

Hannah's Journey



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Introduction

My name is Hannah Cain and this book is my testimony of what God has done for me in my very short twenty four years of life. God is so much greater than anything any of us will ever endure in our entire lifetime. As I tell you about my testimony, I want to give you hope and encouragement that it doesn't matter where you come from, where you have been, or what you have done. Your past does not define you. Your story is not yet over. As you read my story, do not get caught up in the actual events that took place. Instead, focus on the mercy of God upon my life, His unconditional love and forgiveness, even when certain situations may seem unforgivable. Most importantly focus on the lessons that were taught. There were situations and lessons where I thought, "How could any good possibly come from this?" But I saw the Lord turn all of my bitterness and sorrow into understanding love. For me, it was all worth it. I want you to hang on to God's promise, even on your darkest days. He will always be the light at the end of the tunnel. Fight for the weak and those who cannot defend themselves.

Belief will be your key and strength as you journey through this thing we call life. I've encountered so many broken people on my path. A lot of times they feel so alone and don't have any hope to keep going. A lot of people are just truly struggling and continue to go around in circles in their own insanity. When I share my testimony with them on how God has brought me out of all of those situations, I see that little spark of hope in their eyes. They no longer feel like they are just too far gone. That has given me so much courage to write my story. To put my faults and the things that I'm not proud of, my truth, on paper for people I've never even met before to read and be encouraged that they're not alone. There is someone who loves you despite all of your faults. His name is Jesus. I was told, "Your life will preach" by Antonio Hurt and I intend to give the world the good news of Jesus Christ and what he has done for me. The Lord truly makes the bitter things sweet. He has been so good to me that it doesn't matter how well I try to put it into words, it just doesn't do Him justice. Everyone has a story and this is mine.

“And they overcame him by the blood of the lamb, and by the words of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.”

Revelation 12:11

Do you think you can have an open mind and believe that my story is simply the work of God? He can do for you, what he has so graciously done for me!

I grew up in a small town, Wetumpka, Alabama. It wasn't like the movies where small towns are made out to be this loving little perfect community, where everyone is treated like family. Although everyone did know everyone, it was filled with loads of gossip, jealousy, back stabbing, and undercover racists. If you hung out or dated people of a different color than you, it was definitely frowned upon. Many people, just like most places, were only trying to keep up with the Jones'. There were a lot of fake people. Many people were too afraid to stand up for what was right and wrong. If something bad happened people would rather turn a blind eye and just go talk about it Instead of actually doing something about it. That was when I grew up there. I can't tell you what it's like now, other than it has grown and added a few more places to eat and I believe they have a small shopping center now.

I definitely had a dysfunctional family. I was taught from a young age that what happened at home, stayed at home. Who would've known those few words I was told so often would hold so much weight and power in my heart. I didn't grow up in a religious home. We rarely spoke of the Lord, it tended to stir up chaos. Though I will always remember the three most important things my mother told me. She always told me to believe in God, never deny him, and not to continue asking for forgiveness if you're not willing to stop. She would tell me it was a slap in the face to Jesus. From a young girl I had always believed in Jesus. It just hadn't become a reality for me yet. I would sometimes ride to church with my neighbors. I even got baptized, just because everyone else was doing it. But I still had no clue who Jesus was, other than what people would tell me. This was that he had died on the cross for my sins.

It was just a ticket out of Hell for me, until New Year's Eve 2016, when He changed my life forever. He showed me a love I had never experienced before. His love and mercy are so beautiful to me that it wrecks me every time I think on the goodness of Jesus and what He has done for me. It's a love that can never be properly explained.

Even though we rarely spoke of God doesn't mean my home was filled with only horrible memories. I had a lot of happy memories as well. The bad will outweigh the good at times, so I figured we should start off with some of my

better memories. When my parents got married they both dabbled in drugs and alcohol. My mom worked at a bar in Prattville while my dad did construction and would work side jobs cutting down trees, etc. My dad is a hardworking man who bought 25 acres in Wetumpka and a trailer. He was wise with his money and paid their trailer off in the first year of having it. He continued to work hard and ended up buying the company he worked for. My dad made the decision to get clean. He stopped smoking cigarettes and only drank. He became the best father he knew how. He also got my mom off the hard stuff. When I was a little girl we would do things just like any other normal family would do. We would go to the lake, ride horses together and even made a trip or two to the beach. All of these things we would do as a family. My dad was a great dad. He taught me how to swim, ride a dirt bike, four wheelers, how to hunt and even skin a deer. He even coached my softball team when I was a little girl playing city league ball. He spent time teaching me how to play and running me to practice.

A memory that still makes me laugh to this day is when he got my little brother a calf. He tied a rope under its belly and we have a homemade video of him putting me on the cows back and it throwing me off. This memory isn't a favorite for me, but my dad still tells it, so I guess I should add this in. I had gotten some money for Christmas and they said I could buy what I wanted with the money so I got what I thought was a pot belly pig. I named him Wilbur and my dad and myself went and built him a pen by the barn. I loved this pig when I was a little girl as soon as I'd get off the school bus I'd run in the house and pop a bag of popcorn and go get in his pen with him and scratch his belly as he laid on his back while I fed him popcorn. Eventually he started rooting his way out of his pen and just thought he was a dog in the yard making holes everywhere. This pig got huge! One weekend they sent me to my maw maws for the weekend and when I got home my little brother came running up to the truck with my pig's tail in his hand making squealing noises. I began crying hysterically and was so upset at them for doing that. I swore I would never eat him. Times goes by and one day my mama cooked scrambled eggs and sausage for breakfast. I remember saying this is good. Then they told me it was my pet Wilbur. Devastation at its finest.

We even got to watch one of our horses have a baby. I have loads of memories of my mama screaming at these 2 goats we had they would always jump on top of her car and walk all over it I can see her now screaming at them

and trying to hit them with a broom. Or the time me and my little brother was playing on the swing set outside and mom shoots a raccoon dead out a tree that she swore was about to attack my brother. I grew up in the country I didn't have a lot of kids to play with growing up until I hit the 4th grade and a lovely family moved on our dirt road and they had kids. Before then I had one other little girl that lived there, but she moved. So I was definitely an odd little character. I spent my time playing in the mud with my little brother; catching crawdads with my cousins and putting them in my momma's fish tank; or sitting on my horses back braiding her hair and begging God to let animals speak to me. Or telling him he should have made me an Indian. So let's just say I am so grateful the Lord eventually put other families with kids on the dirt road.

My dad always said, "You never want to go in debt. If you don't have the money to buy something, don't buy it." Around the fourth grade, my parents decided to build a house. My mom was so proud of this house because she was able to design it. It was over 7,000 square feet. The house was massive. It took three years to build because he paid it off as he went. When he had the money for the framing and roofing, then he would do it. In the summer we would help build the house. We weren't allowed to just sit in front of the T.V. all day so we would help tote lumber or clean up bricks. We may have been kids but my parents taught us how to work and help when you see there is something you can do. He taught us how to run barbed wire around the property line; how to drive the metal polls in the ground. We had horses that needed to be fed, so that really taught us responsibility. He constantly reminded me that you have to work hard for anything you want in life, that nothing is ever free and to never do anything half ***. Those words have been instilled in my brain and have gotten me to where I am today.

My mom tried to teach me the more valuable things in and about life. She taught me how to take care of a family, how to clean and cook, and most importantly how to treat others. She would constantly remind me to be kind and generous. She would say, "you get more bee's with honey, it's better to give than receive, and do what I say... not what I do. Always treat others the way that I wanted to be treated." But the one thing she said to me daily as a little girl that I will never forget is, "Hanny I love you with all of my heart." I would always ask how much is that and she would reply with infinity. Of course I asked what is that

when she told me it never ends. I then would tell her I love you to infinity and beyond. When I was a child that was just my way of saying I love you more. I just wanted her to know that's how strong my love was. Even though it doesn't technically make sense, it was just what we would say to each other.

Before I say anything else I want you to understand that my parents were not horrible people. They were simply two parents doing exactly what was instilled in them and what they thought was best. My momma always used to say kids don't come with an instruction manual. I once believed that until I started reading the word of God. You will find the instructions there. I really enjoyed my childhood. When it was good it was good. When it was bad it was bad. It was all normal to me because I didn't know another way. Many nights it was a lot of screaming and things smashing around and we would wake up the next day and see things little kids should not be witnessing at that age. My dad was not an emotional person. Therefore, he had a hard time expressing his feelings and emotions the right way. On the other hand, my momma was a beautiful person who just so happened to have a broken soul. From a young age I idolized my momma. I wanted to be just like her and do everything as she did. She gave me the best of what she had but she tended to let the worries and the struggles of life drag her down. She was an addict, but everyone has their own way of dealing with what this crazy life throws at us. My momma would always make me aware of the things that were going on and happening in, not only our life, but, the world as well. Even though I was only a child when she started telling me these things, she believed I should know and learn what other people chose not to tell their children. She didn't want me growing up thinking the world and our life was all rainbows and butterflies. She wanted me to know the truth because she knew that one day I would have to face all of this alone.

When I was around six or seven years old I learned that my mom was struggling with mental health and depression. No, I didn't have a clue what that was at the time but that was one of the first times God spoke to me. I did not realize it at the time. Some of you are probably asking yourselves how I could possibly remember something like this considering I was so young... I remember because it was the first time I can remember of my mom trying to kill herself. I was standing in my bedroom when I felt something strange telling me to go check on my mom. It was something I still cannot explain to this day. All I know is it was

God. So I went to check on her and she was in her room. I remember being scared because her door was shut. The rule was if the bedroom door was shut then I wasn't supposed to enter, but I did anyways. I walked through the room into her bathroom. It was very dark. She was in the bathtub. She had candles lit all around it and was crying. She firmly told me to get out and that's when I knew something bad was about to happen. I wanted to stay so badly but I always obeyed my mom. Therefore, I was afraid what would happen if I didn't. Eventually I walked out back into her bedroom, while I was standing there I suddenly felt the Spirit of the Lord come over me and right there, in that sudden moment, I ran back into the bathroom. Without thinking or pausing for even a second I jumped into the bathtub with all of my clothes on and continuously reminded her how much I loved and needed her. I didn't leave her side or get out of the bathtub until she promised me everything was okay and that she was going to be fine. A little time passed when I finally worked up the nerve to ask if she was planning to harm herself that night... that's when she told me that I was the one who saved her life. Her plan was to cut her wrist with a razor blade. From that night forward I found my mother confiding in me more and more. I was the one she felt comfortable with. The one she wanted to share all of her problems and guilt with. The ear she needed and I wanted to be. My mother was her own worst enemy. She carried all of her guilt and shame, instead of believing that the Lord had already thrown all of her past mistakes into the sea of forgetfulness.

My teen years were absolute hell. In the beginning of those years my mom had become my best friend. We would party together and made loads of secrets that almost destroyed our family. We were slowly tearing it apart secret by secret. We have all heard my mom was an addict, but I didn't tell you all she was actually a functioning addict until my seventh grade school year. That's when things really took a turn for the worst. She began letting me smoke and drink with her on her famous front porch. To this day I still think of my momma as this wild crazy LeeLee. At least that's what everybody else called her. On that front porch she only wanted to forget about all of her worries and regrets while having the time of her life. If there was ever a person people spoke of as the "life of the party"... it would be her. In her own way, she was simply trying to numb the pain while masking it as she was having the time of her life.

Eventually all of my mom's bad habits started to take a toll on her. She didn't show up to my softball games anymore. Most nights dinner was never cooked. We would stay up drinking. She would end up chasing me around the house, trying to hit me. Saying she wished she would've never birthed me, and she wanted to kill me. Speaking in a demonic voice until my dad would finally come downstairs to make her stop. That's when I realized my mother was not who I wanted to be like anymore. I didn't idolize her like I did when I was kid. She had changed and become someone I no longer recognized. I was watching her slowly destroy herself and there wasn't anything I could do to stop it. She would cry out for help in all the wrong ways. I felt so bad for her but I didn't know how to help her except love her and just listen to her. I felt as if she was my child in a sense. It eventually got to the point where I had lost all respect for my mom. I couldn't understand why she just couldn't stop and get herself together. I just wanted out of that house. Despite all of her faults, my mother was just trying to fight her own demons. Through everything she did to me I knew that no matter what, she genuinely loved me and always would.

