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Hi, my name is Jesse, and this is my story.

For as long as I can remember, I grew up in church. I had a mother who took me and my brother to church for years. My dad never went with us, so she would just take us. I remember her telling a story about how she started going to church and how the church family threw her a baby shower because she wasn't going to have one. She said how memorable that was for her to have this group of people surrounding her and loving her.

From being a baby in an infant carrier, I've always gone to church. I accepted the Lord Jesus as my Savior at the age of eight. My dad actually started going to church with us a little bit before that, and we were baptized on the same day. After that, it was a family unit; we always went to church. It was something that we did. It wasn't a choice; it wasn't a question of whether we were going today or not. It was what we did on Sundays, Wednesdays, and anytime the doors were open.

Growing up in church, we learned many songs, like "Jesus Loves You," and about accepting Jesus into your heart. I learned how good God was, but I feel like He was more of a justice God. If you did not obey, then there were consequences. My parents were amazing in the way they raised us, and I had a wonderful childhood. You could probably say it was picture-perfect; they were just really great parents. However, I feel like sometimes in the Christian culture we grow up in, especially when I was younger, we miss key points of scripture and who God is because we are so routine with a checklist of growing up in church.

I don't remember actually having a relationship with Him as a child. I just remember thinking this is what we do because this is what we're supposed to do. God is good, but He is just, and He rules over your life. At a very young age, I spent some time with my grandparents. My grandma, probably around the age of six or seven, started to emotionally abuse me. She said very inappropriate things

to me. She had a lot of stuff in her past, and I feel like it just came out with me, especially being the only girl.

I struggled with that a lot and told no one. She made it very vocal that it was something I was not allowed to speak about, so my parents never knew. There were times that it did lead into sexual abuse. I wouldn't call it your typical sexual abuse because I had a hard time understanding that that's what she was doing. I felt like she loved me, and I desired so deeply for her to love me that I didn't understand that her making me take a bath with her was inappropriate.

We went to church with her on Sundays, and she would make me get completely undressed and dress up in these fancy dresses. She would put makeup and lipstick on me and talk to me about sexual things—what you do whenever you're married or older. There was a lot of grooming and inappropriate conversations, but most of her stuff was very vocal and emotional abuse about me not being good enough and how much more important my brother was than me.

We didn't spend a great amount of time with them, but we did spend weekends and a couple of nights. My parents would come back and pick us up on Sunday, or sometimes we would ride the bus to school, and they would get us after school. There was never a moment that I felt like I wanted to tell them. I didn't want to disappoint her or make her upset. Very early on, I had a strong feeling in my family that I was not liked. I think I knew deep down that I was loved, but I never felt like they enjoyed me. I never felt like I was easy to get along with.

Sometimes, there were words probably unintentionally said about me being controlling, hard, or not easy to get along with. I took that on and made it my personality. If there was ever an issue, it was 100% my fault. If there was ever a problem, it was because I was not easy, too hard to be around, or that my feelings didn't matter because they wouldn't hurt anyone else's feelings, but they hurt mine. That immediately shut me down because when you don't feel liked and you don't feel welcome, you're not going to open up and be honest about how you're feeling, even if it is your family.

That was really hard to overcome—not knowing where you stand in your family. I think that's probably what started my self-hate and not thinking that I was worthy because the people that are supposed to like you and love you, you don't feel like they do. So, why would anyone else? At a very young age, I got a best friend. She meant the world to me. She had just moved into town, and I had friends, but she was teased because her two front teeth were brown. I remember sticking up for

her one day because I thought she was so beautiful and amazing. I thought, "This girl is going to be my friend."

Unfortunately, our personalities were very toxic together. She had grand ideas, and I was her yes-man. Anything she wanted to do, I was going to do it with her. We started drinking, sneaking out, and doing everything possible. There was always this line that I did not want to cross. I truly believe that now, as an adult, the Holy Spirit was protecting me during that time. I had a great fear of the Lord, a greater fear of the Lord than I did of my mom and dad or getting in trouble. There were lines with drugs and boys that I would not cross, but everything else was free game.

