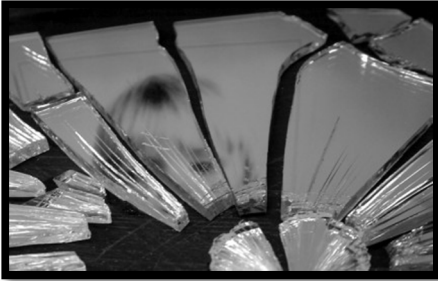


## What Happens When Life Gets Broken?

**1 Corinthians 10:13: (NASB) *No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.***



Tragedy is a part of life. We all know those who have suffered through it. Many times it gets the best of people, and sometimes people cope, but occasionally you find those who truly overcome it, to a point that the tragedy is merely a memory and can serve as a tool of growth and example. Today we will tell such a story. It is a true story of bad things happening and how faith in God, perseverance and the right help transformed those bad things into overcoming lives...

**Warning! Due to the graphic nature of the events we will discuss, this program may not be suitable for children. Parents, please use your best discretion!**

When we say we're going to talk about tragedy, we really mean that. This is the story of a girl named Amy and her family, and just a few days after Amy's 15th birthday, she was raped. It was a trauma that took years to get past. Amy and her family are here to tell us of this journey. Amy, good morning.



AMY: Good morning.

RICK: How are you?

AMY: I'm doing well. How are you?

RICK: I'm doing well. Are you nervous?

AMY: Yes.

RICK: Well, that's expected. So, Amy, let's get this started by saying: How is it that you know me?

AMY: Well, you're my dad.

RICK: Okay. So, folks, this is the story of my own family. We have Amy here with us. She is my youngest daughter. Amy, your sister Emily is here with us.

EMILY: Hello.

RICK: Hey, how are you?



EMILY: Good.

RICK: Are you nervous?

EMILY: Yes.

AMY: We have Amy, Emily, my two daughters; then we have my wife Trish sitting here. Good morning, Hon.

TRISH: Good morning.

RICK: We're going to tell you our story, the story of a period of our life that was, I think for all of us, a dark and difficult time. I want to tell you the ending as we start the beginning, because the ending of the story is *they lived "thankfully ever after."* The whole point of the story is to share a deep and dark trauma of our lives to show you faith really can bring us through things that seem to be impossible. And so we're going to be very blunt about what happened to us and how we were able to deal with it. We are breaking this story up into chapters.

### Chapter 1: REBELLION

RICK: And that has to do with my daughter Amy. And just to get started, let's put this in a scriptural perspective:

Romans 3:23: *For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*

RICK: We are going to be talking about a circumstance where Amy was raped 12 years ago. And in that circumstance, you were not the most obedient child in the world at that time of life, were you?

AMY: No, I definitely was not.

RICK: Okay. The first point I want to make that's important is: just because someone isn't listening does not mean they deserve to have really bad things like that happen. We all in our family know that, understand that, and that is the first basic point that needs to be made. Just because someone makes mistakes doesn't mean they deserve other things to happen. Mistakes have consequences, but there are some consequences that come out of mistakes



that are undeserved. Rape is such a consequence. It is undeserved. Nobody deserves that kind of thing happening in their lives, but it does happen.

So, let's just put this all in perspective. Who was doing what at this time in our family life and what did life look like? Emily, let's start with you. You're older than Amy. How much older?

EMILY: About a year and a half.

RICK: So, where were you in school and all that kind of stuff?

EMILY: I was a junior in high school.

RICK: And how was life?

EMILY: It was okay. I mean, you know, had its ups and downs as a teenager, but things were good, I guess.

RICK: Were you a rebel?

EMILY: No, not at all.

RICK: Not at all. As a matter of fact, just a quick sideline about when you would do something wrong.

EMILY: Yeah, you would just look at me. Even if you didn't ask if I did something wrong, I would confess anyway.

RICK: So you and your sister were very, very different.

EMILY: Yes.

RICK: And, Amy, at that point in time in life, where were you?

AMY: I had just started high school.

RICK: So you just turned 15.

AMY: Just turned 15, just started high school, really drawn to the rebellious crowd. Me and Emily were in the same school finally. We weren't really meshing you could say, didn't hang out. I was really into partying and lying about where I was and who I was with and all that jazz.

RICK: We'll develop that part of the story as we go further. So, Emily, you were more the studious stay-in-line kind of a kid.

EMILY: Yup.

RICK: Amy, you were more the "who cares about the lines."

AMY: Yup.

RICK: Of course, our son Tim is not here with us. He was older than both of you. Tim also had his rebellious time in his mid-teen years. We're not going into that today. From the kids' standpoint, that's where they were. Tim was in his first year of college.

So, Trish, when you look back at that point in time of our lives raising our kids, we now have three that are teenagers, what's your perspective of that? How did you see it all unfolding, and what was your sense of our children?

TRISH: Well, you know, it's teenagers, and if you can survive teenagerhood, then God blesses you with grandchildren. (laughter) All three of them had their different scenarios in life that they were managing, and at this point in time Amy was the one we had to be like detectives with, because she was definitely tricky.

RICK: That gives you a sense of what the family dynamics were at that point of our lives. And in going through this now, Emily, Amy said the two of you did not mesh at that point. What was the problem the two of you had? Earlier in life you guys could not be separated.

EMILY: Right. Well, I wasn't exactly the cool kid in high school, so I think that had a lot to do with it. I was her big sister, and when you start seeing signs of trouble, I used to read her diaries and kind of try to see what she was up to, because I knew something wasn't quite right there. And she wasn't really a big fan of me confronting her and whatnot.

RICK: So she kind of shut you out.

EMILY: Oh, yeah.

RICK: And, folks, understand, this is an important introduction, if you will, because if you understand where we were in the family and then you see the tragedy happen you say, okay, what happens to all of those pieces? So, there was a fragmentation between the two of you, and it was not comfortable.

EMILY: No.

RICK: Amy, let me just ask you: You're 15. You start the year at 14; you turn 15 in March, your freshman year. So, your sister just wasn't worth your time or what?

AMY: Our lifestyles were very different, and she wasn't really conforming to mine the way I was hoping. So I just kind of pushed her away and kind of shut her out because I couldn't get away with as much as I wanted to with her.

RICK: That sets up a very difficult situation. And there's not a lot of communication - again, folks, if we had a camera in the studio and you could see the two of you now, it is like, "I'm sorry to say this. I really don't mean to say this now, but it was true then!"





That's part of the "thankfully ever after." I want to keep going back to the thankfully ever after, because that helps to tell the story. And we want you to hear the story - as hard as it is to listen to - because the ending is that all the pieces, by God's grace, pull themselves together.

