Church of Strawberry Arizona

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Deliverance from Childhood Abuse

Sharlene Clark Testimony

I know many people have recollections of a childhood of considerably poor mistreatment and/or of dreadful and unthinkable abuse. These have affected them as adults; regrettably, those who should have been protectors were the abusers. The ones who should have never let anything bad happen to children were the ones guilty of destroying their innocence.

From parents, siblings and other relatives, those closest to us are the ones we have vivid unpleasant memories of. Some memories of our youth are very hard to revisit. I have two sisters, nine and seven years older than me and I have a younger brother. We seemed to have been in two separate families. The sisters grew-up together and were married and off when I was in the sixth and eighth grades so my brother, four years younger, and I grew-up together.

Then, as we grew into the teenage years, our memories of abuse became embarrassing and frightful. It is difficult for many to admit they had parents who were so cruel. Those who have experienced this just want to forget, and try somehow to regain their lives back to some level of “normal” with God’s help. People who never had these abusive types of people in their lives should praise God, and we who grew up differently are very happy for you! For those who still suffer greatly with terrible childhood memories and their results in life - there is **HOPE** in Jesus; He is willing and able to set you free.

This life ‘we now’ live as adults is shaped by the influence of those closest to us. They can dictate or guide our lives into making very poor choices - strongly due to the influence abuse had on the mind, emotions, and will. The HOPE I speak of comes from my own personal experience; I was one of those mistreated children.

I had a mother who was a mean-spirited woman. I later learned that I was not the only one she abused. As I reached my early teenage years I was able to observe how she dealt with and treated all people. It was indeed comparable to what I was accustomed in my own life. This, I reasoned, sort of helped me to some degree in knowing I wasn’t the problem since I was not the only one she was cruel to. Many families will blame alcohol and drugs for abusive parent. This was not so in my case although my parents drank some alcohol, but I never saw them drunk and in our house drugs were never used.

As a child I spent a very short time in church, but I really didn’t know about Jesus. My last childhood memory of being in church was in 1960. I was in a Baptist church and was 8 years old. I finally met the Lord and was born-again in 1991. For 31 years I suffered within a broken life that I could not escape, not knowing that Jesus gives new life to the emotions, will and mind just as freely as He gives salvation into eternal life in heaven.

The picture of abuse I’m about to paint is not to dishonor my parents, especially my mother. She died about 3 years ago and was not heaven bound the last time I had a conversation with her. This is my testimony of a broken child who was set free from damage which came from the hand of an abusive parent. I love both of my parents and have forgiven them both: my mother, Grace, for the abuse, and my father, Norman, for standing by and doing nothing to stop the abuse, which was both verbal and physical.

My mother came from family with a very abusive father. Family reports say he physically beat my grandmother. I wasn’t around him much. In 1957 we moved from Whittier, CA to Fairfield, CA, fairly near them. I was one of the younger grandchildren then, and he probably was in his sixties. All my uncles and aunts were married adults with children. My mother had 11 siblings and the stories were that he almost killed several of the boys he beat them often. My mother is the one child that is most like her father in that she had the same, cruel spirit. All the others seem beat down but did not take on that spirit of their father. Not only was this spirit upon me and my family line, but many generational curses were - until I broke them ALL from both sides of my family.

Three weeks after I was saved the Lord begin teaching me about deliverance and breaking curses. The Lords hand was guiding me so amazingly. My Christian friend and business partner took me to meet two sisters skilled in deliverance ministry. They handed me a piece of paper and told me I needed repeat what they read aloud. I did. They would wait a few minutes for each thing I was to renounce and they would instruct me to ask the Holy Spirit to bring to my memory anything I needed to confess or forgive. Right away, to my amazement the Lord said, “You need to forgive your father for not stopping your mother from abusing you.” Then I heard the Lord say “You have unforgiveness toward him and you wonder why he didn’t protect you from your mother.” So I told the sisters what I just heard the Holy Spirit say, and they helped me to confess and forgive. I didn’t know how I was to word this or really what to say correctly to get it right, but they led me through the process. This was the beginning of my freedom from my childhood torments. I need to mention that the evening I was born-again, immediately I heard the Lord give me a set of instructions. He told me what I needed to do, and it had to do with dealing with my parents and forgiveness and with many others things in the same area of forgiving and restoring. The really neat part was right after hearing all of these things the Lord was speaking to me; I was given a confirmation to what I was hearing. I had been saved for maybe fifteen minutes. My mother loved to play Christian albums on Saturday mornings, and her most favorite hymn was How Great Thy Art. Well, that is what they were playing at this Christian seminar and it sounded exactly like the man whose singing I had heard so many times playing in our home.