Experiencing all of this at a young age taught me to have compassion for people and to not judge because you never know what someone is going through. The majority of the time it's the things that have happened to us. We just don't know how to handle it. So when we try to deal with it in our own way, it's usually the wrong way. We are all trying to defeat giants in our lives. We just don't realize that we will never take down that giant without faith in Jesus Christ. "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." Ephesians 6:12

I started drinking and smoking pot with my mom at thirteen. If I had a pain in my leg or back, she would give me a Lortab. If I couldn't sleep, she would give me a Xanax. This was normal to me. I wasn't allowed to stay the night off much, so I wasn't able to witness what was actually normal at that age. I didn't realize then what my actions would cost me. At the age of fifteen, when you've been hurt by the people that are supposed to love and take care of you, it's hard to trust any more. I became a toxic person who lashed out and tried to destroy any relationships I had. I was so comfortable with my dysfunctional state that it had become easy and bearable to live with. That was just my life. I never expected

more. I just dealt with it the best way I knew how. My mother and I had a really toxic dysfunctional relationship.

I did meet one person at this age that completely blew me away. He was different but normal if that makes sense. His name was Stephen, and he was 18 years old. We met on the way to a bonfire to have a few drinks and watch a bunch of drunken teenagers sink their trucks in the mud. There really isn't much to do in a small town but that was our definition of fun. Stephen caught my attention because he had this really cute British accent and because he was such a gentleman. I had never met anyone like him before. He was different and I loved him. From the moment we met we just clicked. We went together like PB & J. He took me on dates, opened doors for me and genuinely wanted to get to know me. He knew my home life was not normal. He just didn't know the extent of the dysfunction.

We met five months before his visa expired. I wanted him to stay so much that I tried to convince him to marry another girl, just to stay there with me. Obviously that was not going to work. So he promised me he would come back and he made me promise to never change. I was a few months away from 16 when he had to leave. I was heartbroken. He would call on Sundays, but eventually he stopped calling as often. I continued to date a guy my parents' despised on and off again. Stephen got into a relationship and we rarely spoke anymore. He would message every now and then and ask if I wanted to see him again etc. He was a breath of fresh air. I honestly didn't believe he would really come back.

My brother raced dirt bikes. A lot of times he and my dad would be gone on the weekends, racing in all different places, sometimes different states. My brother and dad really started to bond and that became their thing. We would go to the big races with them. But for the majority of the smaller ones, my mother and I would take advantage of that and stay behind and throw wild parties. Our house became the party house that attracted the wrong crowd; where all of the unruly kids came to stay when their parents had had enough. We always had people in and out of our home. At times my older cousins would live with us, when things weren't working out at home. My brother's dirt bike trainer lived with us for a while. A friend of mine from school stayed there for a few months

until he graduated. I had a boyfriend who also lived in our home for a little while that caused a lot of tension between my family and me. It was like this boy had a strong hold over me, I allowed this boy to do and say whatever he wanted to me and I still stayed with him. It was a really toxic relationship. Neither one of us knew how to treat people or to be treated. After a while my family didn't want me seeing him. Of course I rebelled against them and brought a lot of problems on myself that I could have avoided. My momma had a big heart. She would never have turned someone away. Life at our house was always crazy. There was always something going on.

One weekend toward the end of October we threw my 16th birthday costume party when my dad and brother were gone to the races. We threw a massive party. Everyone was extremely waxed. I'll never forget my mother coming down stairs in this Marilyn Monroe outfit slinging my dad's desert eagle (gun) around saying, "Who is going on a beer run?" and took some guys hat to put money in. I didn't even know the majority of the people there. I enjoyed having party's because I had loads of friends. But in reality I didn't. I just had the house and mom who was down for whatever. It eventually got old to me and I became embarrassed of what would happen at parties. In a sense I just wanted to escape it but I struggled. I wouldn't be Hannah if I wasn't the party girl.

On New Year's Eve I made the decision to go with my friend Bryna to her relatives' house. We both decided on drinking, taking shots, and what we thought was having the time of our lives to bring in the New Year. It wasn't unusual for Bryna and I to spend time together drinking and doing what we thought was fun. As the night passed by, one thing had led to another where I eventually ended up passed out on the couch. The next thing I knew my mom and a family member came barging through the front door to take me home. Yes, I was allowed to drink, although I wasn't supposed to while away from home. They put me in the car to take me home.

I don't remember much of what happened that night but here's what I do remember. I remember asking my mom and cousin why they came to get me. I wasn't bothering anyone. Yes, I was drunk but I was already asleep on the couch when they arrived. The plan was to stay the night with Bryna and they knew that. My mom also knew I would be drinking but I believe she came and got me

because she was worried I would leave while being intoxicated. She didn't want anything to happen to me. Little did I know, something was going to happen once I got home. My brother and I began screaming at one another. I cannot remember what started the argument. I swung at him a few times but I was so drunk that I fell to the ground. Next thing I knew I was laying on the cold concrete outside of my house. My cousin then pinned my arms to the ground while letting my brother punch me in the face, over and over. At some point during all of this I blacked out. I don't know how I made it to my bed. All I remember is waking up to a busted lip and sore face. I asked what happened and they told me I was extremely drunk. Because I swung at my brother, who at the time had a cast on his arm from breaking it, I had to deal with the consequences. I wasn't supposed to go home that night.

After I woke up and heard the story of what happened, Bryna showed up to give me something I had left at her house. She had planned on spending the day with me but my parents said I wasn't allowed any company. I walked outside to get my things from Bryna and that's when she asked me what happened to my face. I told her the truth. That was the first time she learned about what had been happening at my home, the occasional physical abuse that took place throughout my teenage years.

After New Year's my parents decided they were going to try and do what they thought was best for me. I had become extremely rebellious and my only concern was what I wanted. If I wanted to do something or be with someone, then that's what I was going to do. I was dating someone who they did not approve of. They told me to end the relationship. That if I was going to sleep with a dog, then I was going to be treated like one. The conditions were that I had to sleep in our barn with no windows while it was freezing outside. I had to shower outside, I had no makeup or hair supplies, and I only had a few outfits I could wear each week. My mother would let me sneak in to take a shower. In less than a week I had gave in and did what they had asked me to do. Obviously I was still grounded though. That's when I made up my mind... I was going to be who I wanted to be and OWN it.

I played softball for my school and LOVED it. That was the most important thing to me while I was in Jr. high and high school, I gave it a 110 percent every

time I'd hit the field or the weight room. I started playing for the school on the junior varsity team when I was in the 7th grade. I was moved to varsity my 8th grade year. I hit my first grand slam in the 9th grade against Prattville, our rivals. I also won the golden arm award my 10th grade year. Softball was a game that I loved. I felt needed and important. That was my escape from my home life. And going to college on a softball scholarship was all I ever dreamed of from a little girl. I had an amazing coach who taught me a lot for my first four years of playing ball for my school. He took me and a couple of other girls to do showcases for Florida State and another for Tennessee. He ended up leaving the school and let another coach take over.

My mother and I made a horrendous secret that basically destroyed our family. Things got so bad that we couldn't be in the same room with each other because of this secret or all hell would break loose. I knew right from wrong and I had a choice to make. But I was torn between guilt and my own selfish desires. I was told if I kept my mouth shut about this and helped this secret happen, that my mom would purchase my dream car for me. It was already set into place because I needed something more reliable to drive. But if I just kept my mouth shut and did as she said, I knew I would get my dream car a lot sooner. My dream car was a black Dodge Challenger. She then began saving money behind my dad's back to buy me this car. Until one day she was tired of me using this secret to my advantage to get what I wanted, so she told me that my dad had found the money she was saving. She told me she was still going to talk my dad into getting me that. Put it this way... it never happened. But they did eventually buy me a nice car.

After a while I had got to a place where I had gotten tired of taking care of my mom. Many nights I would cover her up on the porch, where she was laying in her own vomit and I couldn't drag her inside. I felt as if the partying was no longer fun and games. I became embarrassed of the things that would happen, especially when I had company over. She had become my burden. At the age of sixteen I felt the weight of the world on my shoulders. At that age I was dealing with too many adult situations while I was trying to deal with my own. I had a boyfriend who lived in my home. Everything was so chaotic. I had no idea what my future would hold for me. I was lost, confused, and hurting. With everything that had happened and everything that was going on, I snapped. When I snapped, that's when I

decided I couldn't live like this anymore. Something would happen every night, if not, every other night. I was sick of the drama.

In the mist of all of this, I was spending time with a friend after school. My mother texted and asked me if there was any way I could find some weed before I came home. That day I had gotten a guy's number from school that I knew would be able to get some. I texted him and he told me where he was so I went to meet him. He ended up kissing me before I left. I go home and my mom and I went for a walk. I ended up telling her what had happened. She didn't see color so I knew she wouldn't have a problem with it. That night she got drunk and told my dad, who did see color. Needless to say, after she told him, I was in fetal position on my bedroom floor with my hand protecting my head as my dad was swinging a belt hitting me across my entire body. While this was happening I could hear my mom drunkenly shouting for him to stop. Once the beating was over he grounded me. My dad found a picture on Myspace of the guy who kissed me and set it as the picture everyone could see on our computer screen. He did that to embarrass me, because he knew any guest that came to our house would see the picture on the computer screen and ask who it was. He would then tell them that he was the "nigger" I kissed. At this point I had to be careful. I was terrified to tell anyone what had been going on.

I hated my life and I wanted to kill myself. I told my mother and she took me to a therapist. That therapist obviously believed I was making everything up just by looking at us and speaking with my mother separately. I assume she must have thought I was just a young troubled girl looking for some attention. I needed help so I reached out for it. The therapist decided it was best to put me in a behavioral center. I think it's best that I don't say which facility I went to. The therapist told my mother and me that it was a place for healing and health. There would be people I could talk to who would help me. She made it sound as if that was the best option for me. They sent me there that same day. They said I had to go as soon as possible.

When I arrived, I realized that this place that was supposed to help and heal me, was actually the same as a psychiatric ward. The nurses started me on several medications while telling me I was bipolar. I would tell them my stories of what all had happened to me and they thought I was simply out of mind. Crazy, as most

would say. I didn't know if they were allowed to hold me against my will if I didn't follow their rules. Three days in and I knew this wasn't a place where I needed to be. The other patients had actual mental health problems. They would talk to themselves and yell at things or people who weren't there. There was a girl who started screaming while talking about one of the nurses who worked there. She was screaming that he told her he loved her and that they were having sexual relations. It only took a few seconds before the guards rushed into the day room. When the unlocked door that was just locked flung open, myself and another girl jumped up and ran as fast as we could out of the room before the door shut and locked again. We then realized there was nowhere to go. We had run into a hallway full of locked doors. I began crying hysterically, begging for them to allow me to call my mom, but they refused. The girl who ran out with me ended up locked away in a padded room. She was crying so hard she vomited. The nurses literally threw a substance identical to cat litter on top of her head and body, on purpose, missing the vomit completely. She then demanded they give her a phone call or she would sue. As soon as she had calmed down they allowed her a phone call. Her parents ended up coming and picking her up that same day. I got out also. Not the same day as her, but shortly after. It was an act of God. If it weren't for Him putting us in the same place at the same time, and her getting out and finding a way to contact my mom, there is no certainty of what could've happened if I had stayed there any longer.

Things at home only continued to get worse. I felt controlled when I didn't want to be. I resented my parents more and more as each day would pass. Their parenting skills were shameful at times. I want to add that it is so important to be careful of what you instill in your children. What has been put in them will come out. That's why it is so important to train up a child in the way that they should go so when they get old they will not depart. My life was spiraling down, slowly.

I got a job at dominos after school and saved all of my pay checks because I knew I was going to need them when I was finally able to leave home. At sixteen, that's what I was thinking about. After a few months I lost my job due to being grounded. I ended up getting kicked off of the high school softball team because I snapped at an opponent. She was taunting me telling me to move , get up, leave and getting loud with me. I turned around and said, "No." I only fueled her to get louder. I turned around and told her to shut the f*** up and that she was just a

stupid nigger b****. My actions cost me my future softball career. For a long time I believed I didn't deserve to be kicked off of the team. Until I grew older and realized that I had to take responsibilities for my own actions. I was very wrong for saying what I said. If you are reading this, I want you to know I am deeply sorry for the harsh words that exited my mouth that day. God is not a respecter of persons. Please forgive me for being racist. I was truly ignorant.

