

Just Be My Child

A Testimony of Adoption and Just being God's Child

Life can be a bowl of cherries! However, for a lot of us it is thought of as just the pits!

In 1981 that is the way, I felt about my life. God used two situations to force me to look where I was placing my confidence. The first was in my mother who had failed me in that she died. The second was in my husband of 28 years. He no longer wanted to be married to me. My confidence was shaken to the very core. Even an attempted suicide failed. Life for me was the "Pits".

With all the human props pulled out from under me I was forced to redirect my focus if I was to survive. For the first time in my entire life of 40 years, God had my full attention. I began to focus on God. I mean really focus. At this point in my life, I knew the only thing that I could really count on was God.

Everything I knew about God from the Bible was true. Jesus Christ loved me enough to allow his arms to be stretched out and nailed to a cross and there He took my place. All the sin of my life was placed on Him the day He was crucified. He was the only one who had not failed me!

In September 1981 during a revival, the evangelist preached a message, "Who are you?" He gave an illustration about an eagle who sat on a nest with four eggs. Two hatched and the eaglets decided to go down the mountain to see the world. They found a bunch of wild turkeys and lived with them for a while. As the eaglets grew, they discovered that they did not look like the turkeys nor did they really want to eat what they ate. So, they decided to go back to where their nest had been to see who they really were. As they approached the summit of the mountain a full-grown eagle took flight and began to soar into the wind. That was when the eaglets realized who they were. The point of the message was: "Are you trying to live like a Christian when you are not really a true believer." Over and over the evangelist would ask, "Who are you?" That phrase kept repeating itself in my mind over and over again.

The next day, September 18, 1981, I was driving down the road and rethinking that message and that illustration of the eagles. All of a sudden, I realized that I was in that same situation. I did not know who I really was. I was certainly a displaced person.

The tears began to flow and I talked to God outloud. "God, I do not know where I am going, my life is a mess, and I certainly do not know who I am!"

At that point, God spoke to my heart and said, "Just be my child." It sounded so simple. No pressure to be anything! It was a call to give up my feeble efforts of trying to be what I thought others wanted me to be.

All I had to offer God was brokenness and strife. In my eyes, my life was the "pits." Yet here was His call. Imagine the God of the universe extending such an invitation to me. "Just be my child."

In tear stained cheeks, driving down the highway, I said, "God I have nothing to offer but if you want me, I will be yours. Take control of my life. I cannot handle it myself."

At that very moment, I felt as if I had been bound in chains and immediately those chains fell off. I was free! Free from the bondage of sin. I felt so wonderful. Now I just knew everything would be fine. But everything was not okay. Many lessons had to be learned. God is the perfect parent and He began my training as His child. I call it "God's Boot Camp." It is hard! But it is worth every tear we shed, every lesson we learn, every hurdle we go over! God never wastes any of our sorrows.

After the divorce, I was very bitter. God had to cross that out of my life. Psalms 37 literally became my guide to live by. I clung to every promise in that chapter. I had to pattern my life after the commands and the results were up to Him.

Psalms: 37

1. "Fret not thyself," because of evildoers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity. For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb.
2. Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land and verily thou shalt be fed.
3. Delight thyself also in the Lord and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.
4. Commit thy way unto the Lord, trust also in him and he shall bring it to pass.
5. And he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday.
6. Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for him.
7. Cease from anger, and forsake wrath.... (KJV)

From September 1981 until this day I can tell you God has truly brought the verses of this chapter true in my life. Time does not permit for me to share at this time the stories of the University of Life in which God has trained me. We will save those for another time.

There is one story I would like to share with you. It is a story of a 17-year-old girl who went on a date; there was liquor involved and a baby conceived. When her mother found out about it, she prayerfully considered the alternatives available. Marriage was not an option. That would have been another mistake for the boy and girl were friends but not in love. A home for unwed mothers was too scary for the young girl who had hardly even been out of her hometown except to visit grandparents in other states. Abortion was certainly not an option. This was a life created by God and far too precious.

The decision was made to find suitable adoptive parents. Through their pastor, a couple was located and a direct adoption was arranged. The heartbroken mother put her only daughter on a train for the long ride from Ohio to Tyler, Texas to live with the couple until after the baby was born.

The lovely Christian couple was 34 and 39 at an age where any adoption agency would have turned them down. Direct adoption was an answer to prayer and a fulfillment to the longing in their heart for a child of their own.