The first time I got arrested, I was 13 years old. We were staying the night with a friend whose mom had no rules. We decided to take her mom's truck and go egg houses. It was a big thing when I was a kid. We bought eggs and egged houses. Her mom woke up, saw the truck was missing, and called the police, reporting it stolen. When we got pulled over, we were three 13-year-olds egging houses in a stolen vehicle with no provisional or driver's license. I remember being terrified for my parents to find out. I felt shameful and didn't know how they would react. They were not happy whatsoever and had a very strong punishment for me.

I remember sitting in self-loathing for a long time over that, truly feeling bad about it, but there was no desire to change anything about myself. They could have asked me during that time why I did that, but I don't remember anything other than shame, guilt, and punishment. I had so much fun with this friend. She loved me, cared about me, and enjoyed me. Why would I not want to do everything she wanted to do? She was the first person to truly like me.

We continued to get in trouble throughout the years. In high school, I was known as the girl that parents did not allow their kids to hang out with. They used to have a police record where every time you got arrested, they would write your name and what you did in the newspaper. My name frequented that side of the newspaper, so a lot of people always knew if I pulled something, I usually got caught.

I was 14 the next time I got arrested for shoplifting from Kmart. This was definitely the people-pleasing moment in me. We thought it was fun. People found out that we were doing it at school, and they would put in requests for what they wanted. We would go in, steal it, and walk out. One day, we got caught and arrested. We had to do community service for every dollar we had stolen that day,

which was upwards of \$200—200 hours of community service at the city dump over spring break.

This was the first time I remember my parents saying I was no longer allowed to hang out with my friend anymore because she was a bad influence. That didn't stop me; I didn't care. I didn't feel like anything was ever her choice or her fault. I just felt like it was something we did together. The next time I got arrested was at the age of 16 for drinking. I was not living at home during this time. When I turned 16, I got into some trouble at school, and my parents said, "If you don't like our rules, then you don't need to live here."

I remember being so excited that that was an option. I did not know that I had a choice to not live with them. I saved up my money, and that summer, I moved out. I lived in a tiny house in the backyard of what I now know was a drug dealer's house. It was a little house with a room, kitchenette, and shower. I got a job and paid rent. I remember thoroughly not enjoying it. I worked all the time to pay my bills, and everyone wanted to party at my house. They ate my food, tore things up, and it was hard to get up and go to work the next day.

It was my first reality check of what life would be like. It took everything inside of me to come back to my parents and say, "I messed up, and I want to come back home." They accepted me back and were very happy to have me. During that summer, I did get arrested, and since I was underage, they still had to call my mom and dad. It was the first time I'd seen them since I had moved out, and the disappointment in their faces was almost like, "I told you so; you can't handle this."

That made me dig in deeper to the fact that I didn't want to live in their home because of this. I had to pay them back for all the fees and continued to live on my own until the end of the summer. I felt like there was a small shift in our relationship after that because they felt valued and appreciated for once. I could say that I really wasn't that kind to them. I was definitely the teenager that rolled their eyes and thought everything they said was dumb.

As an adult now, I know that was because I just didn't feel accepted or wanted, and that, in turn, came out as disrespect to them. During that time, I feel like they did feel appreciated, almost like vindication on their part of, "Yeah, you can't handle being on your own." Shortly after that, I got a very serious boyfriend. He was not into drinking; he was very much into sports and did not have a lot of rules. He had no desire to party, and we just hung out all the time.

I think in my mind, I really thought there was going to be an even greater shift with my mom and dad because I was doing everything right. I was making good grades, I had distanced myself from that friend—not on purpose, but you get a boyfriend and become obsessed with them. I wasn't hanging out with her as much. My reputation had already been stuck at school, so it was hard to continue friendships with people whose parents were absolutely not going to allow their child to hang out with me, which I understand now.

There was still a strong feeling inside of me that I was not accepted and not loved. Even though I was being good and doing all the right things, I was still bossy, controlling, difficult, and too emotional. I was still all these negative things that had been told to me. It was very prominent in my life that Jesse is not good enough and will never be good enough, no matter what she does.

When I moved back in, it was a good transition for me. I did not feel welcome at my church again. I was teased and bullied a lot when I was younger, and sometimes, unfortunately, that even happens in the church. I was very uncomfortable. I remember fighting my parents constantly because I did not want to go to church at all. I begged to attend a different church that had a pretty large youth group. It was honestly the popular thing to do, but I felt comfortable there. I wanted to go to church camp with them and do all the things.