Now I know and understand that it was all a part of God's plan for my life. God said, "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." Jeremiah 29:11. Submitting to God's will and plan for my life, instead of my own, was one of my biggest struggles in my walk with Christ.

At this point I felt like my life was over. My only escape from my home life, which was softball, had been taken away from me. I went wild, I did what I knew how to do. I became a product of my environment. I started hanging out with the "drug crowd". I lost my sense of the only good people I did have in my life, my softball family. I continued dating someone my parents did not approve of. They didn't allow us to hang out so I had to sneak around to see him.

One night a friend and I decided we wanted to hang out with my boyfriend and his friend all night. I told my mom I was staying at her house while she told her mom she was staying at my house. We ended up meeting the guys at a "drug house" in Montgomery, AL. When we arrived at the house they had Xanax bars and Four Lokos waiting on us. We took a Xanax bar and drank a Four Loko. Then we chilled in the back room for a little while.

All of a sudden my boyfriend and his friend said they needed to go handle some business and asked if I would drive them. It was only a couple of blocks away so I told them I would. If only I would have known what "business" they were talking about handling, I would have never said I would take them. I thought maybe it was just a good old fashioned fist fight or something to that nature. We got into the car, about to leave, and the two guys got into the back. I looked back and realized one of them was holding a sawed-off shotgun. I asked what he had it for and he said not to worry, that he wasn't going to use it. So we drove to the house they said they needed to go to. Once we pull up, the boys jumped out of the car and ran into these people's yard. One of them started shooting the gun

while the other was fighting. I decided to drive around the block instead of just sitting there, not knowing what was going to happen. Then I decided to make a circle back around to where I had left them. One of them was running down the street and quickly jumped into the car. The other was hiding in the bushes. When he saw me coming he ran to get back into the car. They both started yelling at me to go. That's when I realized I had just done a drive by... unknowingly.

We didn't know where to go so we decided to go back to the first house we had been at, acting like nothing had happened. As soon as we pulled up my phone started ringing. It was my mom. I assumed the girl that was with me had texted her mom at some point during all of this, saying she was in trouble or needed to go home. When I answered the phone my mom began telling me she knew where I was at and who I was with. She told me that I needed to bring their car back home right then. She said she was calling the police because I had people in their vehicle I knew weren't allowed and because I lied about where I was at.

As I was on the phone with my mom, a random girl I didn't know walked outside to where I was and told me I needed to be quiet. I told her I was on the phone with my mom. Next thing I know she was pushing me. I turned around and punched her, over and over until my friends pulled me off of her. I was scared the police were going to find me. After what had just happened, I knew they would recognize my car if the girl I had just fought decided to call the police. So we left. I dropped one of the guys off right down the road at another friend's house and headed home.

When I pulled up the police were in the front yard at my house. In my mind I didn't care if my parents could have me sent to jail or put in jail because I would have rather been in jail than at home with them. I told the police I was leaving. They said if I left then they could legally take me to jail because I was a minor. I was seventeen years old. I wasn't going to stay at home so I took off down the street to my neighbor's house. As I'm telling them what's going on, the police pulled up at their house. My neighbors and I all walked outside. That's when the policeman told me I was going with them. I went to give my friend a hug before I got into the car. That's when the police officer grabbed my friend, threw him onto the ground, and said he wasn't allowed to touch me. When they threw my friend to the ground I grabbed the officer's shoulder and told him to leave my friend

alone. The officer then hit me directly in the face with a flashlight. I punched that officer and two other officers grabbed me. I began fighting them as well. Before I knew it, one of the officers pointed a gun at me and shot it. It was a Taser gun. He tased me for so long I thought I was going to die. I couldn't breathe. As soon as he was done I took a deep breath, thankful I was still alive. That's when I felt another Taser hit me. I then wet my pants and fell onto the ground. They quickly cuffed me. While I was cuffed, a male officer punched me in the jaw and said, "This is what you get, you crazy b****!!" After that I was put in the back of the police car and taken to a juvenile detention center. I had to stay for the weekend. Somehow my mom was able to get me out so I could stay at home until my court date. When my court date came we all believed I was going to jail because it wasn't long before I would turn eighteen. We all thought I would be tried as an adult. I was charged with assaulting three police officers along with resisting arrest. On my court date the Lord had mercy on me. I was charged as a minor. Therefore it went on my juvenile record. My punishment was probation, anger management classes, and community service.

I had no idea then that the place where I did my community service would someday become family. At this point, I thought all of my hope was gone. I wanted to leave my parents' house. I wanted a job. But most importantly, I wanted to be anywhere rather than living with them. So I figured out what I thought I needed to do.

I worked up the courage to finally confide in someone again. I became desperate to leave home. Mentally it was taking a toll on me. The person I decided to confide in was my school counselor. She was a wonderful woman who believed everything I was telling her and she wanted to help me. She told me the only way she could help me get out of my house and situation was if I allowed her to contact DHR. So I did. I bravely told her she had my permission to call them.

I got home from school that day to find my parents fuming with anger because DHR had unexpectedly paid them a visit. DHR informed my mom that she needed to take a drug test. Her and my dad went and got a "stripper". A stripper is supposed to detox all of the drugs out of your system for only a couple of hours to help you pass a drug test. Her anger soon turned into desperation. She begged me to tell DHR it was a lie so this would all be over. She couldn't believe I actually

got DHR involved. She was crushed that I did that to them. I was her best friend and I betrayed her. That's when I realized I ruined the bond we shared. I became overwhelmed with emotions. I loved my parents and I knew they would go to prison if I pursued. My heart was torn. I wanted out of that house but I couldn't actually bring myself to send them to prison. I loved them too much. Things didn't seem so bad at home, other than my emotions being played with. When my appointment with DHR came, I made one of the hardest decisions I had ever made. I went to my appointment, sat down and looked at the woman and said, "It was all a lie. I made it all up just to get out of their house." The woman looked at me and asked, "Are you sure?" And I remember having to literally make the words, "Yeah it's all a lie" come out of my mouth. I had never had such a hard time telling a lie before this happened. But I'll never forget the feeling of shame I had walking out of the building. It was awful. It hurt my pride pretty good.

I felt as if my one chance at freedom was completely gone in a matter of minutes. I ended up going home to tell my parents it was all over, in hopes of my mother forgiving me for ratting her out. Of course it didn't take long before the tables turned. Every time friends or family would come over to hang out and chill, they would make me feel uncomfortable. They would be on the front porch or in a room and when I would walk in I could hear them saying, "Hush, here comes Hannah, she snitched". I would just go back to my room. It only made my depression worse. I felt isolated and alone. I stayed cooped up in my room all the time. At this point, I believed things couldn't get any worse. I didn't have anyone anymore. I didn't have anywhere to turn. I just wanted out.

I asked my parents to unenroll me from school because I wanted to drop out. I wanted to get a job and save some money so I could get my own place. I told the school counselor that I had lied to DHR because I couldn't send my family to prison. I felt the only thing to do was drop out of school, get my GED, and get a job. I was a junior in high school. My dad ended up going to unenroll me from school. My counselor asked him not to do that, but to put me in a course so I could graduate early. I went to a computer lab and sat all day long. I finished half of my junior year and my whole senior year in three months. But thanks to www.wiki.answers.com I didn't learn a thing. I simply copied and pasted all of the answers.

I was able to graduate and walk with the class of 2011, all thanks to that lovely school counselor. God uses people on your path. He always provides a way. After I graduated I was still seventeen. Therefore, I couldn't leave home without my parents' consent. Things had gotten worse since I went and talked to DHR. I was still rebellious and didn't want to listen to a word they said. I had gotten so bad the day after I graduated my parents sent me to stay with my grandparents for a few weeks. I had no clue I wouldn't return home, no matter how bad the circumstances got. God had already worked out all of the hard struggles I was about to face, even when all hope was lost. When I left for my grandparents I took some clothes and my vehicle. Within two weeks I got a job at Applebee's working as a hostess.

I had no idea of the hardships I was about to endure. I ended up leaving my grandparents after three weeks. I stayed with Bryna about two months before her boyfriend said he didn't want a roommate. I didn't have a place to live so I started spending the night at different friend's houses. I would get up and just go to work from there.

I met a really good friend of mine who was in the same situation as me. He knew a woman named Debbie who was renting some rooms out in her trailer. So I pawned two rings an ex-boyfriend got me before he went to jail again. I got 500 dollars for both of the rings and that was my down payment to move in her house. I began living there and paying rent until I turned 18. I was working in Montgomery at the time, so I ended up getting a trailer on Troy HWY with two of my best friends who I worked with at the time.

In the midst of all this, I prayed a prayer that God would send Stephen back to me. I didn't have any faith, just hope. I was praying to a God I didn't know. Little did I know that God would eventually answer that prayer, and that it would completely change the direction of my life.

The reason I was bouncing from house to house was because my dad did not believe in dating outside of my race, nor my lifestyle. My dad had disowned me. But my mother loved me, and she would always check on me and make sure I was doing okay. She came to see me on Christmas and my birthday while I was staying at someone's house. While I was experiencing all of the hurt from not having love and support from my family, the Lord had begun teaching me a lesson

about racism. I didn't think I was racist at the time because I would date outside of my race, but in my heart I was. When I didn't have family, God placed different people on my path to bless and care for me, to love me, and they were all black.

He not only did a work in me but in the people whose paths he placed me in. My best friend/roommate's mother hated white people. She even told me to my face when she met me. She definitely was not going to have a white woman in her home. But that same woman took me in when I didn't have any money to wash my clothes. She fed me, washed my clothes, and invited me to all the family cook outs. She wished somebody would say something to me and she would let them have it. Even when I had my first little girl, she got Marley a little gift and took a sharpie and wrote from Grandma Joe.

When I had nowhere to go, my manager, who hired me and allowed me to keep a job, even when I deserved to be fired, was also black. My best friends/roommates on Troy HWY were also black. I began to see racism from both sides. I began to HATE racism and anyone who was not for love. Yellow, black, or white; we are all precious in his sight, literally. You see my family is totally against mixing except for my mom. She just had to hide that.

All things work together for the good of those that love the Lord and are called according to his purpose. And even though I could not understand what was going on at the time, I'm now able to thank God for molding and shaping me into the person I am today. All along God had people on my path that would truly bless me, and it was people I never expected. But you see there is a lesson to learn from every experience.

I had always done drugs at home. It was normal and accepted, at least from my mom. Once I got out on my own, it only got worse. I needed to escape reality. My manager always threatened to fire me when I would show up to work high or smelling like alcohol, but he never did. He knew I was going through something and he chose to try and help me instead of making a bad situation worse. It got so bad that he had to move me from my hostess job to the back, washing dishes. I wasn't allowed to be around the customers.

This was the lowest I had been in my life. Rock bottom is what most people would call it. I found myself in some really bad situations. I was young and dumb and had the mentality of "oh that will never happen to me." Well I came across

some sick men and it happened to me. I was always so out of it that I felt like I didn't have any proof. No one would believe me, so it was just something I kept to myself after I tried telling a friend. It was her boyfriend, and of course she never believed me.

My addictions had gotten so bad that it went from drinking, huffing duster, smoking, and pills to crack and meth. I just wanted to be numb from all feelings. It was my only little bit of hope in my dark little world. I looked forward to escaping reality as soon as I would wake up every day. To be honest I could not deal with reality. It was easier to check out than deal with it. I began selling weed to make extra money. I already had the clientele. We just needed a supplier that we didn't have to wait on. It was quick money.