After the birth of her child, the young girl went to live with the lady's sister until she was able to travel back to her home. She never saw the baby; she never even knew whether the baby was a boy or a girl.

The girl came home. Her family never spoke another word about what happened. The young girl was left to suffer silently within her own self the sin, the guilt, and the shame of it all until that day September 18, 1981, when God asked her to be his child. I was that young girl.

This happened in 1959 --Thirty-nine years ago! It was a hard decision to make but the best for all concerned at the time. Having lived with the couple, I was confident the baby would be loved, cared for and raised in a Christian home.

There was never any question in my mind. I always knew in my heart that if and when the time came that we should meet, God would let me know it. When my mother died in 1981 I found the torn corner of an envelope with the return address of the couple. I kept the address but did nothing about it until September of this past year. I searched through the Internet and found the name and address of the couple in Tyler, Texas to see if I could locate them. Both of their names came up on the screen but at a different street address. I did not do anything at that point. I had to be sure this was of God. Too many years had past.

The thoughts came back to my mind over and over again. Not nagging thoughts, just a gentle nudge that kept coming back. Finally, I felt that for some reason it was time to contact the couple. I talked it over with my husband and my children. They were all in agreement that I should.

On November 17, 1998, I wrote to Louise and Bill Hale, the couple who adopted my baby. I sent pictures of our family and what had happened to me during the past 39 years. Ending with the question that perhaps they could tell me why the feeling to contact them was so strong.

The weeks went past and no word. Every day I asked my husband, "Ralph, did I get any news from Texas?"

"No Merle, I'm sorry. Just be patient."

On December 18, 1998, we went to the Spartanburg Downtown Rescue Mission to help with the Christmas party. While we were away from home, I received a phone call from Mary, but

she did not leave her name or a phone number. When we got home, Ralph checked his e-mail and there was a message. Regarding Merle's e-mail to Louise and Bill Hale in Tyler, Texas.

Talk about emotions. Mine were running wild at that time. I wanted to hear but was afraid at the same time. When he opened up the letter that was the first time I knew what my baby was. It was signed your daughter, Mary.

She spoke of my "long awaited letter." She had tried for eighteen months to find out about her heritage and me. She also explained how Louise had laid the envelope aside thinking it was an advertisement. She has cataracts and does not see very well. That very day Louise woke up with a bad headache. Usually, she would have gone back to bed. Instead, that day she prayed and asked the Lord to help her do what she needed to do that day. That was the very day she opened a stack of old mail and found my letter.

That evening Mary tried to reach me by phone but I was out for the evening. She wanted to talk with me personally and did not leave her name or number. In the e-mail, she gave me some information about her family but not a phone number. The next morning I could not sleep and rose up early to see if I could locate her phone number through the Tyler phone directory. While I was on she came on too and sent an instant message to me and asked, "Mom, is that you?" We sent messages back and forth for a while, finally she said, "Get off, I want to call you. I want to hear your voice."

That afternoon Mary sent a family portrait via the Internet. Can you imagine the feeling I had when I first laid eyes on the child I had never held in my arms? I laughed, I cried, I walked the floor. All the emotions I had not allowed myself to feel came at once. She was so beautiful and she looked so much like my mother and my other children as well as myself.

This is truly a gift from God. Only one element out of place and we would not have been able to ever locate each other. My mother had died, my father moved and now the phone where he stays is not in his name. I had married twice and moved several times. It was virtually impossible for her to have located me. Bill died in 1989 and if Louise had remarried, I would not have been able to locate her. And if both had died, I would never have known if I was searching for a man or a woman.

Truly God has performed a miracle in our lives to bring us together at this time in our lives. What a wonderful Christmas this has been. Even though we were not together, just the fact of knowing that we found each other. It was all in God's timing and to his glory.

Life may seem like the "Pits" to you but it does not have to stay that way. God, too, is looking for his children. As you read this story he is extending an invitation. He calls to you. Come to me, just be my child! I love you and want you to be with me forever.

As you have read the story of how God made Himself so real to both Mary and I, we hope that you will be touched and hear His call. To be His child is a call to be adopted into God's family and is a life-long commitment. Do you feel Him calling to you, "Just be my child?" What will your answer be?

Write to me and let me pray for you. Let me know what your answer will be. Will you just be His child?

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