**I want to go to another Scripture here. It outlines the time that we live and the tragedies we must deal with:**

2 Timothy 3:1-5: (NASB) *<sup>1</sup>But realize this that in the last days difficult times will come. <sup>2</sup>For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, <sup>3</sup>unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, <sup>4</sup>treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, <sup>5</sup>holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; Avoid such men as these.*

**RICK:** When you read that Scripture, there are a lot of little pieces that kind of come out and you say, Wow, look at that in relation to our life! That's what I do. You see the *disobedient to parents* and the *treacherous, reckless*. These are hard things to describe your own child. But, Amy, you were reckless at times with your very, very young life.

**AMY:** Yes, I was.

**RICK:** And there were prices that were paid as a result of that. And you are no longer reckless.

**AMY:** No, I am not.

**RICK:** You are the mother of my grandson.

AMY: Yes, I am.

RICK: So you done good, Kid. That's all I got to say! Trish, remember when Amy was really little? What was the conversation we had about her when she was about two years old?

TRISH: Well, in my eyes, I had three beautiful children. Amy was just a darling little two-year old, beautiful. And you said to me, "We're going to have trouble with this one." And I was like, "How could you say that? I mean she's just so cute." And he said, "Yup, but we're going to have trouble with her." She was only two.

RICK: She had that look in her eyes. She did. She had that defiant look in her eye. I'll never forget it thinking, oh, boy, there's something there that's going to have to be dealt with. I hate it when I'm right sometimes!

At this point we have laid out for you a little bit of the family dynamics, where we all were at the time. As we get into the next segment, we're going to talk about what happened and how it happened. Then we're going to start to walk through a very dark and difficult road of dealing with tragedy in a personal life.

### How do you prepare for those things in life that are unthinkable?

We are going to be talking about a rape, just to be plain and simple, put it on the table. The word elicits a dramatic reaction in most of us. And most of us can't even imagine what it would be like if that entered into your life. Well, it entered into ours. Nobody wants it. How do you prepare somebody for that? You really can't prepare ahead of time, because it is so unrealistic.

JONATHAN: It's unthinkable.

RICK: It really is.

**This becomes a theme of trudging through the darkness of such an experience:**

Proverbs 3:5-6: (NASB) Trust in the LORD with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. <sup>6</sup>In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight.

RICK: That Scripture really, really helped to guide us in very difficult times as parents. Let's get into the discussion, the event on March 8, 2002, 12 years ago. What happened?

Emily, let's actually start with you. You're her older sister. We established she didn't like you so much at this stage in life, because you were looking out for her and she didn't want to be looked out for.

EMILY: She asked me to drive her to the local pool hall.

RICK: The pool hall was totally, completely, utterly off limits in our household!

EMILY: And I did it because I wanted to be cool, and I wanted her to like me. I gave her a stipulation before I would let her out of the car. She had told me a couple of stories about this kid that she had hung out with occasionally.

RICK: And he was a senior in high school and she was a freshman.

EMILY: The stories made me really uncomfortable. I told her on a separate occasion that it takes one time for someone to force you to have sex with him. I said, don't hang out with him. I don't like him. I never met him, but as a sister I just didn't like what she was sharing.

So, I remember that night telling her, I'll drop you off, only if he shows up, you call me and I'll come pick you up. I thought that might justify my bad actions there.

RICK: You were trying to be who you are. You are that "I-look-out-for-people" person. That's who you are. You're a registered nurse. You ooze watching out for people. And you were watching out for her, but obviously she wasn't going to listen.

EMILY: Nope.

RICK: You drop her off. You knew you shouldn't do it, but you do it anyway because you desperately want to be connected. Through the school year, you were trying to mend fences between the two of you. You would write her little things and all of that.

EMILY: There was a couple years there that she didn't really talk to me. And once Tim had moved out and she got his room - because we had a shared room for so long - that really separated our communication. So, I would send her cards and notes and little books. I once gave her a little bunny that went, "I love you!" She says she used to listen to it privately, but she would roll her eyes at me when I'd leave her things.

RICK: The whole point is you're setting up for a difficult situation. Trish, touch really quickly on the kind of ground rules we would set up. We would try to be so good, efficient and clear on what we were expecting to happen.

TRISH: Well, I don't know if it's with every parent, but being Christian, we were far more strict than most. And there were so many things that we were very adamant that could not happen, that she could not do. And when the kids had friends, some of them were from homes that were very broken. So, you had to be careful as to how much leeway you gave them when they were with these kids.

Amy had a good, good friend that would stay over our house. And she would ask me time and time and time again to stay over there. I kept saying no, because I did not have confidence in this family. I finally met the grandmother and the mother and I talked to them, and she wanted to stay over. This was the same evening. And I talked to them about assuring me that they would be there and they would be watching, there would be supervision. And they assured me yes, they would be there. And, of course, that just wasn't true.

RICK: The moral of this part of the story is sometimes you do the best you can and still things can fall apart. And when you look back on it, we can tell you that's what happens. That's what life is.

AMY: So, my sister Emily dropped me off at the pool hall. I definitely guilted her into it. I was supposed to be at my friend's house, but we did not go there. We went to the pool hall. We met up with a group of friends of ours. The particular kid that she was talking about was there, and we went to one of their houses, but the mom was away for the weekend.

So, um, you know, there was drinking going on, and I definitely had too much to drink. I just remember him sort of watching me and feeding it to me almost; like paying very close attention.

RICK: Making sure you were always...

AMY: Yeah, just really watching me. There was like a plan going on, looking back, I can see that.

RICK: This is the guy that Emily said to you, do not hang out with him. If he is around, I will come pick you up.

AMY: Right. So, you know, I definitely overdid it. I was in over my head. Next thing I know, he's raping me. And I just remember thinking to myself, I don't know what I'm doing and not being able to move or fight back and just...it was like my body was a rag doll and just not being able to get out of the situation, and just constantly thinking over and over again, I don't know what's happening. I don't know what to do. I don't know what I'm doing.

RICK: So do you remember how you ended up getting out of the situation?

AMY: I ended up finally getting enough power almost to just kind of pull myself out of the situation and went into the next room, because there were other people there. And then I got very sick and my other friend took care of me for the rest of the night.

RICK: And there it is. You have this event that happens as a result of just being in a place that you're not supposed to be. Again, and I want to stress that just because someone makes a mistake, it doesn't mean they deserve such a consequence as this. It is never, ever, ever deserved. I don't care how bad a mistake you make in life, some things should not be.

I want to be clear because, Amy, you are way beyond all of that now, and we, as a family, have gone through all of this time and time and time again. And you know that none of us look at you as, well, you shouldn't have been there. You brought it upon yourself.

AMY: Right, absolutely.

