I saw that they were going to offer a self-defense class for women in June so I signed up for that. I thought maybe that would help me if I felt like I could protect myself. It didn't. I did meet someone from The Chapel at the class. They invited me to attend a Forgiveness class and the Search For Significance Bible Study with them. That changed my life because I had two women come along side and mentor me along with attending church and listening to worship music in my car and at home. During those studies I truly accepted Christ into my heart and believed. God slowly started transforming my life.

I was invited to attend the Discipleship Walk the winter of 2004. I had never felt God's love like that before. I have been blessed to work several Walks now. I can honestly say my best friends and accountability partners come from the Discipleship Walk community.

I also had someone disciple me after I attended the Walk. They taught me **how** to forgive. I was able to forgive my abuser. Then they taught me how to confess my sins. After that I was able to reconcile with my abuser. After we reconciled my abuser came to know Christ. He is now a godly man and we have a healthy relationship. My abuser has even

given me godly advice. I feel blessed and can honestly say that I'm thankful for the abuse because God took something so ugly and turned it into something that glorifies Him. What could be better than God using something that ugly to bring both my abuser and I into His family?

While I was being disciplined, it felt as if my life had been shattered into a thousand pieces. I had no idea of how to pick them up and put them back together. I remember thinking I don't want to be the one to put them back together, I wanted God to be the One to piece my life together. I found myself being in God's Word, excited to work on the CTO lessons and wanting to learn more. I also noticed that I would stop drinking three or four months at a time.

As God transformed my life through His Word, and CTO, He called me to give up alcohol. I'll never forget praying in August of 2007, and asking God if I could have an occasional drink, or if it was His will that I give up alcohol completely I would, but He would have to be the One to keep me sober because I knew there was no way I could do that on my own. God has been gracious enough to keep me sober for more than five years now. He has taught me to trust Him to keep me sober. He also humbled me. I had tried to drop hints to my discipler that I

struggle with alcohol, but she wouldn't say anything. I'm so thankful that she didn't fill in the blanks or guess, but I had to confess to her that I struggle with alcohol. That was one of the hardest confessions I made to my discipler.

I have been given a servant's heart, and have had the privilege of being able to share my faith at the Discipleship Walk, while volunteering.

The fall of 2009 my PE job got cut the eighth day of school so I had to teach Science and Social Studies. I was completely out of my comfort zone that year. I had to have surgery later that school year. Students & co-workers were able to see Christ through my actions. I taught Health the following year. I was able to share my life experiences with my classes. Again, God taught me to trust Him on a deeper level to help me through all of this.

April of 2012, I was called into the office at school. I had been sending out prayer requests from my home computer to a select group of friends who were willing to pray for my classes. I was told someone had turned me in and I was being suspended because of that. I was

told to go home. Instead I found myself at the home of my disciple. We talked for a while and then prayed. I asked if we had to give thanks for what I was going through. Of course the answer was yes. It was hard to think of things to be thankful for, but we were able to give thanks. It made a huge difference. I had a peace about the situation. I resigned my teaching position and was without a job for three to four months. As I look back, I knew I needed to make a career change but was scared to because of insurance and money. I am so blessed and thankful that God closed the door for me. I'm anxiously waiting for God to reveal His plan for my life. I know He has something big planned for me; I just have to wait and trust. He will reveal His plan in His time, not mine.

Looking back over my life, Jeremiah 29:11-14 stands out to me.

Jeremiah 29:11-14 New International Version (NIV)

11 For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and **NOT** to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

12 Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen

to you. 13 You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your

heart. 14 I will be found by you," declares the Lord, "and will bring you

back from captivity.[a] I will gather you from all the nations and places

where I have banished you,” declares the Lord, “and will bring you back to the place from which I carried you into exile.” The abuse and other things that I have been through or have happened, God never intended to harm me. He used it to prosper me. He brought me out of the darkness and into His light. My hope and future is in firmly in Christ and my future home in heaven. What could be better than that?

Without Called to Obedience and the different studies I doubt that I would have been able to go through the things I have and had a godly look at things. The Who’s In Charge study really helped.