Reluctantly, they said yes and allowed me to go to a different church than they attended because they just wanted me in the Word and wanted good influences around me. I don't feel like there was a shift or change, but I remember being very shameful and guilty for everything I had done. One Wednesday night, they had an altar call, and I went down to rededicate my life to the Lord. It had been eight years since I accepted Jesus, and I remember being so excited about that. Something felt different.

The youth pastor called my mom the next day, and she was not excited for me. She was very confused. She said, "She's already been saved; I don't know where this is coming from." I remember her talking to me about it and not understanding it. She thought I was doing it because that's what everyone else around me was doing. I was trying to explain to her that something shifted and was different, but it didn't make sense to her at all.

There really wasn't a change in my life, and I'm not saying that was because my mom didn't support me. I was doing better than I had been doing before, so why did I need to fully devote to Him? Why did I need to fully follow Him when I was already a better person? I would have conversations with Him, but there was not

an actual relationship. I prayed because I was supposed to pray. I went to church because I was supposed to go to church. I was a better person because of the choices I was making, but there was no deep connection to the Lord whatsoever.

Going into college, I think that played a lot into the fact that I did not attend church in college. I did not have a relationship with Him, embarrassingly enough. I don't even remember talking to Him even a single time in college. I had to work through a little bit of guilt in that way, thinking that I couldn't be forgiven for that time because the Lord never leaves you. He's completely by your side all the time; it's you that leaves Him. It was fully on me; He was never not there. I was not seeking Him; I was not looking for Him.

Going into college, I had that serious boyfriend. He was younger, so he was still in high school when I went to college. I truly thought he was the one. I thought we were going to spend our lives together, so I completely devoted my time to him. I took all my classes on Tuesday and Thursday so that I could drive home on Thursday and back on Monday to spend as much time as I could with him. It was a great youthful, loving relationship that we had.

I don't think it was for him what it was for me. I do notice and know that God's protection was over me during that time. He did cheat, and we did break up, which caused a deep spiral in college. The cheating factor is really hard; a lot of us have experienced that, and it makes your self-worth feel like nothing. You don't feel good enough; you compare yourself to the person they cheated with. It was another moment in my life where I was not enough. I was making good grades, I put him as my top priority, and I drove back and forth a four-hour drive every single week to be with him.

It wasn't enough. I truly felt like I deserved to have a good time in school because for two years I didn't drink, I didn't go out, I didn't do anything. College was about having a good time and experiencing life, so that's what I was going to do. After that, alcohol became a huge priority to me, and going out was a huge priority. My grades started slipping, and friendships really started to deteriorate. People said, "You're not who I thought you were," and I would think, "You need to just give me a break; I want to have a good time."

I was totally not seeking the Lord. It definitely compounded and got worse to the point that I was in a full-blown depression in school. I was no longer attending any of my classes; I was sleeping all the time. If I was awake, I was drinking. Self-loathing and suicide entered the picture at this time, where I decided that I was not worthy of being on this earth and that the world would be better without

me. I had struggled with depression on and off as a young child, but this was the first time it was prominent.

I reached out to a friend, and they told my mom. She and my dad drove and picked me up from school, loaded everything up, and brought me home. This was huge for me because I truly didn't think they cared. For them to drive that distance meant a lot. I was renting, and they had bought a house there in the school where I was going, so it wasn't just like Jesse had three or four boxes of stuff to move home. We had to move a whole house.

I don't remember fully talking to my parents about exactly why I was depressed or what I was feeling. I remember being happy that they were there, and at that time, that seemed enough. It wasn't going to heal anything because then you get back into the routines of life. I moved back in with them, and it wasn't much longer until I attempted suicide. I had taken pills and was self-harming, cutting myself. I locked myself in the bathroom one day, and my mom and dad ended up coming into my room. I was completely out of it from the pills I had taken.

I remember bits and pieces of it. I can remember my mom yelling to my dad, "You have to get in here! You have to get in here!" I remember him coming in and wrapping me up in his arms, holding me like a baby, and crying. He was begging the Lord not to take his daughter. That was so impactful for me because I truly, in my mind, was like, "Do you actually like me? Do you actually care that I'm here?" Before that, I truly didn't feel that from him whatsoever.