RICK: And, again, folks, that's one of the things that happens so often in people's lives. You get a sense people bring it upon themselves. Not so.



**Psalms 103:17-18:** (NASB) *<sup>17</sup>But the loving-kindness of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting on those who revere Him, and His righteousness to children's children, <sup>18</sup>To those who keep His covenant and remember His precepts to do them.*





RICK: I can tell you this does not seem like the lovingkindness of God. When you have an experience like this and it's your daughter, you don't feel like, well, this is God just showering His love upon me and my family. That's not how you feel. What we need to find is what is God's overruling in such a situation? We are always talking about the positiveness of God and his plan, but this is a dark time in our lives, and it doesn't feel like there is kindness or anything good happening with it.



After this happened, Amy, you didn't tell anybody.

AMY: No.

RICK: When you picked her up, was there something about...?

EMILY: Yeah. I picked her up the next morning from where she was supposed to be. She had this bruise on her forehead and against her neck. She looked very pale to me. I said, "Are you okay? Did something happen?" I knew something was wrong. She was walking a little funny, but she wouldn't tell me anything.

I just didn't know what to do with it. I didn't want to make assumptions and say, Oh, Mom, Dad, something may have happened. But she just didn't look right to me.

RICK: So you had a sense, but you weren't sure.

EMILY: Right.

RICK: How did we end up finding out about this? You were actually confronted by somebody about this afterwards.

AMY: Right. Well, it happened over the weekend. I went back to school Monday, and it started going around; he started telling people basically.

RICK: What did he tell people?

AMY: He kind of conquered his quest.

RICK: He didn't tell people he raped you.

AMY: He was very proud. And somebody who was a friend of his heard about it, and she was actually Tim's ex-girlfriend. And me and her did not get along. But when she heard it, it didn't make sense to her. She just could not put it together. She knew something was kind of off.

So she approached me about it and asked me what happened. And I told her. And she was surprisingly supportive and angry, not with me. And then she ended up calling Tim.

RICK: She called Tim, and Tim told us. And so then we find out. So we find out on a Monday afternoon what happens. And we're going to get into more of that reaction in a few minutes. So we find out in a very unusual way. You had no intention of revealing anything about this.

AMY: No. I wasn't going to tell a soul.

JONATHAN: And, Rick, how often does that happen with a victim?

RICK: It happens all the time. And if it's not found out, then the injury, the emotional, the mental, the physical injuries all fester and they only get worse. And that's part of this story - the beauty of the vulnerability of being exposed as to what happened. Because if you allow yourself to be exposed to what happened, then the healing can begin - and only then. So, that's an important point.

We want to take a quick moment here and go to a verse from a song that became Amy's theme song for life at this time, and we are going to explain more about this.



"Hazard to Myself," Pink

Everyday I fight a war against the mirror  
I can't take the person starin' back at me  
I'm a hazard to myself

Don't let me get me  
I'm my own worst enemy  
Its bad when you annoy yourself  
So irritating  
Don't wanna be my friend no more  
I wanna be somebody else

RICK: I would drive Amy to school, and it would come on the radio and she would just look at me and say, "That's me. I'm just a hazard to myself."

I could see just how she was not able to cope with her just being inside her own body. As a father, you look at your daughter and you're thinking, what do I do to help to mend this experience?

This is the reality so many people go through. This is what happens in life. Tragedy happens. The question is: Where is our faith to walk us through it?

RICK: You probably heard at the end of the last segment there is a lot of Kleenex being passed around this room, and there will be for the next couple segments.

This is a story of the darkest time in my life and not something I like to talk about, but it is important because we all need to understand that faith can deliver us and hope can be there and there can be a "thankfully ever after."



## Chapter 2: Victim

So we have a victim now. We have a victim of rape, and it is my youngest daughter Amy.

We were beginning to find out. Emily, I want to start with you. You had a hunch something was not right. You find out. What do you feel?

EMILY: Obviously anger; a lot of guilt.

RICK: Because you brought her to the place you weren't supposed to. And, folks, you know, I remember talking to my daughter about that. And she came to me and she said, "Dad, I think it's my fault." So we talked about it.

I said, "Look, it's not your fault. You got to put this in perspective. We all make mistakes, and just sometimes things happen as a result. But it's not your fault." That's something you really had to fight with for a long, long time.

EMILY: Oh, yeah. So much so that a lot of the stuff when we were talking about everything and the events, I apparently blocked it out. There's a lot that I just don't remember.

RICK: That just shows you were an adolescent yourself, going through all the normal traumas of your own life and then you get this thing piled upon you. So, obviously it's a very difficult thing.

Folks, again, in your own lives, if you're dealing with such a thing, guilt is one of the big things that gets in the way of healing, and we have to learn how to put guilt where it belongs. And it belongs in the hands of God Almighty. That's where it belongs.

Trish, when you found out, I called you at work, and I told you that you had to come home. What was your reaction?

TRISH: Well, I wanted you to tell me why I had to come home, and you didn't want to tell me. I said I had to know if one of my children had a problem. Then you told me. I, fortunately, answered the phone in an off-side room because I just screamed on the phone. I just couldn't believe it. Then my co-workers were there with me, and my boss obviously let me come home. I just was so shocked and upset. It was difficult.

RICK: To say the least. And it was. It was a hysterical moment in life for every one of us. I'm the dad. Everyone in our family always looked to me to give them direction, and I had no idea. I had no idea what to do with this. I had not a clue how to handle this because this was way beyond my wildest fears.



Isaiah 50:6-7: (NASB) *<sup>6</sup>I gave my back to those who strike me, and my cheeks to those who pluck out the beard; I did not cover my face from humiliation and spitting. <sup>7</sup>For the Lord GOD helps me, therefore, I am not disgraced; Therefore, I have set my face like flint, and I know that I will not be ashamed.*

RICK: *I have set my face like flint, I know that I will not be ashamed, that's what ended up happening to me as a result of this experience.*

I want to set the stage because my son Tim is on the line calling in, and this part of the story has very much to do with him.

We had gone to the hospital, and I'm going to come back to that in a few minutes. We came home sitting around our dining room table having gone to the hospital. Having your daughter go through the whole rape kit thing at the hospital is something you don't...I'll get back to that.

We're sitting around the table. Everyone is looking at me, Dad, what do we do? Nobody's saying it, but the tears and just the silence was deafening. And Tim is sitting on my right side at the table. Tim was very sick at this point. He had mono, and he was so weak he could hardly move. He was sitting there and gets a phone call. He puts the phone up to his left ear. There's a deep voice who doesn't say hello, it just says, "I understand you have a mess that needs cleaning up."

I heard that. I instinctively knew that somebody was going to seek vengeance for my daughter. And he said, "What? What? Who's this?" And the voice said it again. He said, "I understand you have a mess that needs cleaning up."

