

Living
THROUGH
THE
Pain

The Lonely Me
A M E M O I R

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Healing
*H*ert
PUBLISHING

Preface

“Our greatest glory is not in ever failing, but in rising up every time we fail.”

Ralph Waldo Emerson



This book deals with the tragedy and pain I endured. It clearly explains you can't outrun your shame and guilt. I had been raised a strong Christian, yet in my shame, I turned away from God, only barely reaching out to Him from time to time in true desperation. It was only when I was fifty that I finally started seeking God at a deeper level in my life. I realized He had always been there, carrying me most of the time, never abandoning me and, yes, He had long forgiven me of my sins. I had just not learned how to forgive myself.

My life has been a long and difficult journey, but I finally arrived at a place where I can find peace at the end of the road. I am still growing every day, but I now grow together daily with God instead of by myself. I hope you will read my book and join me in my painful journey to find peace in my soul. My wish is that my story may help you put your life into perspective and turn toward God regardless of what journey you are on—you are never alone.



C H A P T E R 1

My Story

“To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven.”

Ecclesiastes 3:1



My book begins with a short story I wrote in my senior high school English class almost exactly one year to the date of the fatal accident.

“The Lonely Me”

10/12/77

A lonely figure kneeled quietly in the dark, whispering prayers as tears streamed down her frightened face. That lonely face belonged to me as my disillusionment was stirred about a year ago.

The weekend had started off quite pleasant. My acceptance on the tennis team sent a thrill through my heart early Friday morning. Excited, I hurried home to tell my mom the good news. As usual, everyone was too busy to listen. With the pain building inside, I quietly

walked to my room to pack for our trip. At around five o'clock we drove out of the driveway leaving behind a cuddly white Alaskan Husky and his companion, a golden-brown miniature German Shepherd.

We drove to the airport and met my brother Ronnie and his wife. My brother had been a pilot for quite some time now, and I was confident of the trip that lay ahead. We were to fly to A&M to celebrate my brother's twenty-first birthday, and there I would remain for the weekend while my family flew on to Dallas for a convention.

That night was a memorable occasion. At dinner the family sat around the table eating with cheery smiles bursting from their faces. However, outside a thunderstorm came echoing through the walls on my brother's trailer. I could almost feel the nerves tightening as fear swept over me. I knew my family was to fly to Dallas in a small twin-engine plane, and the storm was steadily growing worse. After a family council, we were convinced it would be best if they left early the next morning. Dawn woke on a harsh day ahead that would seem to me like an eternity.

Before I awakened, my family had left the trailer and taken off at the airport. Around ten o'clock, my brother woke me to tell me that my parents had not arrived in Dallas. As my body trembled, a sudden presence engulfed me. I knew what had happened, yet I could not admit it! After a telephone call to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), my brother and I were informed that the wreckage had been found with people still alive. Panic cringed in our bones as we slowly broke down.

A friend drove us to the site of the accident, but we could only talk to the police, who refused to let us go out to the wreck. After being instructed to go to the hospital, we sobbingly drove off. Little did we know that a four-hour wait lay ahead of us. Finally we were told to go to the funeral home where they were being taken care of. Four thin black bags were lying in an open garage as we drove into the driveway of the funeral home. We knew that they were all dead. For the first time a queasy feeling swept through my body as I was shaking. Sweat poured off my forehead, mixing with the stream of tears running down my face.

Questions, questions, and even more questions! Where was your father born? What was your mother's maiden name? How old was your brother? Your sister-in-law's full name is what? After the death certificates were filled out, a long trip home awaited my brother and me.

That night became a nightmare. The news reports, the telephone calls, the people who dropped by made me want to scream. Sleep would take control of my body every now and then, but nightmares would appear and I suddenly found myself sitting straight up in bed screaming at the top of my lungs. Why? Why them, God? It has to be a lie. Why?

The next week was traumatic. At sixteen I had to face adult problems. Friends deserted me in my time of need, school work was slowly piling up, and the house needed attending to, but sorrow kept me strangely staring into space.

Well, after almost a year now, the pain still exists.

The reality is still there, but probably will never be completely faced. At times I hear my mother call me and I come running only to discover it is my imagination. I cannot say if it will ever get easier, but the pain still exists as if it was yesterday. I guess the hardest thing was to grow up overnight, but when one has no choice, there is not much one can do. Without a mother or father to guide me, a brother to tease me, or a sister-in-law to talk to, it is awfully rough at times. My only living brother lives across town, and I live by myself with a small dog as company. The only happiness in my life now lies with my boyfriend Christopher who has led me through an awful lot of hard times when I thought I would not make it. He has helped to make me strong when I am weak and to strive to live for tomorrow.

I hope that the loneliness in me will leave later in life, but right now, I am still that lonely figure kneeling in the dark, whispering prayers with tears streaming down my frightened face.



That was written by me when I was seventeen years old as a writing assignment for school. It is strange to think this paper, which reflects so much personal pain, won me a national writing award and provided me with numerous English scholarship opportunities to various colleges, none of which I accepted; yet, looking back and re-reading it, I now find it hard to understand why anyone who would read that paper couldn't feel my pain and reach out to help

me. Here it is thirty–five years later, and reading it immediately transports me back to that lonely girl as she is always inside me. Only through the grace of God have I been successful in living through that pain as well as the painful experiences soon to follow. My desire in writing this book is to provide courage to others who face serious trauma in their lives so they, too, can “live through the pain.”