To see such strong emotion from a man and to see him crying to the Lord, "Please don't take her from me," was a turning point. My parents put me into a psychiatric hospital after that in Roswell. I was very self-medicated and still drinking at the time, trying to get medications right. My parents were the most supportive they had ever been during this time. They soon realized that the alcohol in the house was not a good idea, so they took it out so that I wouldn't have an option to drink.

They did not let me self-isolate; they did not let me sit in my room in the dark. They would make me get up. Sometimes it made me really angry, but they would make me have dinner with them and have conversations. I can remember several times hearing my mom cry out to the Lord, "Just take this from her, Lord. Let her thrive and let her know who she is." Even though it was such a hard time in my life, I remember truly feeling seen and loved by them.

It felt like the first time my family wanted me around, and that was very helpful. They supported me completely when I lived with them. I got on a good dose of medication that really helped me get through that time, and things were starting to get better. They needed help in the office with their billing and all their stuff, so they said, "We think this would be a great transition for you. We think this would be great if you could just go in and help us in the office. You can make some money and get back on your feet."

I started to work for them, which is where I met my husband. He will tell a different story about how we met because we met when I was 17. He had worked for my parents for a long time, and we met when I was 17. I don't remember this, but we met another time, actually the day that my high school boyfriend broke up with me. I went to dinner with my dad, and he was at a contract in the town where I was living. I cried through that dinner, and apparently, my now-husband was there, but I don't remember him being there.

I remember meeting him when I was at my lowest and my worst. I was the heaviest I had ever been, very depressed, and very sad. There were things he knew about me that I had never told anyone. He and my dad were very close, and he was the person my dad confided in a lot when he was at work. For whatever reason, he still fell in love with me during that time. We did this back-and-forth thing because I didn't feel like he was my type, and I did not want to live in Artesia for my entire life. He was very much rooted here, and this is where he wanted his life to be.

In my mind, I never wanted to be here, so we went back and forth. I remember one specific conversation with my mom after work. I said, "Hey, you know, Wade would make somebody a really good husband one day." I remember her smiling so big because in her heart, she just knew. Moms always know. It wasn't long after that that we were dating. We actually dated an entire year and didn't tell a soul because he had full intentions of being in our family business forever. If it got rocky or messed up, he said that I couldn't get in the way of that.

It's funny now because we're fully in the company together and married. We got engaged shortly after we told everybody. I remember the day he proposed. He said, "I think we should just go to Vegas tomorrow, get married, and then have a baby right after." As a young kid, I loved children so much. I was like the babysitter of all babysitters and loved being around kids. I knew deeply that I was going to be a mom and that I was going to have a lot of kids. I thought I would have six or eight. You could ask anyone that knew me; they would always say, "Jesse's going to have like eight kids."

For him to propose that way was something I truly didn't want. I remember not thinking, "No, I want a long engagement. I want this big wedding, and I want to enjoy time with you." I don't think I realized until I was older why that was such a big deal to me. For the first time in my life, there was somebody who saw every ugly, gross, sad part of me, and he still loved me. This was the first time I saw a depiction of our loving heavenly Father in real life.

There was nothing I could do that he didn't think was wonderful or beautiful. He just loved every part of me. I knew so deeply what his character was that I knew he was going to be the greatest dad there ever was. He was going to invest so much in his kids. I selfishly didn't want that taken from me. For the first time, somebody was all about me, truly, deeply all about me, and I couldn't fathom having that taken from me.

So, we waited a long time to have kids. He reluctantly agreed. Right after we got married, I was getting on birth control, and the doctors told me that I had severe cysts and fibroids and that I should have children earlier than later because they would continue to grow, and having kids would be harder. I remember being completely devastated because in my mind, that wasn't the plan. That's not what we wanted to do. We were going to wait; we were going to have all the time and all the things together.

I can remember vividly that was the first time he and I really sat down and prayed together, talking about the fact that the Lord would provide and that we would make a decision, and He would see us through that. That definitely shaped where our relationship would go. For four years, we traveled together, worked together, lived together, and did everything together. We were fully obsessed with each other in every possible good way. It was a great time in our marriage and in our life, and I am so thankful for those years.

We finally decided to start a family. It took us a little over a year to get pregnant with our son. I remember all those self-doubts creeping back in again. Everything had been so blissful and happy, but I was told medically that this would be a problem, and we chose to wait, so we wouldn't have kids. I desperately wanted a baby and wanted several babies so badly. I questioned the Lord during that time. I was walking faithfully with Him, talking to Him, and I was very close to Him, wondering, "Did we make a mistake? Did we not hear you in this?"