At that moment, I had to make a choice because I wanted - I hate to tell you this, but it's true. I wanted to pretend I didn't hear it, because I wanted there to be vengeance. I wanted somebody to hurt for hurting my daughter. I thought for that second, I thought, I can't do that.

I grabbed my son's arm. I looked him in the eye and I said, "Tim, call off the dogs. Do you hear me? Call off the dogs. We're going to do this right."

It was that moment that helped me understand what my role was going to be as a father. It is to make sure I protect my daughter according to law, according to righteousness, according to wisdom and not according to the emotion of wanting to get back at someone. And he did. He called off the dogs thankfully, and we were able to move forward on that.

On the line now is Tim. Good morning, Tim.

TIM: Good morning.

RICK: How are you?

TIM: I'm alright. I'm sitting here with my wife Sharon. It was a very difficult time for everybody, that's for sure. I remember, I was just telling her getting that phone call from my ex while I was living in Bristol, Connecticut - I was in college - and thankfully through providential overruling, I was extremely sick and was not physically able to get that angry and get out of the house. Because if I was, it might have been a different story.





RICK: And you're right. We've talked about that. God overruled you being as ill as you were.

For folks who don't know, my son is in the Coast Guard.

He is in an antiterrorism unit. He chases bad guys.

JONATHAN: He's a strong guy.

RICK: I was so thankful you were so sick because I don't know if I would have been able to control you. I would have tried, but I don't know. Because there's so much rage at somebody hurting your sister or your daughter or whoever it is without provocation like that.

TIM: Absolutely. It was definitely a huge trial. I remember sitting at that table and getting that phone call and, you know, everything wanted me to, in my being, wanted me to do whatever it took to make whoever it was pay, because as the girls pointed out earlier, the three of us were not very close when we were in our teenage years. We just weren't. We all went our separate ways, Amy and I a little more because we both had a rebellious streak. But we were not like we are now. But still nobody hurts your family.

RICK: Right. Tim, thanks. Appreciate it.

TIM: Not a problem.

RICK: Folks, I want to tell a little bit more. We got the initial reactions, but I want you to feel my own perspective what happened and the battle of my own rage and putting it in the hands of God rather into my own hands.

When we went to the hospital, Trish was able to go in with Amy and left me out in the waiting room. After a long period of time, I started asking questions and nobody would tell me anything. No one would tell me anything at all. I started to get a little frustrated. "Look, it's my daughter in there. I need to know what's going on." "Sir, calm down." "What do you mean calm down? That's my 15-year-old daughter. I want to know what's happening." They said, "Sir, we're going to have to ask you to calm down."

I wasn't yelling, but I was strong. I'm not a big guy. But they sent the police officer into the room to stand next to me so that I would, quote, "calm down." And the fact is, I wouldn't because she was 15. It was private and blah, blah, blah, blah. Finally, after a period of time, Trish came out and I was allowed to come in and see my daughter.

Amy, remember you and I were sitting there? You were in the hospital gown. Let me paint the picture. She's gone through this whole rape kit thing, the humiliation of the experience, the humiliation of being in the hospital. And I'm looking at her. And you know, hospital gowns are short. And I look at her thighs. And she's got these bruises on her thighs in the shape of fingers. You could literally see on her thighs fingerprints from the force that was used. She had a bruise on her neck. And, you know, I cannot describe to you the frustration of a father having seen the evidence of his daughter being abused. It is just...it is just too much.

# Precious Promise

**Psalms 34:15,18:** (NASB) *<sup>15</sup>The eyes of the LORD are toward the righteous and His ears are open to their cry. <sup>18</sup>The LORD is near to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.*

RICK: That's the type of promise I clung to. I changed my entire life around to try to take care of my daughter, because I decided when the phone call came and Tim was on the phone and I heard the statement, it focused what I was supposed to do. And I had a sense if I don't fight, I could lose my daughter. And I told God, I told Him out loud, I told Him quietly, I told Him in a pool of tears, I am not losing my daughter without a fight and I'm going to fight with her, whatever it takes.

So I changed my entire life around. I would take her to school in the morning. I would pick her up from school in the afternoon. Remember, we would sit downstairs in the family room, and what would we do?

AMY: We would watch General Hospital.

RICK: And you wouldn't talk. Months and months and months of her not talking. We would watch this silly soap opera. I decided I had to spend time with her just to let her know she's not alone. Even if there is not a word exchanged, I would never stop spending time with her until we could break through this thing.

So, we went to the first counselor, and how did that go for you?

AMY: Not too well.

RICK: She wasn't that good for you, was she?

AMY: No, definitely not. Her approach really wasn't for me, let's put it that way.

RICK: We go through that. Now we're getting near to the end of the school year. There's about six weeks left of the school year. You're still getting in trouble.

AMY: Yes.

RICK: Because this is just a reaction from all of this stuff. So, Amy had got into trouble. Trish remembers she lied about something several times.

We are sitting with the counselor, and I'm trying to figure out a way to keep her out of trouble. What ends up happening is you had lied six times about something, right?

AMY: Yes.

RICK: So, I pronounced that she had to be grounded for six weeks, because I know there was six weeks left of the school year, and grounding at that time meant she couldn't see any of her friends, she couldn't talk to any of her friends. She would either be at home with us, with Tim or with Emily, and that was it because we knew we had to break the cycle. So, we used those lies to

get us to the end of the school year because there needed to be new friends. It comes down to fighting for the life of those that you love.

**Psalms 121:1-3:** (NASB) *<sup>1</sup>I will lift up my eyes to the mountains; from whence shall my help come? <sup>2</sup>My help comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth. <sup>3</sup>He will not allow your foot to slip; He who keeps you will not slumber.*



RICK: Amy, sum up some of the things that were happening in your mind as we went through all of this part of your life.

AMY: Well, I definitely lost a sense of self-worth. I felt like I lost a part of me, of who I was. I battled with guilt and just going back and forth with myself, just, oh, maybe it wasn't so bad. Maybe I'm overthinking this. Am I getting somebody in trouble who doesn't deserve it? Maybe he didn't mean it that way - almost trying to justify the whole situation, because it's just what your mind does and feeling guilty like it was my fault, and maybe I shouldn't be reporting this and just feeling totally at fault.

RICK: And you wouldn't talk.

AMY: No.

RICK: That was the other problem. So for a long, long time we would spend time together in silence.

AMY: Right.

RICK: But we would spend time together, whether you liked it or not or wanted it or not, you couldn't get rid of me. By God's grace, I worked in a business where I could rearrange my schedule.

Just to reiterate Amy's struggle, when I would drive her to school in the mornings there was a song that would come on very often called Hazard to Myself from Pink. To her it exemplified her life.



