

Nancy's Story

This is a letter written by Nancy to her pastor because she felt God wanted her to share her story with her church so those who had experienced abuse could be set free.

Dear Pastor,

This is what I feel God wants me to share, it's not easy laying yourself bare before the people you have been going to church with for 31 years. But I know the Lord will give me strength to do so. That someone might be helped. One of the scriptures I have held onto for my healing is Isaiah 43:2 When you pass through the waters, I will be with you and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned or even singed –only the dross will be burned and nothing else.

When you are walking through your healing, you feel like the waters, the rivers and the fire will completely destroy you, but that is a lie from the devil. God will give us strength to face whatever comes. Any chamber of our heart that God opens from our past, He will help us to deal with. All our pain, our hurts and disappointments: he will be the one who opens and closes those chambers when He says it's time. He is the keeper of our soul. 1 Corinthians 1:8 He will keep you strong to the end, so you will be blameless on the day of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I had what you call total repressed memory, and through an event of someone sharing how they had been sexually abused God opened up the hidden chambers of my heart. I began to feel a lot of guilt and shame, I didn't know why. I started having nightmares and flashbacks about the abuse, they were so painful and devastating. I became angry with God for bringing this up and wanting me to deal with this at age 52.

There were times when I didn't want to remember what had happened to me in my past, and I asked God to stop, because I couldn't look at the pain any longer, it would be so unbearable. He would allow me to rest for a while, then we would continue our walk through the places I needed to walk through to receive my healing.

I USED TO THINK IT WAS THE CLOTHES THAT I HAD WORN, SOMETHING I SAID OR DID THAT CAUSED THE ABUSE. But God showed me it was none of those things at all, only evil hearts taking advantage of an innocent child.

My father began sexually molesting me at age four, that's the earliest recollection I have, and it continued until I was ten. Even though I was four I slept in a baby bed in my parent's bedroom, I remember my father taking me out of the baby bed and placing me in their bed. The utter terror that I felt was unexplainable: I began to cry. He would plan times together with me where it would be just me and him. I loved and trusted him, it was hard for me to understand what I felt on the inside. I didn't know if it was normal or not. I just knew I felt dirty all the time.

My grandfather also sexually molested me when I went to stay a week in the summer with him and my grandma. I would go out on the front porch and

feel so lonely, believing the lie that no one cared for me. And if they did care they only wanted one thing from me. I never went back to stay with them again.

My best friend was a minister's daughter. I would go over to her house and play sometimes. Her dad was our Pastor. One day she left me alone with her dad while she went upstairs to look for something. While she was gone the Pastor put me up on his lap and told me he loved me and that Jesus loved me too, then he proceeded to molest me. When my friend came back I told her I couldn't come back to play at her house any more. I couldn't tell her what had happened because I felt so ashamed and afraid.

On Easter Sunday morning my whole family went to church, but before we went my father and I went to our grocery store to check on things, because we were closed on Sunday. While we were there my father sexually molested me. We returned home to get the rest of the family for church as if nothing had happened at all. The Pastor gave an altar call at the end of the service and all my family responded except me. The Pastor motioned for me to come down to the altar, but my whole body became frozen with fear. I felt angry and I hated the Pastor and my father. I felt so much confusion and worthlessness. I was filled with hopelessness and despair, along with my guilt and shame. In my heart I felt if this is the kind of love God has then I don't want it.

After we got home from church, I went to our barn and climbed to the highest place. I was going to jump, then it would all be over, I was seven years old. Somehow God sent His angels and stopped me. But my heart became so hard that day that I buried my pain and my anger and I became numb. I learned how to disassociate myself from what was happening. I was there, but yet I wasn't there. This became a real problem in school for me later. I could come outside my body thinking of something else and escape reality. So even through the abuse that continued with my father and other family members, I felt nothing.

God had mercy on me and saved me when I was 21 years of age. He allowed me to experience Him in a very special way and to minister in music under the anointing of His Spirit, and even though God was using me to be a blessing to many people, I could not hide the pain forever.

I had learned how to cope with the pain in a lot of ways. One way I coped was I would get sick and I realized that I could receive sympathy and also be left physically alone. It gave me justification for the abuse and I would be in control because I had promised myself that no one would ever control me again. I learned to lie and manipulate to get what I wanted so I could have it my way. I thought the pain of my past earned me the right to behave the way I did in the present. I decided that I would never be able to trust anyone again.

During the abuse there was pornography involved with my father which brought a spirit of lust that followed me and tormented me constantly for 45 years. There seemed to be no hope. I coped with the abuse, until God said it's time, Nancy, to expose this darkness in your life and to be set free.

Seeing signs of abuse in my life, a friend talked me into going to a Tree of Rest retreat. As the layers of my life began to unfold, and I began to speak out loud about what had happened to me (*note: not everyone talks about their abuse at retreat, only those who choose to do so*) and face my fears.

The devil lost his power over me. No longer could he hold all the guilt and shame over me. No longer would I believe his lies that there was no hope and

that it was all my fault. Ezekiel 18:20 The soul who sins is the one who will die. The daughter shall not bear the guilt of the father nor will the father share the guilt of the daughter. The righteousness of the righteous man will be credited to him and the wickedness of the wicked will be charges to him.

My father had to face his sin and I had to face mine. My sin was the way I coped with everything instead of trusting the Lord to make a way for me. My coping became a habit, a way of life for me...all the lies and manipulation, self-pity, control and the lust. I have repented for my sin. With a repentant heart I forgave my father and all my abusers and I have asked God to have mercy on them. I have repented of finding God lacking because I cried to Him and I didn't think He heard me and didn't think He cared and I couldn't understand how He could ever make things right. But a friend showed me that the first time I cried out to the Lord he heard me and the tide of the battle changed for me. Psalm 56:9 Then my enemy will turn back when I call for help, by this will I know that God is for me.

God has healed my wounded heart. He has taken away the anger, the hate, all the pain, all the hopelessness and despair and confusion. I have been delivered from the strongholds of fear, suicide, lust, and control that the devil had me bound with for so many years.

I have asked God to apply the blood to my sin and I have asked the Lord to place a Round Seal on my heart at the door of my past and I want to say to the devil **THE BLOOD OF JESUS CHRIST HAS DEFEATED YOU! Hallelujah!**

God's purpose is not to destroy us but to restore us. The enemy is the destroyer but God has promised to restore the things the enemy has stolen from our lives, all the years of lost joy, all the times of frustration and defeat, all the hurts of broken relationships. God is building His Kingdom within us. Yes, a Kingdom of joy, love and peace, righteousness, victory, redemption and right relationships. Hallelujah Jesus is Lord!

Sincerely in Christ
Nancy