I was over at a friend's house one day. We were about to smoke, when someone I thought was a friend pulled up. He came inside and sat down like we were going to match. Next thing I know he pulled a gun and grabbed my bag. It had all of my money in it because I was going to re-up the next day. He ran downstairs and jumped in his car, where he had someone waiting to pull off. It was a set up. He ended up telling people the only reason he had done it was because he needed to teach this "white girl" a lesson not to be so cocky. After I was robbed, the first thing I did was call my mom, because I needed help paying all of my bills, plus money to eat. I was just a hostess at Applebee's before I became the dishwasher. So I had to sell weed in order to support my habits. I was a really prideful person and it was hard for me to ask for help. I asked for help and my dad told her to tell me that I needed to just do whatever it was I needed to do in order to make some money. So I did. I did horrendous things in order to make extra money. I defiled my body. I felt so dirty and ashamed. I was living in a trailer park on Troy HWY at 18 year's old; living as though I didn't care if I woke up the next day or not. Life became unbearable for me at this point. I hated my life. I didn't see a way out of this hell I had brought on myself. I was absolutely hopeless at this point. I truly believed the enemies lies and thought this is all I will ever amount to. NOTHING! I felt I was lower than trash and got to the point I just couldn't face reality anymore. I was an absolute mess! I couldn't go home. I had nowhere to turn.

I began texting my mother. I'm sure cussing and taking my frustration out on her about my life and not being able to come home. The text that was sent to me was my brains would be blown out if I ever stepped foot back on their property. In the mental state I was already in, that was the icing on the cake for me. I decided to take my own life. I felt there was no point in me living; that no one truly cared about me or loved me. So I took fourteen 100 milligram trazadone's. I sat down and waited.

The next thing I knew my roommate came home from work and I told her I had done something stupid. She said, "What?" I told her I took too many pills. She started to get really worried and said, "Are you ok?" I kept reassuring her I was fine. I started feeling really sick so I called my mother and told her. She just said, "If you have done that, you need to call 911." So I hung up and called 911 at that point. All I could tell them was my address. I began to lose all movement in my body. I wanted to walk inside after I hung up the phone. As I slowly made it through the house, I began to have my last bowel movements. I couldn't control anything on myself at that point. I was going in and out. I remember my best friend trying to wash me in the shower and keep me awake till the ambulance showed up. They kept trying to keep me awake, asking loads of questions like, "What happened"? I kept sticking to the same story and saying I accidentally took too many sleeping pills. I have a high tolerance. I knew they didn't believe me, but at this point... I remember being put on a stretcher and in the ambulance.

All I could do was pray to God and ask him to please save me. That I didn't want to take my own life, and that I understood I would go to hell. I could no longer speak but I could hear everything the paramedic was saying. She kept trying to keep me awake and telling me to hang on. Keep your eyes open. If you can't stay conscious I'm going to have to stab you in the heart with, I believe she said, adrenaline. I continued to fight. I gave everything I had left in me to try and keep opening my eyes. I remember crying on the inside. My soul was literally crying out to God asking for forgiveness. Telling him I just need help. I cannot go to hell. Please don't send me to hell. I opened my eyes and loads of people were surrounding me in a white room. I'm assuming the hospital. I could no longer hear what was being said. It was like I had finally lost everything. My brain could no longer even think to even form a prayer. I remember literally feeling everything

slip away. I knew I was dying. It was like falling asleep without being able to control or stop it.

I have no remembrance of what happened after that. All I know is I woke up and the doctors continually asked me if I had taken those pills on purpose. I immediately lied. I started saying no, I would never do that. I would never send myself to hell. I stuck with the same story. They had multiple doctors ask me the same thing. I just kept to the same story to everyone who asked.

My mother and two roommates were at the hospital. When I was allowed visitors, they came in. They said they had been asked if I had tried to kill myself and if I was suicidal. They all told them no, she would never do that. The doctors didn't believe me, but my mother did a good job persuading them. She knew they wouldn't be sending me home when they discharged me if I had. They had a lady sit in my room day and night to make sure I didn't try to kill myself.

After they discharged me, my mother apologized. I was allowed to go stay at her house for a little while until I started to feel like myself again. She loved me and didn't want to lose me. After a few days she drove me back to Montgomery and I continued my normal life. My relationship with my mother had gotten better. She had really missed me. God truly had his hand on my life. He answered my prayers. He didn't allow me to die. He had a plan for me all along. He is so faithful to his word. He said he would never leave me nor forsake me. And he did just that.

This is when the Lord began to change my circumstances by sending my Stephen back to the USA. The Lord answered my prayer in his appointed time. We went our separate ways for about two and a half years before he came back to the USA. About four months after I overdosed, Stephen, out of know where, turned back up. I was a little over a month away from being nineteen years old when he came back. The day after he got off the plane, we were already back together. Honestly, I was terrified to see him again because I had changed. I was not that sweet loving young girl he once knew. I was at my lowest point in life. I had just tried to kill myself and I was a functioning addict. I was not the same girl he remembered. Stephen did not do drugs. He was an angel compared to the men I would have normally dated. But when he saw me this time he had so much compassion and he said, "I know who you really are". He made it his priority to

help me. I know Jesus is the only one who can save my soul. I also know God answered my prayers. He ordained Stephen before he was formed in his mother's womb to save me at his appointed time. God sent me someone who I could confide in and tell my darkest secrets to. Things that I thought I would never be able to tell a soul. And you know that all we really need is someone who loves us regardless of our faults. I'm so grateful I don't have to hide anything from him and that he knows everything about me.

That man married me three months after my nineteenth birthday. We threw a wedding last minute. It was put together in two weeks, so we would be married before his visa expired. He was really nervous. I don't think he really understood what he was getting himself into. I put Stephen through a lot. I was such a mean person who hated people. I didn't allow anyone to love me because I was so used to everyone that I ever loved, or even gave a piece of my heart to, walking out on me. He would say I was like an onion to him. He was always having to peel my layers back just so I would let him in. In reality, I was afraid to love and be loved. Stephen showed me what it was like to be loved again. He was a gentle man. He wouldn't really cuss in front of me. He was so sweet to me, bringing me home little gifts and flowers. I had never experienced someone who really cared about me before, so it began melting my heart.

I would lie to him about where I was at. In reality I would be somewhere getting high before I would come home. I started to cause a lot of problems. After he found my crack pipe, he put his foot down and said, "If I find out you are doing this or meth I will leave. I'm not into that." I knew I loved him too much to actually let someone like him slip out of my life. So I went to the Doctor and was prescribed 40 mg of Adderall to take every day, as well as two 10 mg Lortabs and a one mg Xanax. That really helped me save money, because I wasn't buying them from random people all the time. I felt like I was getting my life together in a weird way. So I decided to start weaning myself off and just substitute my highs on different days. Sometimes I would just speed ball or some days I would only take one Adderall a day. So I started saving up the extras and selling them to make extra money. People loved it. My mom got prescribed four 10 mg Lortabs a day. She started giving me some of hers to sell. She just wanted me to give her a little kick back for her own spending money, so my dad wouldn't be able to see everything she spent. For about a year that's what I did.

I was stupid with the extra money. I was buying two ounces of weed a week. I convinced Stephen to start smoking by telling him he needed to chill out and stop being so uptight. And then I used the whole “if you love me you will” thing. That was the worst mistake I made concerning our marriage. That’s when Stephen started to change from this guy who I thought was perfect, into a really selfish person. It was all my fault. I wouldn’t let up until he just gave in. I would have an ounce of loud and an ounce of midgrade every week. That way we could sell a small amount to make a small profit. We just smoked the rest. We literally became hermits. We isolated ourselves from doing so much because all we ever wanted to do was go home, get high, eat and go to sleep.

Eventually we tried to stop smoking. We wanted to save money and just have a life again, other than just going to our certain friend’s house to smoke and chill with them and then right back home. We would only hang out with people who smoked so it’s just basically what our lives revolved around. Anytime people would invite us somewhere, we would just make an excuse not to go, run straight home, get in the bed, and smoke.

When Stephen and I first married, there were two things he specifically asked me not to do. That was to never ask him to go to church and never ask him to smoke weed. Well I got him to do both. We would go to church every now and again but neither one of us submitted our lives to Christ. We would even go to church high sometimes. We decided to get baptized without really any knowledge of what it stood for spiritually.

I remember asking the Lord for a baby and promising him I would get clean. At the time I was working two jobs. I was a cashier at Ryan’s in the mornings and a server at Outback every night for the first year we were married. After our first year of marriage I had heard a few sermons and it was really weighing heavy on me to get myself together. At this point I really wanted our own little family to love. Things with my mom were still really rocky. But at the same time I was terrified because I didn’t want to bring another life into this world and have them be just as screwed up as I was. Because to be honest, I didn’t know how to have a healthy relationship with anyone, but I knew that’s what I wanted.

I was a functioning addict, but eventually, working those two jobs, being on all of those pills, and not taking care of myself began to take a toll on me. I

constantly had to go to the doctor or Emergency Room because I was always sick. I didn't realize at the time it was all of the drugs in my system, and my body was not able to function properly from speed balling every day. I still dabbled with crack behind Stephens back, until I smoked a really bad rock one night after I got home from work and I got so sick. I felt awful even when I woke the next day. I had Stephen take me to the doctor because I felt so bad. I didn't tell him what I had done because I was afraid he would leave. That was the last time I messed with crack. I decided I wanted to do something with my life other than working restaurant jobs, so I decided to go to cosmetology school. After a couple of weeks, Stephen told me I could quit both of my jobs and he would just pay the bills until I graduated.

The Lord had another lovely black woman on my path that was going to bless me. She was my instructor in cosmetology school. She would talk about the Lord and was just genuinely a great person. She was so funny. She would have us teach her all these dances like love slide, bunny hop, etc. We would do these every morning, along with other dances, as a fun exercise. I really enjoyed cosmetology school. She taught me how to do color, cuts, perms, relaxers, quick weaves, and sew-ins. She would tell me hair is hair. Learn how to do all hair types because money is money, and she was so right. She pushed me and taught me how to use marcel irons as well.

At this point in my life was probably the first time I ever really tried to read the bible. Honestly, I didn't understand a thing I was reading. So eventually I just gave up. God answered another prayer about three months into cosmetology school. I got pregnant. I remembered my promise to the Lord about getting clean. I didn't find out I was pregnant until I was eight weeks along. It took me about two weeks to completely stop the pills; a few more weeks before I stopped smoking cigarettes. I honestly could not stop smoking weed on my own. I was so ashamed because I would have never said weed is addicting. The truth be told, I told myself, "It's just a bit of weed. it won't hurt the baby."

Now Stephen did not want kids because he did not have a stable father figure growing up. He was afraid of being an awful parent. He tried his hardest to persuade me to have an abortion, but I didn't believe in abortion and I wanted a family. I told Stephen I needed help to stop smoking pot. At around five months

he promised to quit with me and he was going to help me. I couldn't even go to the doctor to find out the sex of the baby. I was afraid that when they did blood work again they would find weed in my system, so I had to wait until I was clean. Stephen understood how hard this was for me because I hadn't been clean since I was 13 years old. Honestly, I didn't know what it was like to be completely sober. I didn't know who I was without all of the drugs. It's been really hard just to get to know me and who I am without all of the drugs. I did not realize just how selfish I was. I had all these emotions of hormones flooding me with tears and love and anger. I was still a really hard hearted person. I was a mess. Needless to say my relationship with Stephen hit one of the lowest points in our marriage because Stephen was now addicted. He would lie to me about where he was, always saying he was working, but really just at a friend's house smoking. The tables had finally turned and now I had to get a taste of what I had put him through. I would come home from school and just go to sleep and wait for him to come home.

We were so broke from just having one income. I didn't have a phone so I didn't have a way to contact him. I felt so alone during my pregnancy. My mom wasn't talking to me because I told her she couldn't watch my baby unless she was sober. She would say, "I can't love what I don't know". She would get really frustrated with Stephen for not getting me a phone, knowing he was still smoking. I understand she wanted him to take care of me better since I was pregnant, but I was so bitter from our past. God forbid if she said anything about Stephen. I would go ballistic on her. Stephen and I were both so ignorant and neither one of us thought we were going to be able to do this. We have brought the best out in each other and we have also brought the worst out in each other. No one warns you how hard marriage is, especially with drugs involved. How selfless and forgiving you have to be. Marriage is work. It is also so worth it. When people are unlovable, deep down all they really want is love.