The way I was abused affected my learning and social skills, I was unable to concentrate on my school work. Most days I would be thinking of what would be waiting for me when I got home. I was an emotional wreck and full of fear & rejection, unable to function. Here are some of the things I was told by my mother over and over mixed in with vulgar name calling that I will leave out (brainwashing). I was evil, no one would ever love you, no one would want to marry you, you’re such a bad girl, I hate you, everyone hates you, why did I have you, you’re stupid, you’re not wanted, you’re ugly, you smell, you’re dumb, you can’t do anything right, your hair looks awful, your eyes are ugly, your too skinny. That was what I heard all the time from an early age. I thought I was probably adopted. I couldn’t understand why my mother didn’t love me so the adopted thing came into my head.

Many times awful things were being screamed out at me as I was being physically beaten. She used anything and everything that she could grab to hit me with: belts, (the buckle end) brooms, skillets, shoes, brushes, switches, and wooden spoons. If we were outside, then she used shovels, pieces of wood, and one of the worst thing was rebar right across the head. I don’t remember what happened, but I think I passed out. One time she threw a brush so hard that the bristles of the brush stuck in the inner thigh of my leg. I had to pull it out and the little holes were bleeding.

Then many times she would do many more things to put tremendous fear in me as a child. She would lock me in closets, sneak in my room at night on the floor to scare me, make noises or sneak her hand under the covers to make me think some monsters was going to get me, or tell me monsters are under the bed. I had a habit of making a running jump into bed every night in fear that something was going to get me under my bed. She would go to the outside of the window at night while I tried to go to sleep and make noises or run something across the window to scare me. I never know when it was going to happen so I was always in fear.

She would chase me around the house with all kinds of critters dead and alive, put them right in my face, rats, mice, fish, spiders, bugs, lizards & snakes. When you are a child, these things are especially scary!!

By the times I was in third grade these things my mother was doing really began to have a damaging effect on me in school and my learning abilities and relationships with schoolmates suffered. I was too scared to even talk to other kids or to be able to talk to my teachers. I didn’t know how to play with other children. I was withdrawn and isolated by my fears and rejection, shy, and couldn’t even speak.

The thing she used most against me to put more fear and to embarrass me were the fact I was a bed wetter until my teenage years. What a tool this was in her hands. She would hang my wet sheets outside where everyone could see them. I kept my bed wetting a secret from everyone and my mother used that to torment me constantly. If I had one of my friends come over she would say, “Let’s go to your room, Sharlene.” I knew she was indicating they would see my wet sheets and know I was a bed wetter. She had already washed them, but I didn’t know that. I never knew if she was threatening or she might leave the sheets this time to embarrass me: what torment.

Another really horrific thing she did that really had a tremendous effect on me was she would unexpectedly, without warning while we’re all watching TV would wrestle me down on the family room floor left my dress up over my head and take my panties off and pull my legs apart to expose my private parts. I tried to fight her off but she was too strong for me. My dad and sisters and brother just sat and watched. They were paralyzed by her control and violence.

When we’re out of school for the summer she would lock us outside all day in the heat. She wouldn’t let us come in for lunch. She open the screen door and hand us a sandwich, we drink from the hose. When we’d go on summer camping trips I wasn’t allowed to go into the tent until bed time or if we would stay in motels she would lock me outside while my parents and brother would be inside, reading, eating, watching TV. She would come to the window many times I guess to check on me and she would throw her head back and laugh while looking at me. More fear came into me. I would be sitting outside the motel room on the concrete for hours and anything could have happened to me. I was so scared sitting all by myself in a strange town. I knew I could be kidnapped. I think she would let me in at nightfall, I was so hungry and would scarf-up what they didn’t eat or she might toss a sandwich out to me, and my mother seemed to enjoy watching this too. Camping wasn’t so bad. I could find something to do, I liked being out in the wilderness.

