

DAY 1: TERRI SHUERGER

“PORTRAITS OF GRACE”

MAY 1, 2019

“FEAR THOU NOT; FOR I AM WITH THEE; BE NOT DISMAYED; FOR I AM THY GOD: I WILL STRENGTHEN THEE; YEA, I WILL HELP THEE; YEA, I WILL UPHOLD THEE WITH THE RIGHT HAND OF MY RIGHTEOUSNESS.” ISAIAH 41:10

I am 53 years old, and I have been married for 35 years to the best husband God ever made! (sorry, girls!) I have 2 sons who are 31 and 33; 3 beautiful granddaughters, and another grand on the way! I am a First Generation Christian. I was raised in a nominally Catholic home, but got saved when I was 20 while we were stationed in Madrid, Spain. We were called into Full-Time Service in 1991, and for the last 20 years, have served as Church-Planters in Zacatecas, Mexico, and Tucson, Arizona.

I would like to speak to you about the Grace of God that is present even when we are unaware. When I was 9, my parents divorced. I was an only child. Ultimately, my dad was awarded custody of me due to abandonment/neglect issues concerning my mother. It was not long before I began to be sexually abused by my father. This continued off and on until I was 15, at which time I was considering suicide. It was during this time that I met my now-husband. A few months later, in hopelessness, I called my mom and asked her if she would come and get me. After I told her what had been going on, she accused me of lying. I was crushed, and seemingly abandoned again. She took me back to my dad’s house to get my things. She also sought counseling for me. I was eventually referred to a group called Daughters United; for girls who had been sexually abused. It is during this time that the Grace of God was actively at work in my life, yet I didn’t know it until almost 15 years later.

Let me jump ahead and give you the retrospective; when my sons reached the ages when my abuse had begun, I became overwhelmed with feelings of anger, resentment, and hatred towards my father, “How COULD you?! I was *just* a little girl!!” I became eaten up with these sinful emotions. Then, a sister in the Lord gave me a workbook for victims of abuse. I began to do the study, then one day the question came, Where was God during your abuse? I was floored. HE had let this happen to me! Why?! Where was He when a little girl who had been abandoned by everyone else in her life needed Him?! I became angry at God! Then, slowly, but surely, the Light began to dawn; He WAS there! I had felt Him in my room when I asked to die; I believe His angels took me in their arms and carried me safely over the threshold of death (being unsaved, I would have gone straight to Hell, otherwise).

Then, He brought me to Daughters United where I learned strategies to survive the abuse and neglect that I had suffered my whole life. But, more importantly, He had brought my 16 year-old boyfriend who drove me to the Daughters United meetings 2x/week, and waited in his car for me; he never asked me any questions. He was just there; quietly, patiently waiting for me. When I looked back and saw that the arms God had used to sustain me in that awful time were the arms of my husband, I was brought to my knees with thankfulness at the mighty and wondrous grace of God! He had never left me! Even in my unsaved state, He had sent a pair of loving arms to hold me, to comfort me, to be there in the darkness! (Isaiah 41:10)

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