While I was still in cosmetology school the Lord began to give me dreams. At the time I had no idea that eventually these dreams would come to pass. I believed in God. I just had very little faith. So therefore, I never expected the Lord to want to have anything to do with me, or even like me, because I was so vile. I honestly didn't believe He loved me. He began to really bless me even though I still had no idea who God really was.

While I was pregnant, my instructor blessed me so much my last semester in school. Every morning when I would arrive to class, there was a gift on my desk. She would have a box of wipes, a box of diapers. Every day I had no idea who was blessing me with everything I needed and it was her. She even threw me a baby shower and supplied me with everything I needed, from my car seat to my stroller to my highchair and clothes for my baby. God blessed me beyond measure. Not only did he prick this woman's heart to go above and beyond for someone she did not know. I'm assuming she saw this crazy young white girl who looked like she was having a mental breakdown and extended all of her love to me. I went into labor a week away from my graduation date. She went to the school board on my behalf and worked it out to where I was able to graduate instead of having to go back and retake my last semester after Marley was born.

God always provides a way. It doesn't matter how difficult your situation may look. God is still in control. When the Lord blessed us to be stewards over Miss Marley something changed in Stephen and myself. When we would look at our baby and how little she was, we just thought 'this can't be real'. We are legit parents now. She is just so perfect. We became super protective and we didn't let anyone watch her or change her diapers. We felt like this is our baby and it is our responsibility to protect her with all of our being. Marley had to stay in the NICU for two weeks after she was born. I remember thinking "these nurses are not going to let us take her home because we had to get them to show us how to change her diaper, and feed and dress her". She was so little we didn't want to hurt her. I remember the first time Marley made a little drool mark on the yellow gown we had to wear. Stephen asked a nurse for a sharpie and drew a circle around it and put the time and date on it. We also dated and timed her first bottle she finished. We have all these put up with pictures of EVERYTHING, including a picture of the first projectile poop that sprayed me. Who would have thought that two people who didn't have a clue on how to be great parents would have ended up falling madly in love with this precious little perfect gift from God and devoting ourselves to being great parents to our girls.

People do not realize how much of their actions and words affect children. It's important to give them a healthy childhood, teach them the way of the Lord, and instill your best in them. They are the future. What you instill in them will come out. Do not fail them. It is so hard for adults who have been emotionally

abused to unlearn everything they have been taught. We loved our little Marley so much but we eventually failed her. After she was about a month old I went back to the doctor and got back on all of my medications. I started back smoking after I had already promised the Lord if he gave me a baby I would get clean. Stephen never stopped. We failed to realize she needed help. We thought she was deaf for the longest because she wouldn't ever look at us when we would make a loud noise or speak to her. So I took her to the doctor. They told me she can hear. She had had a hearing test so we just left it alone and trusted that everything would be fine.

We went back to our normal way of life, except we had a baby. This time smoking was a huge secret because we didn't want to lose our baby. Stephen and I were both still toxic. Neither one of us had been shown how to have a healthy relationship. All we knew was that we wanted more for our child. We started attending a church again and the Lord just began to deal with our hearts. Now we sat on the very last row. We rarely ever spoke to the greeter and would run out of the door as soon as church was over.

I began to have dreams again and I was convinced someone was going to die. I dreamed the funeral and burial and some other things. I went around telling the family someone is going to die. I know it. I remember talking with my mom about it and trying to figure out who it could be. Every time I dreamed this certain dream I would wake up crying. Literal tears. My pillow would be wet and it really hurt my heart so bad. I would be sad and continue crying after I had been awake for a while. It literally felt like it was ripping my heart out.

Months had past and my relationship with my mother was still rocky. No matter how many arguments we would have we always forgave and picked right back up where we left off like we never missed a beat. The bond we shared was special. Many won't understand it and that's ok. It was ours and it worked for us. It might have been twisted but there was unconditional love. My mother passed away September 16, 2015. God truly blessed me with an awesome day with my mother, that day before she passed away that night. There weren't many days that we would get along all day without any hick ups. We spent the entire day together. We went to Marley's doctor's appointment that morning and then had lunch at Taco Bell. She had her favorite two bean burritos with extra sour cream

and extra onion and insisted I try the freeze drink she kept going on about. We stopped by a thrift store. I don't believe I had ever been to a thrift store with my mother. She hated them. But she bought Marley a dress and some Barney DVDs.

We went home and finished putting Marley's crib together. She was 9 months old and my mom said it was time for her to start sleeping in her own bed. If you knew my mother you would be able to understand just how funny that was. A lady down the street blessed me with this crib so I didn't have all of the screws and maybe it was warped, because it just wouldn't connect together properly. My mom had this really short temper and she called this crib every name in the book. After probably 30 minutes she was like she wanted to throw this piece of crap out but she worded it a bit different. She was screaming at it and eventually she was like, "I'll just go buy you one."

It was getting dark and she was going to head home. I remember talking with her and giving her a huge hug. One thing about my momma's hugs was that you could feel everything she wanted to say through her hugs. Her hugs are my favorite memory of her. Every time we would get ready to say bye we would just go on talking, not wanting to leave each other's presence. That wasn't out of the norm for us. Every time we would get together our departing always took about forty minutes before we actually said our goodbyes. It was just our thing. I love my mamma and miss her more than I could ever put into words. We made plans to get together the following morning and she finally left. I remember lying in bed telling Stephen how much I really enjoyed our day. She texted me that night, sending me some pictures that she took of me and Marley at the doctor's office that morning. She tried to call me but I didn't answer because I assumed she was probably drunk. I knew I would be on the phone all night. I didn't want to make Stephen upset by being on the phone all night. If I would have known that would have been the last time I could have possibly spoken with my momma, I would never have ignored her phone call. I just figured I'll call her first thing in the morning.

The following morning I was up early. I had popped my Adderall and was going. I was standing in the kitchen getting ready to see Stephen out the door for work when my phone started ringing. It was my mom, so I picked up the phone

happy to hear from her. I was glad she was already up and moving so we could start our day early.

I remember answering the phone and saying hey. It was muffled on the other end. I immediately thought, "Ah. She is still drunk, just calling to tell me we weren't going to be able to get together." I said, "Mom can you hear me?" That's when my dad spoke clearly and said, "It's your mom." I was like, "Hey. What's wrong?" That's when he said, "She is dead." Immediately Stephen and I grabbed Marley, jumped into the car, and headed to my mom and dad's house. On our way there I kept thinking, "No. This can't be real. This woman is going to be the one who outlives us all."

I remember pulling up and jumping out of the car because I saw a figure just lying on the ground some distance away. I remember running down the driveway to the pool thinking this can't be real. No one is out here with her. When I made it to the pool I saw my mom all swollen. She was water logged like the way a dead frog looks in the pool. So full of water, she was a deep purple color. She had dirt and twigs of grass stuck to her lips. Her hair was soaked with water making her blond hair look extremely dark. There were also leaves all matted in her hair. She was so cold. Her hands were freezing. I didn't feel her as I held her hand. There was no gripping back. As I lay across her body, I cried out to God to have mercy on her Lord. Please forgive her. My emotions were going crazy. I was overcome with anger and sorrow. All she ever wanted was to be loved and not judged for her faults. She had her fair share of problems but she loved hard. I could not understand why no one was outside with her. Her dog was the only thing outside with her. He was cuddled up to her side. Someone had just thrown a blanket over her and left her like that.

After being with her for a while, I didn't understand why she was just laying out there so long. Where was everyone? So I went inside to see my dad handing some cops an empty bottle of vodka and all of her prescription pill bottles, and showing them the surveillance camera. I'm not sure where my brother was. I'm assuming in his room. I was told my dad found her floating in the pool that morning. He and my brother had to drag her out.

I went back down to the pool where she was. I didn't want to let go of her even though I couldn't feel her anymore. Not physically, but spiritually if that

makes sense. It felt like this cannot be real as I laid over her cold bloated body praying I felt hopeless I just wanted to give everything I had in me to wake her up, but she was gone. I felt that. As they put her up on the gurney and wheeled her to the back of that car to put her in and take her to the morgue, I still couldn't believe this was actually happening. I watched her slip from my grasp, then out of my sight, but my heart could not let go.

Soon people started showing up left and right at my mom's house, bringing food and wanting to talk. To be honest, I'm more of a person who likes to suffer alone. I felt so overwhelmed by all of the people, I just couldn't take it. I went to my old bedroom and something just came forth from me. I fell to my knees and literally just started crying out to God. I didn't know how to pray or even talk to God properly. I just began talking and crying out unto him as if I've known him my entire life. I started singing *God of Mercy Sweet Love of Mine I Have Surrendered to Your Design*. Playing that song over and over again, until I had this tingling sensation over my entire body. I didn't get up from singing that song until I had this feeling.

I then went out of the room and was greeted by a family member who looked at me and said, "I'm so sorry Hannah. Was she just ready to go? Did she take her own life?" And I honestly could not believe someone had asked me that. I know I had the Spirit of God on me because I was not a saved person. I would have cussed you up and down and mopped my momma's kitchen floor with anyone who would have said something like that to me. But instead I just said no and walked off. I'm sure I probably went and smoked a cigarette somewhere away from all of the people.

For three days I did not drink or smoke any weed. I knew that I would lose that tingly feeling of peace that I would continue to get every time I would get ready to cry. I would go hide somewhere and cry out again; singing that song *God of Mercy Sweet Love of Mine I Have Surrendered to Your Design*. And it gave me the strength I needed. I was able to do my momma's hair and makeup. Also to put up with a family member telling me I'm the reason my mother was dead, because I talked about God and pushed her too hard. I had couches flipped over at me and was called all kinds of names.

I did not feel comfortable at my parents' house after my mom passed, because I would not drink my pain away or smoke. When asked why, I stated that demons are real and that a demon needs a vessel to inhabit. When you're under the influence you open yourself up to what the natural eye cannot see. I started telling them they needed to call a pastor to come pray over that house because it's evil. I couldn't even stand to be in the house after she passed.

Needless to say, after three days she was buried in the exact cemetery I saw in my dream. At the end of my dream, I was driving out of the cemetery with a naked baby in my hand and it pooped and stuck its hand in it and put it in my mouth. It literally left a bad taste in my mouth. When my mother passed and I saw all the drinking after she had just died, being intoxicated literally put me off of drinking and it "left a bad taste in my mouth". I felt like the outsider. I was somewhat used to it, considering I have always been one to stand for what I believe in, even if it means standing alone. I consider it an honor to be persecuted for my faith in Jesus Christ.

After three days, I no longer had the peaceful tingling feeling. I realized this was the first time God became real to me. I had an experience with God that I can't explain properly with words. And that's really when I felt like I needed to wake up. You never know when it's going to be your last day. I knew I wanted to get to know Christ. I just didn't know where to start. My momma's death really shook me spiritually. A stirring began to take place within me and I realized that we really are not promised tomorrow. We are not going to have an excuse. He is coming back. No man will know the day or hour.

If you are reading this and wouldn't necessarily say you believe, I encourage you to get to know him. Repent! He said choose ye this day for whom you will serve. If you are on the fence the time is now. We all have a soul and the Lord said all souls belong to him. I urge you to ask the Lord for an experience with him. Seek him and you will find him Ask him to make this a reality for you. Ask him to rid you of your unbelief. People's souls are truly in danger and they don't even realize all the prophecies are being fulfilled and that the time is near. Come out from under your strong delusion and get serious with God and he will get serious with you! Ask the Lord to remove the scales from your eyes and to let this blind man see. One thing I know for sure is every knee will bow and every tongue will

confess that Jesus Christ is Lord! One of the enemy's greatest lies is that you have time. I have seen a lot of people wait till they are in their 40s and 50s before they give their lives to the Lord, or even on their death bed. Stop taking God's grace and mercy for granted. He is who he says he is. He is a loving and merciful God. He is also a holy and righteous God who means what he says.

The same God who brings salvation unto our souls is the same God who will also allow you to send your own soul to hell. It's your choice. He is a gentleman. He is not going to force himself on you. It is wise not to put yourselves in God's position and say, "I know this person went to heaven and this person went to hell". You do not know any man's heart. Only God does. Salvation belongs to God. He will not be mocked. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: [it is] the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." Ephesians 2:8-10.