In my teenage years, when I could help around the house and do household chores, the criticizing began in that area of my life. I couldn’t do anything right to satisfy my mother. I was being trained for ruin and despair in all areas of my life. I was utterly, hopelessly unworthy, had nothing to offer anyone, and had no useful skills. The most devastating conclusion was that I would never have anyone who would want me, or love me.

My saving grace was that she couldn’t stand to be around me, so on weekends she told my dad to take me with him to get me out of the house and out of her sight. My dad helped with my brother’s baseball little league and I helped my dad with his team and training. This went on every spring for years. Too, we had some property that always needed upkeep and I would go with him to help him or just to play. I liked going fishing. With my dad I had fun and was fear free. Mainly, I was free from my mother’s cruelty.

In school and learning issues, it was oblivious. I just would shut-down. I couldn’t speak or carry on any kind of conversation. I couldn’t join in with class type of participation, group stuff. Oh my, I would get so fearful!! I couldn’t listen or understand the teachers or what they were teaching: my mind would go blank. I was so paralyzed that even if the teacher would pull me off to the side to talk to me, I would just stare and keep my mouth shut. How I made it thought grade school is a mystery. I was so fearful that one time I had to go the bathroom and couldn’t raise my hand to get permission I wet my pants right in my seat. I remember the bell ringing for recess and I just sat there. The teacher noticed what happened and that is all I can remember. I must have blacked out. He must have taken me to the office and called my mother. I don’t remember. I was in the seventh or eighth grade when this happened, way too old for this type of stuff.

In high school it was much harder to maintain. I had a very hard time walking in the hallways during recess to get to my next class. I was so nervous someone would notice me or try to talk to me. I’d hang my head down hoping I wouldn’t be seen. I really don’t know how I got through high school. I did have some good close friends that I had somewhat of a normal relationship with starting in my junior year. I never dated, never went to dances or was involved in school things. I was too shy and broken. I did come out of my shell a little once I had some friends that I could feel safe around. They were nice to me and wanted to hang out with me, and that, too, was a mystery: they wanted to be my friends.

The belittling and physical abused continued until I married in 1974 and left my mother’s home for good. I was told so many times by her no one would want to marry you. When I married I thought I was very fortunate that someone would marry me or want me. He turned out to be very messed-up just like I was. That is what happens when we need to be fixed from all the mental and physical abuse from childhood. Most times you marry someone your “demons” are attracted too and the results are a huge disaster.

What I didn’t know was that that Lord’s hand was on my life then! I just didn’t know him yet. I began to receive some positive and needed compliments - which I didn’t know how to receive or react to. I was beginning to hear things I’d never heard before. You’re a good cook, you look pretty, you are pretty, you keep a very clean house, and you have very well behaved children. This was all new to me and hard for me to accept. The marriage didn’t last; there were way too many problems that we didn’t have the skills to deal with.

Finally, the Lord came into my life and used my new life as a Christian and my new husband to get my attention and to deal with all the things that happened in my past - the dark days of my childhood. We had both accepted the Lord and married. How wonderful this was going to be. About two years later my husband lost interest in walking the walk of a believer. I continued to grow and was fully into deliverance. I was changing and my husband didn’t like what was happening. He grew colder and colder. Then I began to see many of, but not all, of the same types of things my mother was doing to me as a child beginning to manifest through my husband; he was becoming very cruel. It was a loveless marriage and he would have nothing to do with me. There was no intimacy starting right from the very start of our marriage. He would never consummate our marriage. It ended after sixteen years.

