

My Testimony

By Tara

I am a survivor. I was sexually abused by a family member. I have been abused physically, mentally and emotionally. I was also raped twice.

I had a baby at 13 from the sexual abuse. I gave Samantha up for adoption because I knew I couldn't give her a good home that she so deserved. It was arranged with the adopting family to be an open adoption so they would tell her she was adopted when she was old enough to understand. Also, she would be allowed to call me if she wanted to, and her adopted mother would send me pictures periodically. When Samantha was five, she called me. During this call she told me her dad was hitting her. At seven, she said it was still happening and she was afraid of him and didn't want to be with him. She said it was worse when she was left alone with him.

Samantha asked if she could come live with me. I told her I had to see what I would have to do to make it happen.

A few days later, I received a call from her adopted mother saying she was dead. "I'm so sorry," she said, "Samantha's dad beat her to death." I dropped the phone, wailing and screaming hysterically. I didn't know what to do with myself. At that moment I fell to my knees and cried out, "God, how could you let this happen. Why?"

After a while it was like I heard this little whisper, "Don't worry. Samantha is with me now. She is safe and will no longer suffer." I knew it was the voice of God.

As much as I was angry and overwhelmed with grief, I realized that what God told me was true. At the same time, I blamed myself because I was the one that gave her up for adoption to this couple.

I was flooded with feelings of guilt, thinking that if I had kept her, she would still be alive.

I was abused in several different ways by the men I chose to be with. I was scared to leave them because I was afraid if I did they would kill me.

Then God spoke to me and said, "Fear not my child, I will protect you. I will carry you out." I was raised in the church so I completely trusted this.

I was raped twice. Once by a man I didn't know. The other time, by a man I was dating. I was so traumatized. I kept asking myself how could this happen to me. Again, I blamed myself.

So I turned to drugs to self-medicate...well just one, crack cocaine. I could escape everything by doing this. No pain, no hurt, no feelings, no memories. I did crack for just over 2 years.

I had two daughters by this time. My oldest was usually with my parents but my youngest daughter was with her father and me.

This is the man that got me addicted to crack cocaine. About two years after starting to use, I was on a major binge. I hadn't slept or eaten for five days. I smoked crack for five days and nights straight.

One morning I heard a whisper say, "Tara, it's time to stop doing this. Come, follow me. I will save you." I left the motel we had been staying at. I took my youngest daughter and went by my boyfriend's workplace.

I said to him, "I'm done! I'm done doing drugs and if you can't stop too, we were through! I'll take our daughter and go." He said, "Goodbye," so I got back in the car and started driving.

I got just down the street before I started feeling so weak that I stopped the car at his boss' house. Somehow, as weak as I was, I managed to get my daughter and I into their house. While my daughter went to play with the other kids, I confessed to the wife that I was done doing drugs and I needed help.

At that very moment I collapsed on her couch. I was taken to the hospital where I was told by the doctor that if I hadn't been brought in when I was, I probably would have died within five minutes. I was Baker Acted and transferred to a psychiatric facility for mental health treatment and drug rehabilitation. I was there about 45 days.

After being discharged, I went to outpatient counseling. I changed my people, places and things. I isolated for a while until I felt I was safe to leave the house.

During this time I turned to God. I asked Him to help me, guide me and to protect me. God replied, "I have you my child. Just give it all to me. I died for you. I have saved you."

From that day forward, I have given everything to God. I stand by the phrase, "Let go and let God." I was saved by God's grace. Has my life been easy? No. But I know that I am a daughter of the King. I study His word and pray without ceasing. When I am weak He is strong. He walks beside me and carries me when needed.

I forgave all the people that ever hurt me. God told me that was what I needed to do. That was the first step for me to heal. I have been a completely different person since I accepted Jesus Christ into my life. I try to help others, encourage and lift them up in prayer.

I share my story because it may help you. If you can learn anything from my life experience, I pray that God will use it to better yours.