It's time for the people of God to wake up. And come out from that strong delusion. Stop desiring for your ears to be tickled and desire the truth. "Enter ye in at the straight gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in there at: because straight is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." Mathew 7:13-14. The church has turned into something it was never intended to be. It's time for the true church to stop all of that complaining and murmuring about all of the problems in your life and ask the Lord to lead you out of the wilderness. So you can enter into the promise land. Read the word of God for yourself and stop following man. It is not wise to preach the gospel if you have not spent time studying the word and learning who God is. It's time to stop preaching a one sided gospel. Hell is real. He is very clear about who will enter into heaven and who will not. Stop twisting the word of God to fit your own life. "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever." Hebrew 13:8. "For it is written, be ye holy; for I am holy." 1 Peter 1:16. "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." John 14:6 God is calling a people in this generation who are not persuaded by the world. People who will stand flat footed on the word of God. That will not be shaken. God did not say conform to the world to draw souls unto me. He said, "and I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." John 12:32.

Give the word of God. If they don't listen shake dust from your feet and keep going. Stop trying to build your own platform. Repent church repent. It's not about how many people are in a building. It's about how many people who are actually baptized with the Holy Ghost and actually have the spirit of God abiding in them, who are doing the will of their Heavenly Father, working out there OWN salvation with fear and trembling. Trust in the Lord with all thy heart and lean not on your own understanding but in all your ways submit to him and he will make your paths straight. Receive (Jesus) the baptism of the Holy Ghost! If you struggle with unbelief ask the Lord to take that from you. "For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, the just shall live by faith."
Romans 1:17

I urge all believers and unbelievers to repent and turn back to God. Save yourself from this corrupt generation. We are in a spiritual warfare. The world we are living in today is so sad. Satan doesn't even try to hide himself and people still can't see him. I find it mind blowing when people believe in spirits and Wigi Boards, but don't believe in God the creator. Wake up people! The truth is not popular so don't be alarmed when people call you crazy and when your friends and family walk away from you. John 15:16-21 "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you. These things I command you, that ye love one another. If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, the servant is not greater than his Lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you for my names sake, because they know not him that sent me."

We live in a generation where people have tried to microwave Christianity just like they do everything else. Like how to lose 10 pounds in a week or 30 second abs. I've heard a lot of people say, "No, it doesn't take all that anymore." Yes it does! We are continually working out our salvation to the END. Just because you have said a sinners' prayer, does not mean you have made it into heaven. Faith without works is dead. I challenge everyone reading this book to take a deep

look into their heart and ask the Lord to do a life change in you and to work out those things that are not pleasing to him. Ask him to put a fire down on the inside of you that causes you to run after him like never before! Your soul depends on it! We are in a time when people would rather you tickle their ears than give them the truth concerning their souls.

Things did not get better for me right away. I went to the doctor. They just upped my Xanax to two 1 mg Xanax a day. I felt conviction upon me. I knew I didn't need to be on all that medicine. They have a pill for everything. Three months after my mother had passed, my discipleship training began. My mother-in-law flew to the USA just to come see me and show me love from the kindness of her heart. She also showed me to pray when I first wake and read my bible. She would read a few scriptures when we would wake up and explain to me what they meant. She prayed to the Lord and asked the Lord to send us to a church where we would be spiritually fed. I had no idea she had prayed that. The Lord answered her prayer while she was here.

We were in Belk's getting ready to check out. A woman behind the counter seemed to just be taking ages looking at the few baby clothes that were on the counter to ring up. She then says something to my mother-in-law and I heard Fay say, "We are Christians". Then she stopped what she was doing, walked around to me, grabbed my hands and said, "The Lord says it's time for you to be happy now." Then she said something to Fay. I honestly had chill bumps on my arms. I thought it was super weird that this woman knew I was going through something. I had never seen her before a day in my life. She kept saying, "I have to get you to my pastor." And in my mind I was thinking, "No, you don't have to take me anywhere." She then goes on to say how much she loved her church and wanted me to visit. She gave me her number, which I politely put it into my wallet. Fay tried to encourage me to call her because she thought I needed friends. "I don't want to leave you alone." I believe I told her I might call. Well, I ended up throwing the woman's number away when Fay flew home.

I believe it was a month later I ran back inside Belk's to return something I had bought for Stephen. He was with me. We ran into the woman again so I immediately lied and said, "I lost your number, etc." She gave it to me again. She told me what time she got off and that she really wanted me to call her and to go

have tea or something. I felt awful for lying so I decided to give her a call. We met up. She was super nice and began to talk to me about the Lord. I shared with her that I had just lost my mom. She continued to invite me to her church. That night they were having a bible study. I told her my husband doesn't really like going to church. You know. We are fine. Thank you for the offer though. She asked, "Can I pray with you that the Lord will turn your husband's heart and he will say yes to coming to church tonight?" I said, "Sure" but I honestly didn't believe in the prayer. I just knew Stephen was going to say no.

Well I drove home. When I got there I simply said, "Hey babe. That lady I just went and met really wants us to go to a bible study tonight". I will never forget. He was high as a kite and looked at me and said, "Do you really want to go. I was like "Yeah. I feel bad for lying to her". But in reality my soul was desperate. I was searching for something to fill the void in my life. Stephen then said, "Well if you want to go, let's go". I was in complete shock because I was for real expecting him to say no. Stephen did not fully believe in God. He always said he was unsure.

When we arrived to this church I truly didn't know what to expect. I was so shy and really intimidated being in a church because, at this time, I didn't have any knowledge of who Christ was. I would talk about a God I didn't know. I knew Jesus was a man who was beaten and nailed to a cross for my sins. And that he died and rose again three days later. That was literally it, other than I knew about a man building a boat to put all the animals on. I didn't know what amen meant or even hallelujah. I did not understand that the three were one. Like we have a mind, body, and soul but are still one person; the different parts that make up one person.

I didn't know that God loved me and you so much that he wrapped himself in flesh and came down through 42 different generations to pick up all the sins that have ever been committed. Something that a holy God detests is sin. He lovingly made himself a sacrifice through his son Jesus Christ. God is a holy and sinless God. That is why he was the perfect unblemished atonement for our sins. He willingly put up with our ignorance and persecution from the Jews. His own people rejected him and said Jesus was not the Messiah. Can you imagine the heart ache that he must have felt? The love and mercy he has for us, I myself cannot comprehend. For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten

son. That whosoever believeth in him shall have eternal life. It is not his will that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. You see God is a gentleman. He isn't going to force himself on you. He gave us all free will, that way we may willingly choose to love him because he first loved us. Because of the Jews rejection, it made a way for the gentiles to also be saved. God is not a respecter of persons. The bible is the most beautiful love story I have ever read. And it is literally being played out right before our very eyes.

When we walked in to this church I first noticed that we were the only white people there. I felt a bit uncomfortable because I didn't know what to expect. They walked right up to us and welcomed us with hugs and introducing themselves. We were super nervous, so we sat there quietly and just observed and listened. In my heart I knew these were people who truly believed in God. The power of God was real in the lives and hearts of the people. And there were only a few people. No more than ten. There wasn't any pumping and priming anyone to testify and worship God. It wasn't a dark room with a loud band. All of the lights were on. They were not trying to set the mood to worship. A lovely little boy was on the drums that made beautiful music unto the Lord and another young boy played piano. Everyone began singing songs of praise to the Lord. It was real. I knew that where I was at was real.

I just sat quietly through the bible study. The amazing pastor, Apostle Palmer, asked to pray for us that night, so we went up to the front with little Marley and received prayer. At the end of service, I asked her if she would come and anoint my home. I explained to her that I wasn't even able to sleep because I was terrified. I would see demons every time I closed my eyes. And if I did fall asleep, I would have night mares of my mom talking to me. Then all of the sudden her face would change into a demon. It was trying to kill me. It got so bad that I could not walk through my house at night without the light on. And even then I was afraid I was going to see this demon when I turned around. At times I felt there was something directly behind me. I'm not sure if she was taken aback that I had said all of this, since it was the first time I had ever met her. But she told me that God did not give me a spirit of fear, but of power, love and a sound mind.

She invited me to come back two days later. They were going to be bringing in the New Year at the church and a prophet of God was going to be bringing the

Word. She said, "If you just come one more time, I'll come and anoint your home." So I came out of her office and told Stephen, "Hey we are coming back to bring in New Years' here". He was taken aback and complained, "I don't want to bring in the New Year in church." We were completely honest with her and said, "You know normally we would be partying." Stephen said, "I want to smoke. I don't want to be here. She turned to him and said, "Even if you have to go smoke and then come. Just come. All you have to do is bring faith." And we said, "Alright. We will be back." Stephen knew I was being tormented and I really wanted to have the house anointed by someone who was of God. I knew I had found her.

When we were getting ready, December 31, 2015, to go to church that night, I left half a blunt and a black and mild in the garage so I could finish when I got home. Now I had tried to stop smoking weed multiple times and I just couldn't. So did Stephen. Well we go to this service and all of a sudden, when this man walked in the building and started to bring forth the Word of God, something clicked with me. Instantly I knew that there were really people of God, who really believe in and reverence God. I almost didn't know if this man was real or not. Like I said, the things of God were foreign to me. But I knew God was real. He started speaking and then, all of the sudden it sounded like it was another language. I lean over and said, "I think this church that came with him is from another country because I could barely understand anything he said. I later asked the pastor if he was from a different country or something. She laughed and said, "No. He was speaking in tongues."

Through the service, conviction came over me. Towards the end, they were taking communion, and I remember him saying, "If your heart is not right and you still desire sin, do not take this lightly. It is better for you if you don't partake. It's damnation to your own soul." I went forth and took it. I honestly had no idea what was in that juice, but I promise you my life radically changed. I went home and never touched another cigarette or blunt or black and mild. The Lord had truly delivered me. He took the desire away from me.

That night, lying in the bed, I told the Lord 'I want to get to know you' and I told him 'I don't want to go to hell'. As I was laying there I heard "*seek me*". At first, I thought I had gone crazy. Now I'm over here talking to myself. Then "*seek me*" came to my heart again. So I opened my bible and flipped to Revelations

figuring that's where I would start. I didn't understand much of it, so I immediately wanted to give up.

I started speaking with my pastor every day. She came and anointed my home. I remember she said, "I want you to pray as well." I told her, "But I don't know how." She told me just talk to him. So that's what I did and the Lord delivered me from that spirit of fear. We began attending church there three times a week. As soon as we started going the Lord began to bless us in so many ways. He delivered Stephen 4 or 5 days after me. Our training in discipleship had begun. Apostle Cheryl Palmer was that 'good man' who left an inheritance to his children's children. I am forever grateful to know such a lovely woman of God. Not many people really live this walk, the way that they talk it. She is a true woman of God. And I love her very much.

The Lord taught us how to have a healthy relationship. He really worked on me about submitting to him, and that it was ok to agree to disagree. But to stop the yelling and cussing, and talk to each other like adults are supposed to. And a really big one for me was, you don't always have to be right. The Lord began to teach us how to pray together and read the Word. He taught us how to fast and pray and, to be honest; he just started blessing us hand over fist. Not only did he sort things out in our marriage, but he also delivered us from smoking.

My very first month submitting to the Lord I was baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of my sins. I began to learn who Jesus was. I began reading, and I'll be honest, I would usually fall asleep. But I was persistent. I continued to read and ask questions and grow in my relationship with the Lord. I would even put Marley in a stroller and take her to the Prattville Park along with invitation cards from our church. I would pretend I was walking the track and walk up to people and give them an invitation. I would try to witness to them even though I had no idea how to witness, until a lady from the church went with me one day to show me. I would literally walk and stop at every person and pass out an invitation. I was so terrified because I knew very little of what I was trying to do. But as I continued to work up the courage to just go, even if I had to walk the track a few times before I actually ever said anything to anyone, the Lord saw my heart and he began to take that fear from me and give me understanding as I began to read.