"Hazard to Myself." Pink

Doctor, doctor won't you please prescribe me somethin'  
A day in the life of someone else?  
'cause I'm a hazard to myself

Don't let me get me  
I'm my own worst enemy  
It's bad when you annoy yourself

RICK: Jonathan, the interesting thing for me was I never asked, "God, why me?" To me, the big question is: "What do I do?" And I would ask God over and over, "What do I do?" And I would plead with Him for wisdom and plead for strength. It didn't mean just because I didn't ask why, it didn't mean it didn't hurt. It just meant, okay, I accept it, but what do I *do*? And not knowing what to do many nights after everybody else was asleep, I would finally go to bed and I would just cry myself to sleep.



I remember that vividly. The pillow on both sides of my face would be soaking wet because I just didn't know if I could just do what He was wanting me to do.

But you know what? Faith delivers us!

Trish, any sense of that you want to share?

TRISH: Well, after this happened, Amy and I were sitting in her room on her bed, and I was holding her. And she asked me, "When would it stop hurting?" And I said, "I don't know. I don't know. I don't have the answer to that."

I didn't say this out loud to her, because I wasn't sure how it would go over. But I knew that at that moment God was holding both of us, and I felt that God was holding our family in His arms, as I was holding her in my arms. I felt very confident. And I did not want to go down the road of, "why me?" I was baffled as to why the Lord didn't prevent this, because I knew He could have. I knew He could have prevented this. But He chose to allow it to happen. He let it play out for a reason, and I didn't know why.

But that Scripture you quoted, *Trust in the Lord with all your heart, lean not to your own understanding, acknowledge him in all your ways and He will direct your path*, was my theme for that moment to allow God to help us. And I knew He would.

### CHAPTER 3: SURVIVING



A caller from the Philippines says: I was sexually abused from my own brother. My mother didn't want to believe it. It was very painful. It took time but I decided I will follow God even if I don't understand. One day He will make me understand. I'm thinking about the people who are experiencing this, and I congratulate you for your courage. It is not easy. It is good to express this. Many people are listening. It's just amazing because you know the truth, and we know that God will bring healing...God be praised! Psalms 34:18

RICK: Amy, this is what we talked about, the reason you're doing this is because other people have had the same experience.

AMY: Absolutely. If I could reach through the phone and hug you, I would. Thank you very much for calling.

RICK: It's something that is common ground in our world, and faith can help us to cope.

Isaiah 43:1-2: (NASB) *<sup>1</sup>But now, thus says the LORD, your Creator, O Jacob, and He who formed you, O Israel, Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name; you are Mine! <sup>2</sup>When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; And through the rivers, they will not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be scorched, nor will the flame burn you.*

RICK: For me, as Dad in this circumstance, those are the types of promises that I clung to with every fiber in my life - just to say I know God will deliver us in whatever way He sees fit. I just want to do what I'm supposed to do. I want to bring glory to His name by doing this lawfully and wisely and with the greatest passion of my heart and my life. So we kept trying.





JONATHAN: Rick, there's another part of it. Justice, also. I know you're big on it. You wanted proper justice, not anger, justice meted out.

RICK: We told Amy throughout all of this that we were going to let the justice system work for us. We're going to talk about the result of that in a little while, not quite yet.

Amy, you're 15 years old at this point in time. Through your sophomore year, you are turning 16. You don't have a lot of faith at this point, do you?

AMY: No.

RICK: You and I were talking about this. You had faith in *my* faith.

AMY: Exactly.

RICK: So we became in a lot of ways inseparable even though we weren't communicating a lot because that was your link to the real world. For me, that was the most important thing in my life for that moment, for those couple years was to always be available. Obviously I couldn't watch over you at school. So tell the story about Joe.

AMY: Joe...Joe is still a friend of mine. Joe and I were friends since middle school, and we became better friends sophomore year. And Joe's a big guy and a good friend, and he's very protective, always has been - still is - very protective of me.

RICK: So, I knew Joe because he was one of your friends, and I liked him. He seemed to be different than a lot of the other guys that I knew. At one point I called Joe aside. I said, "Joe, I need to talk to you." He's a big guy. As a matter of fact, here is a picture of Joe, Amy, and me at her wedding.

I said, "Joe, I need your help. I need you to watch over my daughter for me when I'm not there. I need you to watch her. I need you to be with her, and I need you to be my eyes for me. Are you able, can you do that?"

And he was, "Sir, I'll do whatever you want. Yeah, I promise you."

And I would talk to him periodically through this period of time. And did he do his job?

AMY: Yes, he did.

RICK: And you told me about how he felt about me asking him?

AMY: Honored. He took it very seriously. And the fact that you came to him, my father came to him for help, he took that very seriously. He has the highest respect for you still.



RICK: And I have the highest respect for him. He holds this incredible place in my heart, and every time I see him, I give him a big hug because I love that boy for what he did. He helped to preserve my family, because I couldn't always be there. It is just one of those amazing pieces of the story.

So time moves on. Remember your 16th birthday?

AMY: Yeah.

RICK: That wasn't a happy time for you, was it?

AMY: No, not so much.

RICK: At that point in time, you just didn't want to be with anybody, around anybody. You wanted to be on your own.

(To Emily) At that point in our lives, what were you doing with Amy?

EMILY: Like I mentioned before, I would just slip notes under her door. I think I got her a quote book of "sister" quotes. I don't know if this is when the "Sisters by Chance, Friends by Choice" came into play, but it's kind of been our theme quote for many years. I was just kind of reaching out to her in any way I could because she wouldn't talk to me. And I just wanted her to know if and when she wanted to, I was there for her.

RICK: So you kept on, kept on, kept on.

EMILY: I was persistent, relentless I guess would be the better word.

RICK: Because of that relentlessness, she finally began to give in.

EMILY: Yes.

RICK: She finally began to come back home in some ways. She finally began to talk to me more casually. It was in the fall of 2003. This happened in 2002.

Remember the Yankees/Red Sox baseball game?

AMY: Yes, I do.

RICK: It was a playoff game. I wasn't home. I was out working. You called me in a panic like, "Where are you? You have to be here. I'm watching this game and it's too intense without you!" (That was the Aaron Boon homerun - for those of you who are Yankees fans, you will know exactly what I was talking about.)

That was a time where I began to see that, okay, surviving is getting better. It's growing. It's going further and forward and it was such an important thing.

RICK: And for me being the Dad, looking at those Scriptures saying, "God, teach me how to teach her. Teach me how to be the example," that's what drove me through a very difficult time of survivorship and the light was actually getting brighter.

