

Lori Reil

I could summarize my life in one short phrase: Incomplete, and loaded with missteps, bad decisions, and aimless wandering. My strained relationship with my mother as I was growing up carried over to my failed two marriages and strained relationships with my two daughters. I have overindulged on everything from drugs, sex, drinking, and eating, and on just plain bad behavior. I've felt so alone many times, and I have doubted the purpose for my existence more times than I can count. I had very difficult relationships with both my husbands. I was an unloving mother to my girls, doing only what was necessary to take care of them, rather than really showing them that I love them. I bounced from church to church, never daring to get close enough to be drawn in for any length of time. I always thought what I wanted and needed was the most important thing – trouble was, I never really knew what I truly wanted and needed.

I have been working in therapy for the past two ½ years to deal with trauma that began in my very early childhood and went through my early adult years, which has been dredging up a lot of very painful memories. About the same time I started with the therapist, I met Kathy J. through a mutual friend. Kathy introduced me to HPC for the first time in December of 2011. I didn't feel a connection to the church, but did come back in December of 2012 to give it another try, and got hooked the second time around. Coming to church on Sundays, going to ABF and learning David's story, participating in small group, and having others praying for me gave me the strength to head out to Montana this past May to check in on my daughter. When she found out I was coming, she told me she didn't want me there, but God told me to go anyway, so I did. I prayed to God over and over, asking him for a small opening with her, and, as usual, he over-delivered – she is now living with me. I am excited that she and I can work on our relationship, and am so thankful for the chance to show her how much I love her. I am also working on my relationship with my own mother, and am realizing that she loves me and has always done the best she could for me. My older daughter has also moved home from CA to be close to me, her sister, and her grandmother. All this would not have happened without God working in my life.

I have realized that the choices that I have made in my life are in the past, and there is nothing I can do to change them. I am accountable to no one but myself and God – and only He will judge me. I am getting better with not worrying about what other people think of my past; I am no longer ashamed of it. I go to church just about every Sunday, and I really enjoy it; I feel welcomed, valued and loved; I know that I matter to Him and to others. I am back to volunteering in the community. I listen to (and sing to!) Christian music, and I just connect with it. I went to the Third Day concert – loved it! – and cried during a couple songs. I recognize and appreciate the small miracles that happen in my life every day. I look forward to the next ABF. I know now that I belong with God in this life, and in the next, and I am so thankful. I am no longer worried about meeting God face to face and having him be ashamed of me. There is nothing I have ever done, and nothing I can ever do, to be worthy of what He has done, and continues to do for me through Jesus Christ I just need to walk by his side,

eternally, and that is just what I am going to do. I have been dirty, but through Jesus I am cleansed. I have been lost, but through Jesus I have been found. I have been broken, but through Jesus I have been made whole. I have sinned, but through Jesus, I have been forgiven. It's funny...I recall telling my therapist on several occasions that I just wanted someone in my life who would catch me if I closed my eyes and fell backward – I am just now realizing that God has always been there, ready to catch me, I just needed to close my eyes, lean back, and trust Him.