



Dec. 1, 2011

Danny and I want to thank you for helping making so many dreams come true for so many people this past year. God has truly blessed Harvest Home and everyone in it. We have seen so many come to know God in a new, living way while being healed from the injustices done to them. We have seen tremendous growth this past year in every area. Our farm family continues to grow in number and in the love of the Father. The farm itself is growing. We presently have 5 houses with 3 more under construction. The Refuge building (20,000 sq. foot home for girls rescued from human trafficking) is slowly progressing. Our resident teenagers will be presenting a play this Christmas based on the book *Little Women*. Life is good and God great! Danny and I thank you for praying, volunteering and supporting us in this labor of love. We pray that the Lord will bless you and your family in every way this season as you celebrate the birth of our Savior.

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### Testimony from Our Father's Farm

Through my life, I've known about Jesus and tried to "be good", but I never really knew Jesus personally, in relationship, until I experienced Him during my Encountering God sessions on Our Father's Farm.

I was married at 27, and had been partying my life away. Being married changed nothing really; things just got worse. I talked about God, had my bible that I read when times were tough, and said I loved Him. But I really didn't, it wasn't my heart that was speaking, it was my head. At 32, my husband and I decided to try to have a baby. It wasn't long before I was pregnant with a miracle from God. I immediately stopped all the partying and started planning for my baby and my new life. She was born perfect in every way, and I knew it was time for me to grow up. But, my husband wasn't settling down, and I didn't get the perfect little family with the white picket fence. Oh, I did get the house, but things were far from perfect.

I had so many dreams for my baby, the childhood I wanted to give her, the things I wanted to teach her, but little did I know that Satan had other plans. At that time, Satan was about as real to me as Charlie Brown in a comic strip. But God had plans for us as well. And He has turned everything Satan meant for our harm into good. I want to share my story so everyone will know how much God loves all of us, and how dramatically He can change our very lives if only we will let Him.

Even the first two years of Rebekah's (not her real name) life were difficult. My father died when she was 7 months old, having endured a long struggle with lung cancer. My husband started drinking even more heavily than he had in the past and staying out all night or coming in drunk. I tried everything to make our marriage work, but it didn't. I left him because I wanted to protect my daughter from growing up in that environment. Little did I know at the time, it wouldn't be enough. I was not to find out until much later, but he was sexually abusing her when she went for the weekend visits.

At age three, Rebekah started having very severe outbursts of anger. She cried uncontrollably and could not be comforted. The daycare she had been a part of since age two, told me that they could no longer handle her

behavior so she was withdrawn. After going through at least four more daycares, I hired someone to come into my home to care for her while I worked. I took her to a pediatric psychologist for help. After months and months of behavior modification programs having no success, I was referred to the pediatric psychiatrist. After a few months of working with her, he suggested I start her on medication, and said she was a candidate for early bipolar onset. I changed doctors, but eventually agreed to try medication after a series of several events. One of which I found Rebekah hiding under the bed when we were visiting Grandma's house, and when I finally got her to come out, she was hysterical. She didn't recognize me, ran from me, and screamed when I caught up with her at the end of the hall. I called the paramedics, and when they arrived she was still out of control. They had to strap her down to a gurney and take her and I to the hospital. It wasn't until we were on the ride in the back of the ambulance that she finally looked at me, stopped crying, and knew who I was. There are no words to describe how it feels to see your own child terrified of you, not knowing who you are, and not be able to help or comfort her in any way. After we got to the hospital, she told me that she thought I was a kidnapper, and was trying to catch her to cut her in little pieces! No wonder she was so terrified.

We saw psychologists, psychiatrists, therapists, and even a pediatric neurologist. She had every type of test, including an EEG and MRI to check for a brain tumor. Nothing could be found to help her. After a few weeks of crying on the way to and from work, turning all my emotions off to get my job done, and being up most of the night every night trying to help Rebekah sleep, I contracted Belle's Palsy, and the left side of my face was paralyzed. It took several weeks, but I regained control of my facial muscles much to my relief.

In May of 2008, Rebekah and I flew across the country to see the leading pediatric doctor in Bipolar Disorder. He confirmed the diagnosis of Bipolar Disorder, and she began new medications. The situation continued to worsen. Rebekah was hearing voices in her head that threatened her and told her to hurt me. It was literally killing me to see my beautiful daughter go through all of these things and not be able help her, to make it better for her. I couldn't function anymore. I took a Family Medical Leave of Absence from my job. It was during this time that God called out for me again. This time I answered. I found a church and a Pastor that cared enough to invest the time into Rebekah & I that made a difference. I asked Jesus into my heart and began my walk with Him. I began to learn to give things to God that I couldn't handle on my own. I had Someone to turn to now who knew everything that has ever happened to me, everything I had done wrong, and still loved me without compromise. I threw myself into His Word, and gained a church family. I know that I let God in just in time. I couldn't have made it through the things that were to come without His strength and grace.