I had to cling tightly to Him during that time, saying, "No, this is what you said; this is what we decided, and your will will be done." It might not be what I want. We finally got pregnant with our son, and we were both very excited. You go

through those crazy emotions in the beginning, like, "What if this happens? What if that happens?" I had the best pregnancy; honestly, there were no issues whatsoever. I had a good group of friends, and we were going to church. Everything was going great.

My water broke four weeks early, and we went into the hospital to have him. He came out, and he was so perfect, even though he was four weeks early. There were no issues whatsoever; we didn't have to stay in the hospital any longer than we were required to. He was a sweet, perfect baby that we had prayed for. They released us from the hospital, and we put him in the car seat. He cried the two hours home, and I remember thinking, "Okay, this is just normal."

I was probably on edge a little bit. I did the mom thing where you ride in the back with him, and the dad drives in the front. He was very irritable and fussy. He had not done that in the hospital. We got home, and everybody was very excited to meet him. That's when the crying started. I would say it didn't stop. I know that sounds like an exaggeration, but truly, this baby cried or screamed 14 to 15 hours a day. He did not sleep at night; he never slept more than 45 minutes. I was fully exhausted.

It was very hard. I don't remember reaching out to anybody. I don't remember openly talking about how hard it was. I remember taking him to the doctor and knowing something was wrong with him, but being told he was fine. I think the doctor is where I started. His pediatrician is where I always started with if we could figure out what was wrong, he would stop crying. They told me if I would relax, he would relax. There's nothing wrong; being a new mom is hard. You need to sleep when he sleeps, and all the advice they give you, but it never stopped.

I remember looking up so many things on the internet and thinking that he probably had what they call colic. Colic stopped at six weeks, colic stopped at eight weeks, three months, four months, five months. All the articles I could read, I read, and he did not stop crying. I think during this time, I was the closest to the Lord I've ever been, but He also felt so far away at the exact same time. I felt like all these healed parts of me that I had as a young child that I thought I had overcome really crept in, and they crept in fast.

It wasn't long before I was fully depressed, and I was not going to tell a soul. I was not going to really open up to anybody about how hard it was. I remember not understanding why he wouldn't stop crying and definitely feeling like it was my fault. There were a lot of comments thrown at me during that time, like, "If you can't handle being a mom, you could just give him to me." Or, "If you would not

breastfeed him, he would stop crying." "He's hungry; he's this; he's that." A lot of it was pinpointed at what I was doing or not doing, and it ultimately made me feel, once again, like a failure.

This tiny baby that I desired so greatly and wanted so desperately would be better off without me. My husband fully checked out during this time. Quite honestly, I wanted to run away too, but I didn't have a choice to run away, and he did. Babies always made him very nervous, and this was his first glimpse of fatherhood. The first baby he ever held was our son, and he dove into work. He was gone all the time. They really didn't have a deep connection like what you see on social media and all the comparisons that you can have.

I really felt alone a lot, telling myself, "This is what you wanted; this is where you're at." In the middle of the night, very sleep-deprived and very tired, he's screaming, and I can't even get him to eat. I finally was able to get him to latch and feed, and I'm sitting in the chair. I pulled up my phone and googled Christian adoption agencies. I fully felt like if I gave him to someone else, his life would be better and that I could not handle being his mom.

There was a lot with that later on in life that I really had to work through and the guilt I felt for that. Just being so desperate, even though I did not act on it, it's the thought that I had to release to the Lord and really get His forgiveness from. I feel like that's probably a conversation I'll have to have with my son when he's a lot older and understanding, almost getting his forgiveness in that as well because God called me to be his mom, and God gave him to me for a reason.

I think I would say that my entire life, there was not a lot that I could control. I didn't actually say this out loud, but I think I thought having my own child, my own baby, was something that I could control. Whenever I couldn't, then again, Jesse was a failure. This was the first time I think I fully surrendered to the Lord. I was doing a Bible study at the time, trying to do a Bible study the best that I could, and crying out to Him all the time.