Stephen and I decided to pray for another baby. We thought Marley just turned a year old; let's just have our kids close in age. Remember, this is all still in the month of January. January 1, 2016 is when our lives changed unexpectedly. Stephen and I were lying in the bed. He held my hand and he simply asked the Lord to give us another baby. Not expecting the Lord to answer our prayer so soon, we literally found out we were pregnant three weeks later. Due to me going on a three day fast without food or water, I had to go to the doctor to get fluids as I was extremely dehydrated. They asked if I was pregnant. I said no because I hadn't even missed my period. Well we found out I had the hormone in my blood work. They said it was too early to tell for sure, but to follow up in a few weeks. We had gotten pregnant. If not the night he prayed, sometime within the next few days. That was God because getting pregnant was not easy for us. First I had to have the Lord deliver me from the pills and he did. I did things right with Nevaeh.

A month or two goes by and we are still seeking the Lord and submitting to his will. We still did not realize the Lord loved us or even liked us. I owed some money for taxes from one year from my serving job. I didn't know I was supposed to take money out of my check to send in at the end of the year. I got a bill in the mail. I couldn't believe my eyes when I saw how much I owed. We just thought we would pay it off when we got the money, since I didn't get any money back that year. I owed more. I called to pay off my debt, since they had continuously called me about it all year and it had been adding up. I called them a few months prior to see what my balance was, and they told me. I finally got the money and called them. I told them I need to pay off my debt. The woman on the phone said, "Mrs. Cain you don't have any debt." I was shocked. I could not believe the Lord would do that for me.

The Lord really worked on my unbelief throughout my first year. In the summer the Lord really blew my mind. I was texting my sister in law one night, telling her "When I save up enough money I'm going get me some flowers for outside. I want two hanging ferns for the front porch." I was asking her about ideas for a little patch of monkey grass out in front of my front door. I thought it was really ugly. She said, "I think you should get a little black plant hanger with a cute hanging basket and put like a little solar light underneath it so at night it will

shine up on the plant.” I texted her back and said, “Yeah that would look nice. As soon as I make the money, that’s what I will do.” I didn’t tell anyone about this!

A few days later, I was going to cut and color a lady named Debbie’s hair. She arrived that morning and knocked on the door. I opened the door to see Debbie standing there, smoking a cig and smiling saying, “I just wanted to get you some flowers for your yard.” I just began to cry and thank God because there were two hanging ferns on my porch. I looked to the ugly patch of monkey grass to see a black plant hanger with a cute hanging basket and a tiny solar light stuck in the ground underneath it. Now you can’t tell me God isn’t real. I never asked God for this. I never told anyone. It was just a conversation my sister-in-law and I were texting about. And because God always goes above and beyond what we can even imagine, I looked down at the side of my house in front of the two windows and saw two azalea bushes ready to be put in the ground. As I am crying and just thanking God, I told Debbie what just happened. She began to cry and thank God as well. He will blow your mind. It just all depends on your faith.

During this time we began to realize Marley just wasn’t hitting her developmental mile stones. We didn’t know the signs to look for because we had never had a child before. She really doesn’t make eye contact well. At almost two, she continues to eat and play in her own poo multiple times a week. I told my pastor about it since we spoke on the phone daily. She brought it to my attention that I should have her tested. We decided to have her tested when she woke up one day and just stopped speaking. She didn’t use her simple words anymore, like Momma, DaDa, baby etc. It was like a light switch she just shut off. They put her in therapy twice a week, but didn’t diagnose her with autism until she turned three. Slowly but surely, she began to use basic words again. Words like Mamma, Daddy, no, yes. But it was never the appropriate answer for what she was actually trying to say. Even though she had received therapy twice a week, it didn’t seem to help.

We continued our prayers and the Lord began working on Marley. At three and a half years old, Marley finally understood the question, ‘What is your name?’ She looked at me with the biggest blue eyes and said, “mar- lay.” The joy of a mother, to hear her baby answer a question that we have been working on for so long, brought me so much joy. I can’t thank God enough for what he has done for

us. Marley is now 3 months shy of being four years old and she says her own prayers at night, without any help. It's usually for the cows and pigs, but she says, "I love you Jesus" every night. Her daddy or I take turns praying after she finishes. We give thanks for all of our many blessings the Lord has given us throughout the day.

We also play school. Marley, Stephen, and Nevaeh sit on the bed while I teach them or read bible stories. This is my favorite part of our day together as a family. Children with autism need structure and this is our routine every night. The Lord has truly been good to us. I am teaching my babies to be Disciples of Christ. I came in from a church yard sale last Saturday and sat down on the couch. My face was so burnt, due to not having any sunscreen on. As soon as Marley saw me, she ran up to me and placed her hands on my head and said, "Father Jesus. Booboo pain. Amen." I was so grateful to see my baby going about her Heavenly Father's business.

When Marley was one and a half years old, a horrendous event took place. Stephen was out cutting someone's grass to make extra money. I wanted to have breakfast finished by the time he made it home. I was making biscuits, bacon and eggs that morning. I was about six months pregnant with Nevaeh. I drained the bacon grease into a bowl and set it on the edge of the counter. I turned around to wipe the bottom of the pan with a paper towel and checked a text message. I turned back around because Marley walked up right behind me.

I saw Marley touching the tip of this tiny Montgomery Biscuits hat-shaped bowl that I had poured the hot bacon grease into. She tipped the entire bowl over. It ran down her eye lid, completely missed her eye ball, and right down her face to her little chest and tummy, then down her entire left arm. I start calling on Jesus. I threw her into the sink and started running cold water over her skin, trying to wipe as much grease off as I could. Then immediately ran her out to the car and drove her to the nearest hospital.

Her skin began to blister up. It hurt me so much to see my baby in so much pain and there was nothing I could do about it. All I could do was cry and beat myself up about not pushing the bowl away from the sink to the back of the counter.

The doctor and nurses asked me what happened. I told them and they asked what did I do after she was burned. I told them I started to call on Jesus and I immediately threw her in the sink and started running cold water all over her, trying to wipe the grease off. They then told me, "You did the best thing you could have done for her, because bacon grease continues to cook the skin." I know that was God who gave me the wisdom to put her in the sink, because my first thought was just put her in the car. But instead, I threw her in the sink and tried to get as much off as I could.

They ended up transferring her to the burn unit at Children's Hospital in Birmingham. My sweet Marley had second and third degree burns all over her. The doctors said she would need skin grafts because it was so bad. She was in so much pain and shock. Even though they kept her doped up, they had to put in an IV for liquids. She also had to have a feeding tube because she did not eat or drink anything for seven days. It was so hard to watch my sweet girl in so much pain. Not eating, ripping the IV's and the feeding tube out. It would cause her more pain, having to re-stick her. It was awful.

They taught Stephen and me how to scrub the raw flesh so she wouldn't get infection. I thought I wasn't going to be able to keep it together. We had to dope her up and scrub all of the burned areas where there was no skin because it had melted off while she screamed her little lungs out. It was truly heart breaking.

My pastor just kept telling me to trust the Lord for Marley's healing. He is going to completely heal her and she won't have to have any skin grafts. Even with all of the miracles and blessings the Lord had been doing for us, my faith was still weak. My God performed another miracle. Marley never had to have any skin grafts. If you look at her today, you would not be able to tell she had second and third degree burns on her face and body. The Lord is a miracle worker. There is nothing impossible for him.

Soon after this, another blessing from the Lord came, and we still didn't believe. Stephen finally completed his immigration papers. We originally put it off because we didn't know if being married would be enough to keep him here. Also, we didn't realize we would need the amount of money we did to go through this process and have his paperwork done before his visa expired. So when we realized, he was technically an illegal immigrant. I couldn't bear the thought of

him being deported, so we stuck our heads in the sand and did nothing concerning immigration. After a good year, we had learned we were pregnant. Then we definitely didn't want to do our paper work, just in case he would be deported. After three years, with one baby and another on the way, we decided to do our paperwork. Our pastor again tried to tell us to just trust God; that it didn't matter what man said. God had already showed her, while she was in prayer, that our paperwork was approved. But we still could not believe. We were so overcome with what our situation looked like that we thought, "There is no way they will approve an illegal immigrant."

Our appointment date came and we were terrified. We knew that they were supposed to interrogate us to see if we were lying, or if it was a legit marriage for love. We walked in and sat down. He asked Stephen his name, birthdate, and has he ever tried to smuggle illegal aliens into the US. Have you ever had a felony? Have you ever been a prostitute? And we were thinking these are crazy questions. He stopped speaking and stared at the computer for what seemed like forever. Stephen was squeezing the life out of my hand. I was huge and pregnant. I'm sure I was all sweaty from being so on edge; thinking any minute police are going to bust through this door and detain him on the spot. As soon as this guy looks at his paper work, he will see he is illegal.

So we were sitting there, ready and waiting for the drilling questions to start. He turns and looks at us and says, "Goodness. She looks like she is about to pop." And then he hands Stephen a piece of paper to sign and says, "Alright. Your green card will be in the mail in 4 to 6 weeks" or 6 to 8. I'm not exactly sure which of the two he said. Stephen and I looked at each other in disbelief. How did we just skip our interview? It was only God. How did he not look at his visa, etc. That was no one but God. Stephen's green card came in the mail just seven days later.

My God! My God! You have been so good to me!

In our seventh month of following the Lord, Stephen was baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of his sins. The Lord had answered my prayers concerning Stephen. I just felt like he was telling me not to worry about Stephen, that he had his hand on him. And after his green card came on the 7th day, and he was baptized in the 7th month, I just felt the Lord was going to continue to finish this work that he had started in him, because the number 7 is

complete in God. It wasn't easy for me to turn Stephen over to the Lord and just trust in God for his salvation. I struggled with that for a really long time.

In the ninth month of our first year following the Lord, we experienced one of the scariest things we have ever faced. Nevaeh Grace was making her grand appearance into the world on September 21, 2016. She was at 35 weeks gestation and weighed 8 pounds 4 oz. They induced labor the following night because pregnancy was just really harsh on my body. I had been giving myself a shot in my bum every Monday. I started taking the shots around 15 weeks because my body did not want to carry either one of my babies. I also went into labor early with Marley. I had to receive a shot early in my pregnancy with her to stop my body from going into labor.

We did not realize the size of Nevaeh, so we went for a vaginal birth. Needless to say she got stuck. The doctor said, "Her shoulders will not pass." She begins to pull on the baby, not realizing the cord was wrapped around her neck and she could not breathe. She pulled Nevaeh so hard that the umbilical cord snapped around her neck. My husband never even got the chance to cut the umbilical cord. We waited as she came out. The doctor was in complete shock that she snapped the cord around her neck. We could not believe our baby was a grey purplish color, lying limp like a noodle. She looked lifeless in her hands. They had no idea how long she had been without oxygen due to being stuck.

I immediately just said, "Thank you Jesus" in my heart. They began to spank her, rub her entire body, and starting saying, "Call the NICU." My pastor looked at me and said, "Just tell the Lord thank you." I thanked Him again for His will. I remember she never cried. They rushed her out of the room. I couldn't even tell you exactly what my baby looked like. My pastor snagged a side picture of her before they rushed her out.

Nevaeh was a really sick baby. She was on a ventilator. She had an IV running into a main artery into her belly button. They told us she looked like she wasn't going to make it. Also, if she did not start getting better within 3 days, they would let us go ahead and hold her. My pastor came and laid her hands on top of Nevaeh's belly in the NICU and prayed. Within 3 days she started to perk up a bit. In a week she came off the ventilator. We were able to hold her at 7 days old. She

had so much swelling on her head that she really didn't look normal. She had bruises all over her body.

They hospitalized me twice after I had her due to my body not responding properly from a traumatic birth. My legs and feet began to swell so bad that I could no longer see my knee caps. They put me on Lasix to get the swelling off my body because it was not good on my heart. A few days later I was readmitted because my blood pressure was 206 / 96. They then put me on an IV drip for two days. It made my entire body limp so that I couldn't move or get out of the bed. After I finished the round of medicine they allowed me to leave. Nevaeh was able to come home after two and a half weeks. God completely healed her. She had two heart murmurs that the Lord also healed. Nevaeh is now a healthy two year old that is not delayed on any of her mile stones. She just has an awesome testimony of what the Lord has done for her from birth.