**So, you are a survivor of a trauma. Where can you go from here?**



RICK: It is a gradual growth. It is hard. One of the biggest obstacles is that of guilt. And in this kind of situation, everybody feels guilty. As parents, we thought: We could have, we should have, how come we didn't...?

Emily, you talked about the guilt. Tim came to me also and talked about the guilt. "You know, I haven't been a good example, and I think it's my fault."

And, Amy, of course you talked about the guilt as well. You just have to put the guilt in God's hands. We ask for forgiveness and act in a way that God would be pleased and God forgives us. Really that's where the guilt belongs.

The first half of your junior year at school, what's happening at this point in time?

AMY: Well, I'm beginning to get myself back. I'm still having some hard experiences, taking some steps backwards, getting emotionally smacked around by my choices still a little bit. I do become best friends with my best friend to this day, Gina. She's listening right now, which I appreciate. I'm starting to become stronger - still lacking some self-respect - but I'm getting there.

RICK: You have a new group of friends.

AMY: Right.

RICK: Things are definitely beginning to look brighter. You're becoming a stronger survivor. At this point, Emily goes away to college. How does that feel?

AMY: Awful.

RICK: It's funny you couldn't get away from her. Now when she goes away, you can't get close enough!

AMY: Right.

RICK: How did you deal with the going away to school at this point?

EMILY: There was a poster she put on my dorm room that says, "Sisters by chance, friends by choice." She left a note with it, saying she loved me, she's going to miss me, she was excited for me. But you could see she was not sure what to do, because I wasn't going to be there. But we kept in touch. I was always on the phone. I was four hours away, so I wasn't really very close.



RICK: You guys were really intact with one another.

EMILY: By this time we were definitely much better. Our friendship was strong again and things had been mended.

RICK: During this whole period of time, we, especially Trish, had gotten you guys to write in journals letters to God, and that was really part of a helpful process of trying to bring our troubles where they really belonged. They belong in God's hands, and that is such an important part of this.

Amy, you're growing through this and now you're getting to the point of Chapter 4. This is my second favorite chapter:

#### CHAPTER 4: Overcomer.

RICK: Folks, understand something that's significant: When people talk about rape, they talk about victims and they talk about survivors. We need to talk about more than that. We need to talk about *overcoming*. We need to talk about being able to manage such a circumstance so strongly that it just is an



element of your past that no longer affects any aspect of your life. That's what faith can do for us here.

So through that, we're getting to the end of your junior year, Amy, and you really are beginning to show signs of being able to overcome this. As a matter of fact, at Father's Day of that junior year, you wrote me a poem that I keep in my room to this day and hope you can do this. I want you to read it on the air.

AMY: It's called Because of You...

## Because of You...

Because of you Dad...  
 My Night turned into Day,  
 I became stronger  
 And the pain went away.

Because of you Dad...  
 Life became brighter,  
 Instead of being weak,  
 I learned to be a fighter.

Because of you Dad...  
 Things became clearer  
 Life made sense,  
 And happiness drew nearer.

Because of you Dad...  
 I have faced all I fear  
 and have begun to change  
 As the nightmare starts to disappear.

It's all because of you Dad,  
 because of your STRENGTH  
 because of your Faith  
 but mostly because of your LOVE

Dad I'll always remember something  
 you told me,  
 I'm NOT a victim  
 I'm NOT a survivor  
 but I'm an overcomer..  
 Thank you Dad, I love you.

RICK: And what that showed me was she truly was learning to put it in a box, and we would always talk about that. You're going to learn one day to put this experience in a box, put it up in the closet and close the door. Whenever you need to look at it, you can make the choice to take out the box and open it up and look at it. Then when you're done, you will put the lid back on, put it on the shelf and close the door. It just will become a tool. And I remember going through that with you over and over and over.

And when you wrote that. It was like she's finally getting it. What it comes down to is you were really coming back home to us.

This next song really typifies one part of a stage of this very, very long road coming home:



**"Coming Home" (Verse one), Skylar Grey**



I'm coming home  
I'm coming home  
tell the world I'm coming home  
let the rain wash away  
all the pain of yesterday  
I know my kingdom awaits  
and they've forgiven my mistakes  
I'm coming home  
I'm coming home  
tell the world I'm coming  
I'm coming home  
I'm coming home  
tell the world I'm coming

Our daughter was coming home to us again, such a thrill. Now, things weren't perfect. You met a guy at this point. It was good for you.

AMY: Right.

RICK: It helped to put things back into perspective a little bit. So now we're getting on to the end of your junior year and into your senior year. You still had that "personal value" struggle.

When you deal with something as traumatic as a rape or something within your own family, you don't feel strong. You don't feel like you can, but by God's grace, you can if you use faith as the main tool.

RICK: That is such a comfort. When I am weak, it is a time when God's grace can be sufficient. We can be strong in God's grace. Really for us, that's how we lived. Trish, you and I especially.

TRISH: I just wanted to share a couple Scriptures that for me were very important and speak to the atmosphere and the mental state for myself:

Isaiah 65:24: *Before they call, I will answer. When they are yet speaking, I will hear.*

For me, I felt it was really important to know that even if I didn't know what the next step was or even what to say, God could hear me. He heard me. He heard our family. And He was there. He already was figuring out the next step, even though we weren't sure what it was.

Isaiah 66:13: *As one whom his mother comforts, so I will comfort you.*

God is our father and our parent. As I was trying to comfort our children and be a support, God was doing that for us; He was comforting us and comforting them. I felt very embraced by God, and it was so important for me.

RICK: It wasn't easy, but faith saved us. It really did. It truly did. We talked about going to that first counselor. We did go to a second counselor. She was way, way better for you.

AMY: Oh, yes.

RICK: And she really helped to put things in perspective. That was another aspect of this. But our faith really was the thing that drove us and kept us focused.

You mentioned you still had this personal value struggle going on. Let's talk about justice. Jonathan, you mentioned justice before.

JONATHAN: Yes.

RICK: What happened to the guy? He was arrested, but what happened to him?

AMY: He fled the country.

RICK: So he never met justice.

AMY: No.

RICK: He left. So to this day, 12 years later, we believe he's out of the country. So, most people say when you have a situation like this and you go through a trial and there's closure, well, you didn't get that closure.

AMY: Right.

RICK: Well, how did you close it?

AMY: Well, initially it was devastating. It was just so unfair. It felt like I was robbed. I needed that. I *thought* I needed that.

RICK: You *thought*.

AMY: And I didn't get it. But eventually I just forgave myself. That's key. And I forgave him in a sense, because this experience doesn't define who I am. This *isn't* who I am. You know, I don't have to hurt every day because of this. This is just something that happened. It's not *me*. And that's the part of closure that you need. It's not the justice part per se. It helps, but you can have the justice without that part and you'll still be lost, you know. The key is to come back home and to be who you are regardless and not let pain define you. It's what you do with that pain. And it's getting through it and getting past it and putting it in that box and closing the door.