There were moments that I would get on my knees before bed and fully lay across the bed, crying out to the Lord, "I can't do this. I don't want to do this, but if it is your will for me to wake up tomorrow, you'll put breath in my lungs." Every day I woke up, and every day was miserable. It was so hard to the point that I had a very good friend at the time. We were on a walk, and he was in the stroller, screaming. He was crying like he always did. Everyone around me was so used to him crying all the time that almost nobody could help because he would cry even harder.

I remember thinking so deeply that the world would be better without me. I asked her, "If something ever happened to me, would you promise to take him?" She said, "Of course." I said, "But will you promise to never hurt him?" She said, "Absolutely." I don't know that she actually knew what I meant during that time, but I was very much contemplating not being here anymore. It was too hard. I remember going home and truly wanting the Lord to take it all from me, knowing that if it was His will for me to breathe, I'd breathe, and if it wasn't, I wouldn't.

He did give me this child, and this was hard. I couldn't see the end of it. I truly couldn't see him being six years old and being this wonderful child. I could just see what was in front of me and my daily drowning. We decided at that time, he was about six months old, that we would not have any more children because it was too hard. I remember that being a huge sorrow in my heart because I desired so greatly to have lots of children, but there was no possible way I could do it. I couldn't even handle the one that I had; why would I have more?

He continued to cry and scream, and I would say that around 14 months, that changed. He started to move and be more active, and he seemed to be happier. My husband and I had a conversation like, "Okay, maybe we could do this again." So, we decided to have another baby, and we got pregnant with our daughter, our second. When she was born, we did have a few complications with the pregnancy, but nothing too crazy. She was born, and we used to call her our angel baby because she never cried. She slept all the time.

Before she was born, I remember having a full panic attack. It was probably two hours before she was born. I looked at my husband and said, "We can't do this. She's going to cry, and we're going to be right back where we were. What are we going to do?" He said, "Well, it's a little late for that; we're already here." She was born, and she slept 23 hours after she was born. I had to wake her to try to make her feed so we could be released. I was totally the girl that pressed the button and was convinced something was wrong with her. I had the nurses check everything because I thought it wasn't normal that she wasn't crying.

Even after we took her home, she slept, and when she was awake, she was happy. I remember thanking the Lord so much for the redemption in the second child, that I wasn't the problem and that we had a hard first go-around. The Lord was blessing me in the second child. At the time, our oldest was two, and he was so happy to be a big brother. He was so loving; he was not jealous. He was fully enveloped with her and loved her so much. It was such a good time.

But there was still something that was hard for me, and that was anxiety. I lived every day waiting for her to start crying or something to happen. I remember speaking to my friend during that time, saying, "I think I need medicine." I had this wonderful child, and it's not what it was before. There's still something that's not sitting right. I went to my doctor, and she was fully supportive. I did get on a low dose of anxiety medication, and that completely changed everything for me.

Everyone that knows me knows that we had a baby very quickly after our second. She was actually six weeks old when I found out I was pregnant with our third. He was also an angel baby who never cried. At this time, I was on medication, and my walk with the Lord was still very close. Everything was going great; honestly, I did not have the feelings I had the time before. He had his normal stuff; he's what we call our puker because he had reflux really bad. We used to sit in the shower to feed him his bottles because we knew we would just have to prop him back up, and he would puke it out.

Even at that, we could laugh and have joy in that because everything was completely different. Shortly after, we had another child. I think he was 10 weeks old when we found out we were pregnant with our fourth. At that time, we were like, "We're already here; we're already in it. We might as well; we want to have several kids." So, we have four beautiful children, and they are six, four, three, and two. We fully love being parents. It's hard; it's a lot. It's chaos sometimes. I joke with people that it's like the Israelites in the wilderness when God's organizing everything. That's what it looks like when we're trying to get out of our house; it's pure chaos.

Our family is good, and we're happy. We're so close with the Lord. There's this beautiful part that everyone who knows us knows what an amazing father my husband is, that I knew he could be. He's amazing; he keeps the kids, he does all the things. He is the number one dad. To see him now is not the person he was in that first year. Having so much grace in that and no bitterness or resentment towards that is a beautiful thing to see.

Being in a different place, I can fully tell you that I love being a mom, and I enjoy every single day, even when they're sick and crawling all over me. It's hard, or we're having temper tantrums and fights. I fully love being a mom, and I am so happy that God blessed me with this family and that He was so close by my side during that time that was so hard. I couldn't see the other side of it, but He did. He had a plan, and He could see it.

