



# Update

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## A Story of Amazing Grace

Jocelyn is in my class on spiritual warfare at the Calvary Bible Institute. She was also in one of my classes last semester. The students live on the base and have come because they want a deeper walk with the Lord Jesus. Some come from difficult backgrounds and want to learn how to live differently. Jesus was practical as well as spiritual, so we address both.

I marvel at where Jocelyn is now as opposed to what she went through as a child. At the end of the summer she will have earned her *Associate of Theology* from the Bible Institute at Calvary Commission. This is the story of the tragedy of drugs on the part of her biological mother and the well-meaning adoptive parents who didn't understand her true need. It is also the story of the amazing grace of God.

Jocelyn was born in Providence, Rhode Island in 1997 to a mother who made attempts to protect her, but was hooked on drugs. They lived in a small apartment with a man who was supposedly her father. Her mother did drugs and drank alcohol so regularly that Jocelyn thought their life style was normal. As a result of her drug habit, her mother left Jocelyn alone much of the time. She says, *"To me these two people seemed normal but I was used to it and now looking back I realize how badly misguided I was."* Her mother was physically there at times, but not emotionally there any of the time.

The first three years of life, a baby needs the loving connection spirit to spirit with his/her mother for the brain to properly develop, equipping the child to connect with others emotionally and socially, and to develop the ability to put things in a logical sequence. Her mother was not making those connections that are so necessary in this development of the brain that leads to security, identity, and the social development of a child.

She had an uncle who lived nearby who took her to church on a regular basis. His input helped, but it could not substitute for a mother's love and connection. She accepted Christ at age four and when her uncle was around, he took her to church.

At age four her mother decided to move to Texas. She said, *"This was like moving to a magical land."* The man she called father, her mother, and several of the family members moved with them. They settled in a trailer park in Waxahachie, Texas, and Jocelyn was pretty much given freedom to roam wherever she wanted. No one had any real

concerns about her.

Within a year her mother married the man she was living with, became pregnant and gave birth to twin boys. The boys were in an underdeveloped condition because of drugs in the womb. On the one hand, her mother cared for her children, but on the other, drugs were king. She neglected them and took short cuts like watering down the baby formula in order to buy drugs.

During all this stress, Jocelyn would read the Bible, watch preachers on TV, and go to church with someone. She said, *"In it all, I knew God was with me. When the pain was hard to bear, His presence would be there to help."*

One winter day when it had snowed, she awoke to find her mother had left the mobile home and Jocelyn felt the fear of being alone; especially, when she could see her mother's footprints in the snow leading away from the mobile home. At noon, her mother returned and announced that she wanted a divorce and that she was taking the children to live with her uncle who lived nearby.

The next morning, Jocelyn was outside playing when she saw a police car pull up into the dirt driveway at their mobile home. She said, *"In fear I ran and hid behind a couch we had out front while two cops walked past me and entered the house."*

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*After about ten minutes mother called from the front door and explained to me that they were going to take me away for a while, but promised that we would be together again.”*

Jocelyn and her brothers were separated into different foster homes and she was allowed to visit with her mom and dad once every other week. *“It was during one of these visits that mother finally told me that the man who I thought was my dad was not my biological father, but refused to tell me who he was.”* This led to further confusion for Jocelyn.

The condition of Jocelyn’s mother had so deteriorated that to visit her was too confusing. CPS gave her the choice (told her) to stay with foster parents and break all ties with her mother.

By the time she was eight, she had stayed for a year each in two other foster homes, but these didn’t work out either. Her case worker took her to a lady who wanted to take her on a six-month trial basis with a view to adoption.

The first few weeks went well in her new home and after about three months she found out that they wanted two boys so she told them about her brothers. Jocelyn’s new parents went with her to their fourth-year birthday party and apparently God moved on them because they fell in love with the twins, went through the process to transfer them to their home, and later adopted Jocelyn and the boys.

Jocelyn said, *“Unfortunately, my new parents expected me to alter the way I was raised and act like a normal child and fit right in; needless to say, that was not the case. I did not know how to act in a family or how to love and the doctors said that I had an “attachment disorder” (unable to emotionally respond to people with any love—*

*this can easily be mistaken for willful disobedience.) Over time, this caused a lot of hurt and strife between my new parents and me. Feeling like I was always in trouble, I started lying to try to get out of trouble and taking food from the kitchen because I felt certain they would say no if I asked. My new parents did not know how to handle me and after four years became so desperate for me to change that they started calling me names and speaking hurtful things to me trying to force me to start acting normal.”*

Even though her emotional system was locked up, during these times Jocelyn sought the Lord, read her Bible and the Lord comforted her, she said, *“Revealing Himself as Comforter, Father, and Friend.”* In all the conflict, these times spent in devotion somehow comforted her to know that *“Even if no one else loved me, at least God did.”* Her new parents attended church but moved about to different churches so there was not the Christian consistency that Jocelyn so deeply needed.

At age 14 Jocelyn went to a youth retreat where she had an experience of the infilling of the Holy Spirit. She said, *“I was sitting in the presence of a Holy Spirit-filled moment when an inner voice said to raise my hands. I did and I experienced something like a wind circling me both on the outside and on the inside. I could feel something happening. When it was over, I was flooded with such peace. However, when I returned home, my adoptive mother thought I was making this up and did not support me in it.”*

The painful conflict continued between Jocelyn and her adoptive parents, so in the providence of God she was sent to stay the summer with her grandmother. She says, *“I learned what a real spiritual mother looks like. She helped me grow and made me feel loved.”*

Shortly after returning home, her new mother and she were in such conflict that the mother wanted to send her to Youth With A Mission (YWAM) to straighten her out. Jocelyn didn’t want to go, but after a few days there she began to respond to the atmosphere of love and the loving order of life. She said, *“I learned among other things that only God can tell me my identity.”*

Looking at Jocelyn’s future job possibilities, her new mother didn’t like the idea that she was in a YWAM school, because there was no credible degree that would give her anything to put on a resume to get a job. After a time, the mother insisted that she return home. Jocelyn says, *“I returned home a changed person in many respects, but it seemed that all my adoptive parents expected of me was their old version of me. It took only two weeks before it was back to the way things had been, and there would be no peace to stay.”* The mother pretty much communicated, *“Get out of our home!”*

At this time, an uncle by adoption was also involved in Jocelyn’s life who was acquainted with Calvary Commission and directed her there. She says, *“I applied for Calvary feeling like this was the next step and was accepted. After arriving here, the Lord has done amazing things and has almost completely restored me. God has given me a home against all odds.”*

A month ago, Jocelyn had contact with her biological mother, which is a start toward reconciliation. Pray for her that she can be reconciled with both of her mothers. And pray for her as she continues to grow and discover who she is in Jesus. That’s what she wants. ✨

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