

## Shannon Andrews' Story

I thought I had everything, until I lost it all. Then, I looked up to God, who had given it to me in the first place. He continued to provide all my needs, but it was a journey.

The turning point for me in my spiritual journey of learning to depend on Jesus was an experience at a homeless shelter. I learned salvation and was freed from abuse when I was homeless, living in this shelter, and I had lost everything. In the large, dark dormitory room where I tried to sleep, there was chaos all around me, as I lay in my bed. Around me, people seemed to be working through their demons. It was scary.

I noticed a beam of light shining under a nearby door, the only thing I could see that dark night. I lay in the dark, shuddering from all my fears. That little sliver of light was like the thin ray of faith in Jesus I clung to; I remember that hour was when I looked up and became obedient to Christ.

I began walking with Jesus that night, after I had been stripped of everything- house, nice cars, a good job the past twelve years I had been so proud of, and just being very self-reliant. From then on, life was radically different for me.

I continued to seek Jesus first, not my own will. He has led me to serving in my church with the prison outreach, and to helping Abigail's Archangels Domestic Violence Prevention, and healed me, despite a life full of rejection and abandonment up to that time. I have found a best friend in Jesus. My own father had abandoned me, but Jesus will never abandon me.

The more you seek Jesus, the more you see Him. Also, the more you see Him, the more you seek Him. He reveals Himself in a rich way to our hearts. I am comforted. The more I cling to Jesus, the better I can face challenges in this world.

Several factors that helped me out of abusive relationships include:

- I began seeking an education for a new career (in criminal justice.)
- Church friendships helped me heal from abandonment.
- I have rebuilt self-esteem with academic excellence in getting a master's education.
- One mentor watched me develop as an accomplished dancer. He encouraged me when he said, "You have finally found a way to gain and enjoy respect." Dance is a gift, a way for me to find joy. I found friendships leading a professional dance troupe, as well as personal achievement, healthy exercise, and even became an accomplished individual.
- I gained in Father God the best father I could have, who will never leave or forsake me.

Sometimes we FEEL all alone, but THEN we REMEMBER His love endures forever. He will never leave us, praise the Lord!

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