

# All I wanted was



Mum was a high profile media personality. She worked irregular hours, which meant I spent prolonged periods alone.

Mum dabbled in witchcraft, attending séances and using the Ouija board frequently. Negative spiritual activity often occurred, loud unexplained noises, and the feeling of an evil presence. I found myself in a state of extreme anxiety and panic. At these times, I used to cower in a corner of my bedroom.

I had a set of Children's' Bible Stories which contained the story of Jesus. I used to sit hour after hour looking at the pictures. While doing this I had the sense of being wrapped up in a warm presence like a big blanket, and I would feel safe.

I grew up feeling worthless, and struggled with depression from a very young age. As a young girl, I used to get physically sick at the thought of someone seeing me if I went outside of the house. I often had suicidal thoughts. I even thought of killing my mother. I was a young adult before I had enough self-confidence not to be plagued by thoughts of self - hatred and suicide. I experienced violent outbursts of extreme, blind rage from a young age.

*But all I really wanted was to belong to a loving family.*

Much of my life was spent in searching for love and the sense of belonging. But I ended up mixing with the wrong people, doing the wrong things, and going to the wrong places trying to find that love. I fell in and out of numerous relationships. I drank and smoked heavily. Drugs only made me feel more depressed and so I didn't become involved.

After the break up with one particular partner I entered another relationship with a biker. We had been together for two years, when another biker began to witness to us about Jesus Christ and invited us to church.

I attended church a few times and even accepted Christ but it was a verbal commitment and not from the heart.

Let me begin by painting you a picture. I came from a broken family. My mum and dad divorced before I was four. I lived with mum while my older sister went with dad. I saw dad once a year for two to three weeks, and that is the only contact I had with him up to eleven years of age. Then he disappeared and I never heard from him again until just before my 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.

My mother was abusive. She struggled emotionally for many years after the death of her brother. She suffered frequent bouts of rage, and either my dog or I regularly bore the brunt of these outbursts. I used to hate the sound of my name when she called because nine times out ten, there would be some form of abuse waiting for me. Several times as a child, mum sent me into a 'foster home' type of care. Some stays were only for a couple weeks; some were as long as a year. A few carers took me in as part of the family; others treated me worse than a dog.

Abuse was meted out to me by teachers, nuns, a dentist, employers and from family friends.

# to be loved



When a young man whom I knew committed suicide I became enraged and directed that anger at the Lord. I walked away from him and back into my old life – in and out of live-in relationships, mainly with bikers, and practising witchcraft.

I have been raped twice in my life, once when I was six courtesy of a family friend and secondly when I was twenty-four. It happened at the train station. I was caught from behind and dragged onto the track and into a tunnel. After the rape, I was bashed and thrown onto the tracks with my face in the dirt, with the attacker kneeling on my back, his hands around my throat strangling me to death. I felt the life draining out of my body. In that instant I called on the Lord, asking for his help. Within seconds, the attacker ran off. I don't know if he saw or heard something.

*What I do know is that the Lord Jesus Christ heard the cry of my heart and truly saved my life.*

I was so full of guilt for the way I was living and behaving that I still didn't return to the Lord after this attack. I didn't believe He could possibly forgive me for all I had done. During the next three years, I moved interstate with another biker to Ballina in Northern NSW. During those three years after the rape, the Holy Spirit hounded me at every opportunity.

When I moved to Ballina I discovered the street I lived in was full of churches. Every time I passed a church it would draw me like a magnet and I found myself pulling away, which took a great effort. I became very exhausted by this battle.

One day I got wise and walked into town by another way and was surprised to find yet another church. I can laugh about it now but at the time I didn't think it very funny.

At this time a Christian began calling by regularly and talking to us. I would become very angry and wanted to throw a brick at her because every word she spoke pierced my heart. One Sunday my partner was out on a bike run and I was alone in the unit.

Suddenly a powerful presence came into the lounge room. It was the Lord and He challenged me to choose whom I would serve. I chose to serve the Lord Jesus Christ.

After the Lord's visitation my legs were like jelly and I could hardly walk. I managed to get to the phone box and ring the woman who had been talking to us and ask her for a ride to church. At first there was a stunned silence.

I shared with her my experience and she was ecstatic. That night I publicly accepted Jesus as my Saviour and Lord and was filled with the Holy Spirit from that moment.

I have been walking with the Lord for twenty-two years. I found that healing for my wounded heart came through God's amazing love, grace, and forgiveness and through my willingness to forgive others. I now have a good relationship with dad and a positive relationship with mum for which I praise God.

*It hasn't always been easy, but the Lord's promise to me is that He will always be with me and that nothing can separate me from His amazing love and grace.*

That is His promise to you as well. He is the only one who can satisfy your hungry and thirsty soul and meet your every need. How do I know? Because He has done this for me, praise the Lord!

*Sue Rodda, Port Augusta*

