



# Update

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Vernon & Martha Hedge

## Jesus Brings Order to Chaos

God is the God of second chances. And the third and fourth. When I share the stories of some of my students, it is to demonstrate the power of Jesus who is transforming their lives. C.S. Lewis said, *You can't go back and change the beginning, but you can start where you are and change the ending.* None of them are proud of their past, but all of them are excited to share the difference Jesus is making.

Donna is in both of my classes and I've been able to see her seriousness about the Lord. When I asked for her permission to share part of her testimony, she agreed and said she would be honored.

As to her beginning, Donna was born into an extremely disorderly home life. She had a strong desire for her parents approval. Both worked long hours which meant she and her older sister spent most of their time with a babysitter.

Donna was a premature baby and sick a lot. Her sister was five years older and took care of her so much that she considered her like a little mother. Although they had their fair share of "sister squabbles" her sister was always there when Donna needed her and defended her when others picked on her.

Their parents divorced when she was five. Her 10-year-old sister took it hard. They went to live with her mother's parents where they had a close and stable environment for a while.

After the divorce, mom tried to look after the girls, but her work at

a bar made it hard to see them often. Because her mom was in and out of several live-in relationships, Donna had the potential of a different stepdad every other month or so.

Donna says, *Some of them were nice and some not so nice. One man changed the course of all our lives. He was a Vietnam Veteran and I think he had some problems from the things he must have experienced over there. He was very abusive to us. He would often beat my mom. We had to do training exercises while he got drunk and he laughed at me and my sister.*

When their mom was gone, he took the sister into another room and sexually abused her. *He always told us if we told our mom anything about what he did while she was gone, he would kill her. So, we were scared to say anything. My sister finally told my mom what was happening, and mom took us, and we left when he was gone to work. So, it was back to grandma's we go, and things just started all over again. This is why I was never able to have close friends because we always moved around so much. I would make friends and start to*

*blend in and feel safe and we would move again.*

When Donna was in the sixth grade, her mom married a man who appeared to be a good guy. It seemed they would be settled in the same place. Her sister was no longer at home because she had married at 14. However, Donna's new stepfather was a working alcoholic, but fortunately he was a fun person when he was drinking and not abusive.

Donna was a good student and always on the A honor roll. She was in band for six years and loved being a part of something important. *I had a best friend in high school, and we did everything together. We were very close like sisters but that came to a halt when she discovered she was pregnant in our sophomore year. She had to leave school to have her baby. She was so busy being a mother I just didn't feel like I fit into the picture anymore.*

*I never was much into guys but now that I didn't have my best friend, I was feeling somewhat vulnerable. So, I started going out more. I did have a part-time job after school that opened doors to be around men outside of school. One of my friends introduced me to a guy who had a job, a car, and a place to live, and he treated me with respect.*

After spending time together hiking, swimming, and fishing, he asked Donna to move in with him. She was just a Junior in high school, so she told her mother what

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she was thinking of doing. The next day when Donna came in from school, she found all her things on the back porch.

Her mother reacted in disgust and instead of sitting down and talking with her, she sent the signals that she wanted Donna out of the house. *I would live to regret this decision for a long time to come. This was the start of a downward spiral of my life that almost made me give up on myself and everything in life.*

Just a teenage girl, Donna took on the role of a wife with no clue what that meant. For a while it was one party after another, and school began to get in the way. At the end of her Junior year she quit school needing only one credit to graduate the twelfth grade. Donna thought her husband only drank an occasional beer and smoked pot on occasion, but after a while, she discovered he was addicted to methamphetamines.

*I didn't want to experience things like that, but it didn't take long for him to talk me into trying it. I was hooked immediately and stayed that way for several years until I got pregnant with my first son. At that point, I knew it had to stop. I had a healthy son, but I had no clue how to be a mother, but some mothering sort of came naturally.*

*Not so long after Joshua was born, I was pregnant again, but I was beginning to catch on to motherhood. My husband lived doing pretty much whatever he wanted. This caused problems in our marriage. I would leave him, and he would make it hard for me to make it on my own. Every time I would cave in and go back to him, I would only become pregnant again and soon I had four children.*

Donna became overwhelmed and turned back to drugs to cover the pain. News came that her mother was very ill with cancer and in the hospital near death. Donna's marriage and her drug use had broken her relationship with her mother.

Still angry, believing that her mother wanted her out of the house, Donna experienced a flood of emotion, confusion, and indecision. Decision making had become very hard for her.

By the time she finally went to see her mother, it was too late because she was unable to talk. *There was no closure for me in her death, and I was totally devastated. I knew at this point I had to get out of this turmoil of a marriage that resulted in my bitterness and shame. My mom was gone, and I felt so alone.*

*Deciding to give my marriage another try, we moved hoping to get away from drug-taking friends, but nothing changed, and I left him. I left my four children with their grandparents on my husband's side because I was unable to care for them. Working wherever I could, I took a second job at a bar. That was a bad choice because it led to drinking.*

*Then I met this handsome man named Bill and fell head over heels for him. He was divorced and we moved in together. He came with his fair share of baggage. I became pregnant and here I was stuck in a relationship that I wasn't sure was going to work, then a second child came along.*

They moved to New Jersey, bought a house and things were good for a while. But Bill's drinking got out of control and he became abusive leaving her with black eyes and broken bones. So disappointed that everything they

had worked for was going down the drain, Donna turned to alcohol herself.

When Bill pushed her son down the hallway hurting him, she became so angry that in rage she said she was going to kill him. That scared her so much that the next day she packed up, took the boys, and drove 1500 miles to her sister's house in Texas. Donna was a working alcoholic, could hold down a job and be a supper-mom, but that couldn't last forever.

Donna was arrested for DWI and spent 16 months in prison. After she was released, she was good for five years but didn't quit alcohol. She got another DWI and was sentenced to five years.

Prison was hard for Donna with being told what to do most of the time, and she felt some of the guards treated her and other inmates like they weren't worth anything.

*I started going to the prison church and Bible studies, and in July 2016 I received Christ as my Savior and made a commitment to God that I wanted to change, and I asked Him to help me. I had a lot of things to work through, but the grace of God was upon me and I started to sort through everything that brought me to the point of my brokenness before Him.*

Donna applied and was accepted to Calvary Commission. *I am so thankful to be in the family of Calvary Commission. I have learned so much already about God, and my life is growing stronger in the Lord every day. My relationships with my family are starting to mend and prayers are getting answered. I give all the honor and the glory to my wonderful Lord and Savior Jesus Christ my King. ✨*

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