RICK: All right. I don't think I can add to that.

JONATHAN: That was profound, Rick. Wow.

RICK: *That* is an overcomer, and that's the point. There is hope. Even if you don't get justice, you still close the door and we can still be forgiving because God's got this all in His hands. So, closure is important, but it may not come in the way you would expect it to. It's just a matter of where we are in our lives.

What would each of you say to someone going through the same thing?

AMY: I would say let go of the guilt. Give it to God, because it's not your fault. And it does not define you. The pain does not define you. And once you can grasp that and just give it to God and not lose yourself - realize you don't have to lose yourself - and all is not lost, then you become stronger and you can run with your life.

EMILY: Well, I know for me, like I said before, hurt and anger can be very consuming. In my case I literally forgot certain aspects of it just because I blocked it out. But what I do remember is the unrelenting and unconditional love that I did give to my sister, which I think is important as a sibling because you don't have control over the situation. And love is what makes the difference, not hate. Hate only fuels anger, resentment and regret. But love, that fuels success and happiness, and in her case being an overcomer. So, as a sibling who can't control it, don't take out revenge. Just let them know you're there, and that's really all you can do.

RICK: It comes down to living the personal positive values of life rather than giving in to the emotion of getting back. Trish, what would you say to someone going through the same thing?

TRISH: Well, I would pray that if you don't have a relationship to God that you find one, because God is the only one that can heal our hearts. He's so much bigger than us. He's our parent. So for me, that would be, say, if you have a relationship with God in Christ, use it. We live in a time of evil. We are *born in sin and shapen in iniquity*. Life isn't easy. Things happen to us even with the best of our intention. Things happen. It doesn't mean that God has forsaken you. It doesn't mean you have done something wrong. It doesn't mean God is really not that strong. "Gee, if God were really God, He would have prevented it." He's using this to teach us how to be close to Him. And that's what I would say to you.



RICK: There is closure. Even when there's not, it is a matter of choice, what you have focused on. Faith is the centerpiece of all of it.

We mentioned these letters to God, this journal. What role did that play for you?

AMY: Well, I wrote in it often. It was more than just a journal, more than just a diary. It was speaking to someone. It was writing to someone. It felt more than that. It felt like I was able to vent and to get it all out to God. And that was my way. I wasn't much of a prayer person at this point, so that was *my* way. Those were my prayers.

RICK: When you write something, it also helps to make it plain to yourself.

AMY: Right.

RICK: So that's part of the process of life. Here's a hint: Don't wait for trauma and tragedy to start that kind of a practice. Start it now! Make it a habit so when you have those difficult things in life, you can work through those difficult things in life.

### Chapter 5: Epilogue, Lessons and Growth from the Fertile Soil of Hardship

RICK: So, Amy, let's fast forward now. We are now in the overcoming stages. You're out of high school. You've moved on with life. You got married and you got divorced. In the meantime you had a child, Domenic, the best kid ever in the entire world. Talk to me about some of those lessons from that part of life. Because that was another difficult, difficult part of life.

AMY: The biggest lesson for me was realizing my value and embracing it and like before, we mentioned I didn't have my own faith, really coming into my own faith because I started living by it more. Marriage was a very important thing to me. And when things fell apart, I was still holding on even though I wasn't happy.

RICK: And I remember you and I having a talk one night where you were not happy, but you had told me, I'm going to do whatever I have to do because I made a commitment to this and I'm going to see it through. And, unfortunately, there was unfaithfulness on the part of your previous husband. And after that, what happened?

AMY: After we discovered he was being unfaithful, I asked you if I was okay to get a divorce.

RICK: The reason that is an important part of the story is because she had come into her own. She was willing to stay committed to something she should have been committed to. Scripturally, there's no grounds for her to have to stay there, so it was an important part of moving forward in life. And now you're a single mother.

AMY: Yes.



RICK: You and Domenic moved in with your mom and me. We ended up working alongside of you, raising that boy and learning how to discipline him.

**Psalms 55:22:** (NASB) *Cast your burden upon the LORD and He will sustain you; He will never allow the righteous to be shaken.*



RICK: When you look at Amy's life and you see how she began to embed herself in righteousness, you can see that difficult things can happen, but you can walk through them. Faith delivers us. That's really the key.



**Isaiah 30:15:** (KJV) *For thus saith the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel; In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength...*

RICK: That's the way faith really works - through quietness and confidence in our lives.



Let's move forward in the story. Now comes the knight in shining armor riding in his white pickup truck! His name is Dan. This is Amy's husband now. Dan comes into her life, and I'll tell you there is a brightness about life that we haven't seen in a lifetime, it seems. The arrival of Dan was really a great, great event for all of us.

EMILY: I remember when Amy had mentioned they were friends and she was sort of interested and not sure. I was like, eh, just date him. When they officially started dating he just was compassionate. He walked into being a father figure at such a young age - he was in his early twenties - and just took it on and is a great father to Dominic. He's accepting, supportive, I could go on for hours about my brother-in-law. It was just

such a great way to see someone look at her and treat her the way she deserved to be treated, and with respect, which she just never really got until Dan came around.

RICK: We spent so much time going through the tragedy of life, and now at the end of the tragedy, what do you have? You have God's blessing is what you have. Faith brings us there.

I want to play one verse of a song that was Amy and Dan's wedding song together. It really does fit in with the pathway that Amy took and the waiting that Dan did for the two of them to come together and to build the life that God can truly bless.



**"Bless the Broken Road," (Verse one), Rascal Flatts**

I set out on a narrow way many years ago  
 Hoping I would find true love along the broken road  
 But I got lost a time or two  
 Wiped my brow and kept pushing through  
 I couldn't see how every sign pointed straight to you

Every long lost dream led me to where you are  
 Others who broke my heart they were like northern stars  
 Pointing me on my way into your loving arms  
 This much I know is true  
 That God blessed the broken road  
 That led me straight to you  
 (Yes He did)



RICK: In the studio with us now is Dan, "the Man." There's a sense of great relief, because you are truly a unique individual. I love you as my son. I told you I promised you I would only ask you one question, What do you see when you look at Amy?



DAN: Thank you very much, Dad, and Emily, thank you very much for everything you said as well. When I look at Amy, I see something that completes me more than you could even imagine. It's anything for Amy.

RICK: He really means that - it is anything for Amy. Talking about this is a very traumatic experience for us. We're all crying, especially me. For Dan, this is his wife that we're talking about. So for the courage to come here and be here with us, Dan, we really do appreciate it.

TRISH: I love Dan.

DAN: Love you too, Mom.