I am so grateful for this journey and the belief the Lord has given me. People do not really understand just how important it is to believe; to truly believe with all of your being. Nothing is impossible to those that believe. I knew the Lord delivered me from pills when I had to have a biopsy done on my leg. They put me to sleep and took out a nodule on my leg. When I woke up from surgery I was in so much pain. I could not walk, so they gave me two pain pills. I remember being on the way home and feeling the high. I felt so guilty for having them in my system. I literally wanted to scratch them out of me. I remember telling the Lord that I didn't want to have to take pain pills for my leg. I really struggled with the fact that I didn't want to relapse. So when I made it home, Stephen helped me get to bed. I couldn't put any pressure on my foot yet. Then he ran out to go get my prescription filled. I prayed to the Lord and asked him to please take this pain away. I went to sleep for the night. When I woke up the next morning I literally got out of bed, walked to the bath room, and was completely out of pain. I didn't have to take any of the pain pills that they had prescribed me. That day, I swept and mopped all of my floors and just praised God. Thanking him for literally taking the pain out of my leg that had a deep incision in it. Most importantly, I thanked him for delivering me from the desire to be high anymore.

A few months ago, Stephen and I took the kids to the park to play. Marley was running around and Stephen was playing with Nevaeh on the slide. There

were a few children out there playing and running around the playground. Next thing I know, Marley comes running up to me crying hysterically. Screaming, "Bite my mommy. Bug bite me." She was showing me her hand so I immediately lay my hands over the spot where she had been stung by a wasp or bee. I'm not really sure which one. I didn't see it. What I did see was a really big red spot with a big white ring in the middle where the wasp or bee had stung her, with a little dot where the stinger was. I immediately lay my hands on it and begin to pray, asking the Lord to take the pain from my baby and to heal her little hand. I began to just thank the Lord. When I finished, I said to Marley, "Say thank you Jesus". She said it and stopped crying about a minute later. We soon wrap it up at the park and head home.

We live about 10 minutes away from the park. We got home and I asked Marley to let me see her hand. So I look at it, flip it over, and still didn't see anything. I thought, maybe she gave me the wrong hand. I looked at the other hand and there was nothing there. It then hit me like a ton of bricks. The Lord had just performed another miracle. I am so grateful to know that my Father is a miracle worker. He is a healer. He is a deliver to those that believe.

If you would have told me three years ago, that I would be sitting here writing a book about the goodness of God in my life, I would have never believed you. If someone would have said, you are going to be so over taken by the love of God, you will submit your life to him as a living sacrifice, and you will desire to do the will of your Heavenly Father, I would have probably laughed in their face. As I sit here just thinking of how good the Lord has been to me, I am undone by his love and mercy. I cannot fathom the love of God. There was a time and place in my life when I believed there was not a purpose for my life. I believed I had just been dealt a crappy hand and that was life. I had to deal with it. I didn't expect more. I just got on with escaping my reality.

I don't want anyone in this entire world to ever feel like I did. You are special to the Lord! He loves you! He has a plan for you! And most importantly he desires for you to have a relationship with him and genuinely love him. If you haven't spoken with him in a while, you may need to check on your relationship status. The Lord gave me a dream. At the time I didn't have the right

interpretation of it. But needless to say, we were being sent out of our training center.

I was given a word from the Lord through the late Antonio Tyrone Hurt, (Hannah may your change remain within you, you are a blessing to the nation, go forth in change. In Jesus name amen –Antonio Hurt Y not B TRUH 2 U?) He wrote it down in a book that he wrote, *Get Your Mind Right*, and gave it to me. I began to ponder in my heart. What was written and how God would want to use someone who is so uneducated. Who hasn't been raised up in the church my entire life or been to bible school. So I began to just ask the Lord to guide us to where he would have our family.

My husband's Uncle Pete's name kept ringing in my spirit, which led me to want to visit his church. We had visited another church, but we both felt that was not where He was calling us to. So when I mentioned going to his uncle's church in Eclectic, he said, "Ok. Let's go". We went to Harden Street Church and absolutely loved it. We loved the Adullam House Mission and everything that they stood for. They immediately welcomed us with open arms. A little while into being there we gave our testimonies. I remember telling my husband's cousins that we are just not sure how long we will be here. We are just following where the Lord leads us. They have a lovely ministry and church family. A few months into being there a pastor from a different church came to give the word. At the end of his message he said, "God is raising up a believer, who is going to bless the nation. And I believe with my whole heart they are in this room tonight." Immediately my husband squeezed my leg because he knew that was confirmation of what Tony had written in the book he gave me. My heart swelled with fear. I was afraid to tell anyone; afraid of what others would say. In all honesty, I felt unqualified. I just didn't fit the mold. Most importantly, I didn't know how this was going to take place. So I would just pray about it. I kept it to myself so no one would speak negatively about it. We attended Harden Street Church for nine months. During that time I just asked God how, and I felt led to write my story. I finished it.

I also had another dream and I felt we were going to be leaving the church soon. I just didn't know when. I had two foot surgeries so I was not at church service for a while. Then I found out that my spiritual coach, Antonio Hurt, had

passed away. Going to the funeral and seeing everyone only made my heart miss them that much more. I began going back to my Christian training center on Tuesday nights for a while. Then I asked my husband, “Do you think it’s time to go back home?” And back to Cross Roads Christian Ministries we went.

Change was definitely not easy for me. It is especially difficult when you’re comfortable where you are. God will take you out of your comfort zone to put you where he wants you. It is not about me and my feelings. It’s about him and his plan. He didn’t create me so I could be served but to serve him. I’ve learned you don’t always have to understand the plan to trust him. Getting to know who I am and owning my own truth has been hard. There is so much freedom in truth. Getting to a place of knowing who you are in Christ Jesus and knowing that you are a daughter of the Great I Am. It doesn’t get any better than that. I truly just want to be led by the Holy Spirit and be just who God wants me to be. There is nothing you or I could ever do to deserve the love of Christ. We are not fully able to fathom just how deep his love is for us.

About seven months later we were driving home from the beach and I saw a little mom and pop store. Every time we have passed it, I’ve always said I wanted to go in and have a little look. I still have not. I loved that the little old run down store was still up and running and how the community was still supporting it. On our way home I told Stephen, “That’s it. I want to open a store.” He started laughing at me and I told him I can do it. I could put my book out for free everyday and tell people about Jesus. He started questioning me about what I would sell? I was like, “I can get Bryna to make T-shirts with scripture on them; and I could grown a garden and bring vegetables to work every day. He was laughing at me, so I told him, “Don’t you put your mouth on this. I don’t want anything negative spoken about this.” We were driving. I had hours to think about the store. I wondered what I could call it. I started throwing different names around and came up with Hannah’s Place. Once I said Hannah’s Place, I knew that was the name.

Seven years prior, one of the very first things I ever bought to go in our house, was a sign that I absolutely loved. It matched nothing in the house. It said take your place, make your mark, and live your life. And that’s what I plan to do. I began to ask God, “How should I do this, so I can glorify you and be a blessing to

the nation? I called my dad the next day and told him what I wanted to do. He said he would help point me in the right direction, but he was not going to do it for me. That if I wanted it bad enough, I'd do what it takes to get it. After about three months I was ready. I had decided to create a safe place to help people with physical or spiritual needs; A place where I could love on people and pray for people every day; A place I could witness about Jesus and glorify my father. I decided it was going to have a couch, table and chairs with free sweet tea and coffee. Maybe I could put out some cookies. If there is anyone out there that is barely hanging on and just needs a little bit of kindness, Hannah's Place is for you. Your life matters. Also, if there is anyone out there who has free time on their hands, you are more than welcome to come mingle in our community and love on people.

I thought, "I'm going to have my book out there for free. You never know whose hands it could fall into. Maybe just one soul would come to Christ after reading my testimony and seeing that they are not alone." I thought, "I'll sell faith based T-shirts and have a thrift store so I could bless those in need." I didn't tell anyone who was not extremely close to me during those three months due to not wanting anything negative spoken over it.

During those three months I had really been praying, especially for my dad. My biggest supporter turned out to be my dad. He would call me and see where I was with Hannah's Place. What steps had I taken? Had I filed for my 501c3 yet? (Form for a nonprofit) He called me one morning and said, "Hannah I woke up at about four o'clock and thought, 'I need to tell Hannah this to help her fund her mission.' He said, 'You are always praying for everybody. Why don't you get your Uncle James to make you a website and call it Hannah's Prayers? And put prayers on it that you have prayed for others in need. Ask other believers if they would like to be a part of it as well. You should put your mission at the bottom so people know what you're doing. You never know, you might help someone that may want to donate to your cause.'"

And I thought, "Lord I thank you for using my dad to help me. I am so grateful for the reconciliation that only the Lord could do in our relationship. I will forever be grateful for the man God ordained from the very beginning, before he formed me in my mother's womb, to be my dad. A man who would walk into a

little girl's life at the age of 5 and be the best dad he knew how to be. I thank God for the gift of wisdom that he has given to my dad. Dad you did a fantastic job, I'm sorry for my teen years. Thank you for staying. I love you!

As I come to an end of this book, it is extremely difficult for me to find a place to stop because I realize my story does not end here. This is only just the beginning of what is to come. The word of God said, "Verily, verily I say unto you, he that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my father." John 14:2 The best is yet to be! My heart's desire is to spread the good news of Jesus Christ and to teach and train up more disciples in Jesus' name. I truly believe that is my calling; to have the book of acts played out in my life. I desire to give hope to the lost and healing to the sick. "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the NAME of the father, and son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen." Matthew 28:19-20. "Repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of your sins and ye shall be filled with the gift of the Holy Ghost." Acts 2:38 "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." Galatians 3:28

I am not an educated person and I don't have proper etiquette. I am just so grateful that the one who made me sees what I can't see in myself. Every time I think about how far the Lord has brought such a vile person as myself, I am so in awe of his love and mercy that it just melts me every time. He has brought my heart so much joy. A joy that is unexplainable and a love to my heart that I didn't know was possible. I honestly would have thought someone was crazy if they had told me I would be so in love with the Lord that I wouldn't want anything else but him. And if all I had was him, it would be enough. I don't want to go on about my love for the Lord, because it will never be what he truly deserves. I fail him daily. What I can do, is tell you just how much he loves you and I. The Lord is so beautiful to me. I don't have the vocabulary to tell you just how amazing and special he really is. Honestly, the greatest advice I would give anyone, is to love the Lord your God with all of you heart, all of your soul, and all of your mind. Your love for him will bring forth submission. I encourage you to grow in love, change,

humility, and always be teachable. Be encouraged and run this race with joy! Let no man put your fire out.

“Verily, I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.” Matthew 18:3. It’s just as simple as believing!

Side note- I’m not sure if my dad will read this because he has a hard time rehashing the past. But I give God thanks for ALL things! I love both of my parents very much .I wouldn’t be the woman I am today if it wasn’t for them. It was all a part of my making. “All things work together for the good of them that love God who are called according to his purpose.” Romans 8:28 I was super nervous to write a small piece of my story. I felt uneducated, definitely out of my comfort zone, and afraid to put my faults and flaws out for people to read. I just felt the Lord giving me courage in comforting me that this is not about me or my own capabilities. It’s about the hope I can give to the lives of others, who feel they are just so far gone that there is no returning to God. It’s all about Him and that He gets all the glory. It’s about what He will use my story for. The Lord said my people will not be ashamed. I’m grateful for the continuous work the Lord is doing in my life. “Praise ye the Lord. O give thanks unto to the Lord; for he is good: for his mercy endureth forever.” Psalms 106:1

If there is anyone who has read this book and feels like they want to submit their life to Jesus but are not sure how or where to start, I want you to feel free to reach out and contact me. You can reach me through my website <https://hannahsplace.godaddysites.com> I would love to pray with you and encourage you to grow in love and truth in the Lord. I am not out to make any profit from this book. This book is free. All I ask is that if you know someone who is struggling, feel free to pass this book along to them. My hope is that this book inspires the hearts of people to turn to God, regardless of what their situation looks like. If this book only gave hope and pointed one person back to God, that would be enough for me. I don’t want my story to be in vain. If you feel led to send a donation to help print copies of this book and encourage others on their

journey that would be greatly appreciated. I also have Hannah's Prayers, which is on my website for people with specific needs like depression, suicide, etc. If you are in agreement by faith, then it is done! The Lord has given me Hannah's Place located in Prattville AL. Be encouraged and let love win in your heart and the hearts of others that you encounter. – Hannah Cain