In 2009, during the worst of the housing market, God made a way for me to sell my home. I couldn't afford the mortgage and expenses with all the medical bills. We moved, and I looked forward to a new start. Unfortunately, the demons followed, and things worsened. Rebekah was so lost, so sad, so lonely, and so, so angry. The sexual abuse memories began to surface, and she began to remember what her dad had done to her. Then, one especially difficult morning, I was going to be late for work again because Rebekah wouldn't get ready for school, and she was going to be late for school. I told her I would have to get someone else to pick her up from school if she made me any later. She thought I meant I was going to call her dad, so when she got to school she had a severe anxiety attack, and they sent her to the school counselor. She told the counselor she was afraid her dad was going to pick her up from school and hurt her again. DHR was called, and an investigation followed. In the months that followed, more memories came, and before it was over, DHR was involved in two investigations and had made a determination of sexual child abuse. The police questioned her dad about the abuse, but they did not prosecute for lack of evidence. Essentially, it was her word against his, and she had a diagnosis of bipolar disorder.

With the beginning of 2010, Rebekah's anger came at me like a train. She had no outlet for her emotions, and I was her safe person. She knew I would love her no matter what, and I did. If I said no to her about anything, she would explode. Things got destroyed, doors got knocked off the hinges, and she pulled further into herself. I had lived in chaos for 10 years, but now something was different, I was not only scared for my daughter; I was also scared for me. If something happened to me, who would take care of her?

Because of Rebekah's internal pain that continued to escalate, I agreed to her admission to the psychiatric children's hospital. I prayed that she would come out and be better. She did, but it was only for a bit. During 2010, she was in the hospital five times, different doctors and therapists treating her, but to no avail. The last few times she went to the hospital, I admitted her because she was threatening her own life.

Sometime between the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> hospital admission, I laid everything at the Lord's feet. I told Him I couldn't make it better and that I trusted Him to do whatever had to be done to save Rebekah. Essentially, I took God out of the box I built for Him. I didn't want to lose her, but I was losing her, more and more every day. God answered my prayers. A new friend invited me to her birthday ministry party. She had read *The Bride* and invited Rhonda Calhoun to share her testimony here in our town. I didn't get to go because Rebekah was in the hospital at that time, but my Pastor attended. She bought a book for Rebekah called *Dark but Lovely* and Rhonda wrote a note to my daughter inside. I was amazed to find out that the Calhoun's had a farm in Missouri where hurting women and children could live while being healed. I immediately dismissed the idea for Rebekah because it was so far away. But oh, how I wished I could find a place like that for her to go!

I began reading *Dark but Lovely* to Rebekah every night and she just soaked in every word until one day she said she didn't want to hear it. I knew she was running from God again. She was scared of Him. He was a man, and men had only hurt her. Our home life continued to be a daily struggle, but now school was the same. Rebekah couldn't stay in class, and the counselor would call me to come pick her up almost daily. In desperation, I emailed Rhonda asking if she had a place for Rebekah. When she called me back, we talked about it and she agreed for Rebekah to come to the farm. When I talked to Rebekah about it, to my amazement her response was "Please, take me Mom. I can't do this anymore."

I told her I would plan a flight as soon as possible. She said "No, Mom, if we wait I will never get there, we have to go now." I knew God was making a way when I called my friend and she said, "Pack her things. I'll be there in an hour." We drove all night. The hardest thing I ever had to do was leave Rebekah at the farm...so far from home. I cried all the way home.

God has since told me to come live at the farm as well. I needed a lot more healing than I realized. I've lived the last 12 years trying to meet Rebekah's needs, and not given much attention to mine. I arrived in June, and now live on the farm. Rebekah is a different person. She knows Jesus, she loves Him, and she is no longer afraid. He is healing her heart piece-by-piece, and memory-by-memory. He's putting her back together. She has a real smile now that reaches her eyes. She is not on any medication! I recently asked her, "Rebekah, is Jesus real to you?" She turned around and looked at me with the most surprised look and said, "Mom, Jesus is more real than you are!" That sums it all up, doesn't it? Jesus should be more real to us than the letter you are now holding! He is as close as the air we breathe. He's praying for us, loving us, and waiting for us to look His way.

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