Sort of jumped ahead of myself….getting excited, okay back to where I left off. I was right back to the feelings of not being loved, fearful and rejected. God had a plan and once I was saved, the Lord began taking me back to childhood memories of those tormented days, but this time I faced them as an adult and a Christian with the knowledge of deliverance. During those sixteen years the Lord began to deliver me of fear and rejection, witchcraft and many demonic spirits that were in my mind, will, emotions, and personality. The Lord told me we’re going to go back into ALL areas of my life and revisit them, but this time through **the Blood**. Everything MUST go through the Blood, the cleansing Blood of Jesus.

The Lord directed me to a church that had a solid understanding of deliverance. I began going to the deliverance workshops beginning in 1994 and attending them for seven years not missing one of the workshops they offered three times a year. In between the workshops a sister that is a seasoned deliverance worker and I would meet every week for around six years. We’d take turns and would cast demons out of each other. That is the process by which I was released from the nasty demons that haunted me for years. I thank and praise the Lord for his compassion and great mercy he granted to me. He showed me endless patience and long-suffering in setting me free from my past life of torment and darkness.

I learned much later about another aspect of my mother’s abusive behavior. My older sisters and at least two of my aunts and uncles were also very shaken and tormented by my mother’s behavior. It had an emotional impact that remained with them until they were able to share with me how they were affected by seeing my mother’s abuse towards me. They, too, needed to be healed and released from their torment and guilt. Around in the mid 90’s both my sisters separately told me how they could not stop her from beating me. They shared how they would try and pull her off as she beat me. They tried very hard to explain and as they were trying to get the words out, they could not continue. They cried in a very painful gut wrenching way as they expressed their sorrow at not being able to help me. I had to stop them both and reassure them I was okay and had nothing against our mother. I told them God had taken care of all the hurts and pains. He delivered me and now I’m a whole, healthy, and healed person.

One day my uncle and aunt came through Houston on a vacation and stopped by to visit. I hadn’t seen them for many years. While visiting they told story similar to my sisters. They really shocked me with the news of how they wanted to adopt me and get me away from my abusive mother they felt so sorry for me. I was stunned and very moved that they cared that much about me. Wow!

Then amazingly and unexpectedly, as I submitted to deliverance, I realized I was receiving this incredible peace and joy. I was being set free from the torment and curses that existed over my life since my childhood; they were being lifted off of my life for good. I continued in a routine of seeking out anything that would hinder me from being set free. I had a taste of freedom and it drove me to want more and more. I searched the Bible for more material that would help me to be completely free from bondage, and the Lord never let me down. He would show me amazing things in the scriptures, like examples of people kept bound in both the Old and New Testament. I then used the Bible as a manual or guide to see and be aware of what happened with many because of curses. I believed if I broke the curses then I could benefit. I would put my name in the places of those that were cursed because of their disobedience and rebellion towards God’s commands, and as I would do this my life was changing. I was finding favor with the Lord. I have many testimonies resulting from reversing the curses and then asking for the blessings. I was being restored from the broken and unstable life like many in the Bible stories, many in bondage from consequences of disobedience. Now I am enjoying an intimate relationship with my Lord and Savior that is both satisfying and nourishing to my spirit and I am growing in the fruit of the spirit. I have been given a wonderful, godly husband who adores me and has a never-ending love toward me - his beloved wife.

God has done an amazing work in my life. My desire is that this testimony will indicate the only way to the Father’s peace is through the Son Jesus Christ. You may ask, “What are you saying?” I’m saying Jesus is the Word and it is the Word that will change a soul. Nothing else will give anyone a lasting and eternal change in one’s life. ONLY through the Blood of Jesus and knowing Jesus through the Word, is anyone released from bondage. We must follow God’s principles, precepts, and commands by submitting to and obeying God’s revelation of HIS plans for man – and we have HIS WORD on that!

Something I want to add to this testimony. After re-reading, and correcting it, to get it just right, I noticed an interesting thing happening. I feel like this story was given through a third party. The history of a fearful abused little girl I once knew, she’s gone and all the issues in this account of my life appear to be so distant. To be honest, really as if they never happened. What a wonderful Savior. Jesus Christ of Nazareth. Amen!