

Donna's Story

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My testimony

– Donna 2/17/09

I believe my testimony starts very early in my childhood. I had anything but a “normal life.” My mother was a very sick person. She was an alcoholic who abused me verbally, physically, sexually and there was some ritualistic abuse as well. I can remember her doing these things all my life. There were nightly rituals and every night ended the same way – my mom would get beside my bed and whisper that every thing that was wrong in her life was my fault. Her pet name for me – Dumb Dora. My dad was often out of town so she was free to do anything she wanted. On the outside we were the perfect family but we were the opposite. From a very early age I sang to escape. I learned to disappear into myself and singing helped. In school, I joined any music class I could, and excelled but my other grades were awful. I didn't care – I was in so much pain and confusion – I couldn't understand how my mom could do those things to me. I felt that I was the only girl in the world going through what I was. I mean this was my mom... The beatings came every other week or so when her booze money would run out but I knew every night the same thing was going to happen once my dad was asleep in his chair and she had enough to drink she would be up to my room like always. She never let me around family when I was young so I couldn't tell. I started telling incredible stories at school anything to get someone to realize something was wrong and when they would call to find out what was going on my mom would get the call and tell them how I was always making up these stories and they would laugh it off. In the process she knew if I ever told no one would believe me – As I got older and more grown up she had developed a drug addiction along with her alcoholism and she needed a way to fund her addiction, so she began to take me to the bars – the ones with all women and she began to sell me to fund her habit. I was never allowed to date boys much less show interest in them. At school I didn't know what to do...I was being exposed to this lifestyle in the dark but at school here were all these girls holding hands with and kissing guys. I never went to party's for fear that I might be expected to kiss a guy...I didn't know how. I know this sounds stupid but my experiences were never wanted, they just came to the car and did what they did...strangely the only comfort I knew how to find was in this activity...some of the women were gentle...almost seemed sorry when I would cry or plead that they stop...but it always ended the same. This went on for almost two years, till finally one night my mom got really crazy and her and my dad had it out and she left the next day – finally it was over...but I didn't know how to stop telling stories...I didn't know I was smart, I didn't know I had value. I didn't know God but I wanted to know the love I heard about in the Christian music I listed too... All the songs about hope & being loved no matter what I had done...but as I started to read the bible I got even more depressed, the things I had done...the bible said these were an abomination to the Lord...even though I had no choice I felt so unworthy. I knew he was at the door knocking but I didn't know how to answer. At Eighteen I started going to a small full gospel church and gave my heart to God and was baptized. On the outside I was living a normal life for the first time ever but it was an act. I was having panic attacks...I slept in front of my door in the floor so no one could come in but the memories were there haunting me so I entered therapy to the first time and over came my need to lie to be in control. I met my husband to be in 1987 and we were friends for several years. One night he gave me a bible...a friend told me, he may not know it yet but he is telling you what kind of wife he wants. We got married and I joined the church of Christ but I had no idea how to be a wife (not a Godly one) or a mom. I just tried to intimate what I had seen on TV and what my Nana had done. Before long I was in a severe depression , the panic attacks were worse and all I wanted to do was sleep and I didn't have the slightest idea of how to be intimate with a man – Michael had no idea of my abusive past with my mom mostly because I locked all of the sexual abuse away – I just couldn't deal with it but it was coming back. After years of trying we finally had Josh & then two years later Amber came along. By the time I got pregnant with Amber my mother had become ill with Cirrhosis of the Liver and was dying. At the end I retired from a job with the State for Texas to take care of her. I was with her to the end – her still telling me how stupid I was – How my husband would come to his senses and leave me for someone better... but the bible said we were supposed to take care of our parents...it didn't say to take care of them unless they treated you bad....just take

care of them....so I did. I was with her when she died. After that everyone went home and I went to pieces. She died in October of 2000 and in December I had my first nervous break down and began having flash back, I thought I was crazy but I tried to go on like nothing was wrong. But it was becoming obvious I wasn't OK, the panic attacks were awful and the anxiety worse...I did not want to be in a crowd, I began to think about dying...I even planned how I would kill myself...then I found a Christian therapist. At first I only told her about the anxiety but as I began to trust her I opened up about the panic attacks and I described one to her about the figure over me without a face, finally one time I whispered it was mom, still being afraid if I said it out loud I would be in trouble. Then the fear and anger began to flood out and I couldn't stop crying or shaking for hours, the great secret was out. A few months later I checked into a hospital because of the suicidal thoughts. It was like jail, I couldn't have my things at first I couldn't close my door even. Slowly I started to work through all of the poison that had filled my heart for so long. I began to accept that I hadn't done anything wrong that I had no choice in any of the things I did all those times my mom took me out....I was simply surviving. I was also able to ask my dad about it. He said he never knew and that he was sorry I had to go through that. Soon after I came home we lost our house and had to move in with my dad. Up to now we had gone to a Church of Christ and I had longed to go to a spirit filled church but Michael wouldn't hear of it. We had visited church with my dad and I had even sang with him a few times but Michael was not comfortable at all. The Wednesday after we moved in with dad Michael said lets go to church with your dad and a miracle happened. He loved it , the music, the people, the freedom to worship. We soon joined. My dad was on the praise team and I soon joined in. The joy that would well up in me when I would sing was amazing. God was healing me from the inside out already but the most awesome miracle of all was soon to come. A ladies retreat was planned and I wanted to go but couldn't afford it. Someone paid for me to go and they asked me to lead the praise and worship for the retreat. As I prayed for direction in choosing the music I just kept hearing "have peace, be still and know that I am God and I am greater than anything you have been through, My healing isn't always instant but it is ALWAYS COMPLETE" The retreat was amazing I began to feel a peace I never had before as I heard testimony after testimony I realized I wasn't alone in this battle...Women people everywhere from every walk of life were dealing with abuse from their childhood each feeling alone and unworthy because of the things they endured. The last day of the retreat we went into a time of prayer and all the pain I had locked away started to come up inside me...all the anger, the fear of rejection and the fear of disappointing, the fear of loneliness just poured out and as I was sobbing ... screaming to the Lord I saw the preachers wife going from person to person praying healing and peace....She went to every woman in that room but me...I continued crying out to God uncontrollably out loud, unashamed of my need of complete restoration until slowly the crying slowed and I felt a warmth unlike nothing I have ever felt, a peace and felling of complete love and worthiness filled me and I was truly happy. Later Gaye would tell me God told her He wanted to heal me Himself but he could only do that when I gave him everything – every pain, every sin, every assault she gave me I had to give to Him and He took it and replaced it with His love and peace. I was floating living without all the junk inside of me. I was truly free for the first time ever. The son My Redeemer Lives took on new meaning for me just the words "You took my burdens, I'll rise with you I'm dancing on this mountain top to see your Kingdom come" I have been on that mountain filled with His Glory. There has never been another day that I have suffered depression no matter how sick I have been or how bad things seem I always remember how He touched my soul and saved me. As I go through trials and loss I remember His promise – My healing isn't always instant but it is always complete. I have been so blessed beyond what I deserve, my healing from depression was only one of several including a healing from severe pain and healing from a severe allergy to beef that nearly killed me and lasted over 5 years. He gave me a husband who not only stayed with me but went through the pit of darkness with me. He gave me a true mothers heart and Godly women to show me not everyone was like her. God I hope I can be an example to others that you can go to the pit of hell and have God lift you out and fill you with love and peace.