TRISH: He's awesome. I just give thanks for him every day.

**Isaiah 40:28-31:(NASB)** *<sup>28</sup>Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth does not become weary or tired. His understanding is inscrutable. <sup>29</sup>He gives strength to the weary, and to him who lacks might He increases power. <sup>30</sup>Though youths grow weary and tired, and vigorous young men stumble badly, <sup>31</sup>Yet those who wait for the LORD will gain new strength; They will mount up with wings like eagles, they will run and not get tired, they will walk and not become weary.*



RICK: That's where we want to be. We want to rely on the strength of God.

AMY: You know, life is wonderful. And I am truly happy. I couldn't have done it without the faith and strength of my family and the strength of God and just being able to be able to hand over all the guilt and feelings of the situation and put it behind me and just be who I am. I'm just truly thankful that I'm home, and I'm me and that's all there is.

RICK: The moral of the story is really simple: There is hope if you go through the trauma, if you go through the experience. **Understand that God is greater than any difficulty we could ever have.**

EMILY: Like I mentioned before, you just truck on through and just keep being there for the people you love, whether it is a family member or friend. Even if they push you away for a little bit, your perseverance and strength and love for them will bring them back. You can't just walk away just because they're having a rough bout. And I think a lot of people do that.

TRISH: I just give thanks for the road that God has led us on. I give thanks for my family, and I just give thanks.

RICK: So the phrase is "they lived thankfully ever after." I wanted to play a verse from the song, "You Raise Me Up," because it talks about "I'm strong when I'm on your shoulders." And for me that's where I felt my strength.

You have to walk your family through the trial and the difficulty and the tragedy and the trauma. And how do you do that when it's overwhelming? How do you do it when it's this tidal wave of emotions and difficulty and pain and suffering and the unexpected?



You do that by putting first things first, by realizing God has it all in control, that it's overruled on our behalf. You do it by realizing that He can supply strength where we have none, and by realizing if I trade my personal strength in for His strength, I'm a lot stronger, and you can see a whole lot further when you stand upon the shoulders of Jesus Christ.

We hope you have enjoyed being with us today. It has been truly a privilege to tell you a story that happened in our lives and the grace that God has given us to overcome and we hope it helps you. For Jonathan, Rick and my family, what happens when life gets broken? You rely on God. Watch Him over time fix it.



*So, what happens when life gets  
broken?  
For Jonathan and Rick and  
Christian Questions...  
Think about it...!*

*And now even more to think about...  
only in the **Full Edition** of CQ Rewind!*





**"You Raise Me Up" (Verse one), Celtic Woman**

When I am down and, oh my soul, so weary;  
When troubles come and my heart burdened be;  
Then, I am still and wait here in the silence,  
Until you come and sit awhile with me.

You raise me up, so I can stand on mountains;  
You raise me up, to walk on stormy seas;  
I am strong, when I am on your shoulders;  
You raise me up: To more than I can be.



**"Bless the Broken Road" (Verse two), Rascal Flatts**

I think about the years I spent just passing through  
I'd like to have the time I lost and give it back to you  
But you just smile and take my hand  
You've been there you understand  
It's all part of a grander plan that is coming true

Every long lost dream led me to where you are  
Others who broke my heart they were like northern stars  
Pointing me on my way into your loving arms  
This much I know is true  
That God blessed the broken road  
That led me straight to you  
(Yes He did)



**A few more PRECIOUS PROMISES that can help us get through hard times:**

**Proverbs 3:5-6:** (NASB) *Trust in the LORD with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. <sup>6</sup>In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight.*

**Psalms 37:23-24:** (NASB) <sup>23</sup>*The steps of a man are established by the LORD, and He delights in his way. <sup>24</sup>When he falls, he will not be hurled headlong, because the LORD is the One who holds his hand.*

**Isaiah 26:3-4:** (KJV) <sup>3</sup>*Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee. <sup>4</sup>Trust ye in the LORD forever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting strength:*

**Psalms 55:22:** (NASB) *Cast your burden upon the LORD and He will sustain you; He will never allow the righteous to be shaken.*

**Isaiah 30:15:** (KJV) *For thus saith the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel; In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength...*

**2 Corinthians 4:7-10:** (NASB) *<sup>7</sup>But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves; <sup>8</sup>we are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing; <sup>9</sup>persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; <sup>10</sup>always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body.*

**Joshua 1:8-9:** (NASB) *<sup>8</sup>This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success. <sup>9</sup>Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous! Do not tremble or be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.*

**So, IF we keep God's ways before our lives daily, THEN we will have the fortitude to be strong and courageous!**

**Philippians 4:4-7:** (NASB) *<sup>4</sup>Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice! <sup>5</sup>Let your gentle spirit be known to all men. The Lord is near. <sup>6</sup>Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. <sup>7</sup>And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

**So, IF we rejoice as a habit of life and we resist anxiety as a result of that rejoicing, THEN we can experience the depth of the peace of God in place of our anxiety!**

**Philippians 4:13:** (KJV) *I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me.*

**2 Timothy 1:7:** (KJV) *For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.*

**Psalms 10:17:** (NRSV) *O LORD, you will hear the desire of the meek; you will strengthen their heart, you will incline your ear.*

**James 1:2-8:** (NRSV) *<sup>2</sup>My brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of any kind, consider it nothing but joy, <sup>3</sup>because you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance; <sup>4</sup>and let endurance have its full effect, so that you may be mature and complete, lacking in nothing. <sup>5</sup>If any of you is lacking in wisdom, ask God, who gives to all generously and ungrudgingly, and it will be given you. <sup>6</sup>But ask in faith, never doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind; <sup>7</sup>for the doubter, being double-minded and unstable in every way, <sup>8</sup>must not expect to receive anything from the Lord.*

**There are ETERNAL reasons for our lives to be tested! Let us seek the wisdom from above to be able to understand these experiences!**

**A living faith requires action!**

**Hebrews 11:6:** (KJV) *But without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.*

**Colossians 1:23:** (KJV) *If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister;*

**1 Timothy 1:18-19: (KJV)** <sup>18</sup>*This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare; <sup>19</sup>**Holding faith,** and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck:*

**James 2:14-18: (KJV)** <sup>14</sup>*What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? Can faith save him? <sup>15</sup>If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, <sup>16</sup>And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? <sup>17</sup>Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. <sup>18</sup>Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works.*

**As a very dear sister in Christ used to always say before she passed away -  
"God's got this!"**

**Isaiah 55:8-11: (NKJV)** <sup>8</sup>*For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways, says the LORD. <sup>9</sup>For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts. <sup>10</sup>For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, and do not return there, but water the earth, and make it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, <sup>11</sup>So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.*