I love the story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the fire. It's such a well-known story, but I feel like there's a piece that I missed for so long. They were thrown in, and the fire was so hot, and they came out, and we all know they're not burned, right? They're not burned at all. The piece that I missed for so long was that scripture says they were unbound. When they were thrown in, they were bound, and they went through the fiery furnace, and the Lord unbound them, but they were not harmed.

I think when we go through those fiery storms and those fiery situations in our life, we will come out on the other side. When we cling so deeply to Him, we will come out with something burned off of us that Satan meant for evil, and the Lord's going to take it and make it so much better for us. That's probably one of my favorite stories.

As my son got older, when he was around three years old, we actually found out that he had an issue with his stomach. He was having a hard time going to the bathroom. I remember him, right when he turned three, we had not potty trained yet because it was such a huge issue for him. He was laying on the floor in a ball, screaming, and the hair on my arm stood up because it was the same cry and the same scream he did whenever he was a baby.

We ended up having to go to the doctor. They had to manually clean his bowels, and then we had to go to the emergency room for x-rays. He was diagnosed with megacolon, so it was so compacted that his intestines had completely stretched out. If we had waited a few more days, it would have been coming out of his mouth. The next year was very hard for us because he was on a lot of medication that initiated him going to the bathroom. It was not a good, clean, great situation, and it was very hard for me and my husband to have to do things we did not want to do for his intestines to shrink back down to normal size.

He's currently still on medication. If he does not take the medication, he does not go to the bathroom. So, there's definitely something wrong with his insides. Being able to get there was such a relief that I wasn't crazy and that he did cry all the time for a reason. Just learning that you have to listen to those mama instincts that the Holy Spirit gives you—they're straight from the Holy Spirit. It's something inside of you as a mother that we are gifted with, and we need to lean more into that. We do know things, and we can press hard for those, and we can advocate for someone who can't speak.

He's so happy; he's so brilliant; he's amazing. The Lord told me very early on that he was set apart and that he was going to do great things for the kingdom. The

way this boy is so in tune with the Holy Spirit blows my mind at such a young age. He feels things that don't even make sense to us sometimes, and the way that his brain works, I'm just so excited for who he is. I am so happy to be his mom and that I get to experience all these things about him.

I am so thankful that Satan didn't win during this time and that the Lord prevailed because it brings me no greater joy than to see him grow and be six years old. All the things that he is—an amazing brother, an amazing son—he loves so deeply. His emotions are high, but the Lord gave him those emotions, and we will teach him how to handle those and give them for the glory of His kingdom. Satan won't take those things from him.

All of our children are just completely wonderful, and we're so blessed to have them. To see where he has come from, such a little baby who cried all the time to who he is now is just a beautiful testimony in itself. One of the most beautiful things I love is I have friendships and relationships now in my life that you get talking in conversation, and you talk about your past, and they fully can't believe anything that I say. They're like, "It's not possible to see you who you are now and hear those things about you."

It's totally just the Lord of who I came to be. Everything that happened in my life has molded and shaped me through who I am because I allow Him to use all of me and every part of me. There was a woman recently who knew me when I was younger. She came up to me and gave me a hug. She had tears in her eyes and said, "It's so beautiful to see who you are because you're not the girl that I knew at 16."

It was the biggest compliment to me because I feel like I've grown and changed so much. On the other side, you can run into people that knew you from your past that don't know you now, and they can't believe where you're at or what your life looks like. We are so blessed, and we are so fully reliant that all of our blessings are from the Lord. We lean so deeply into Him so that we can have what we have.

If I could tell my younger self anything, if I could go back and talk to her and sit with her, I think I would just tell her that you are a daughter of the King. That's not a vague statement; it's not just something we say. He truly knitted you with His fingertips. What a beautiful scripture that is when you talk about His fingertips because His fingertips also created the moon, and it's huge. Then you think about how tiny you are compared to the moon, and He still created you. He spent the time just knitting you together.

I would tell her that all those moments that you sit there and think it's not going to work out, it's going to. God's going to bring you this amazing man that loves every single part of you, even the things that irritate him. He loves you, and everything that you pray for, He's going to give to you. There's going to be this most beautiful time in your life where the Lord is everything to you, and your family is everything to you, and your husband is everything to you, and it will work out.

I wish I could just tell her not to be sad all the time, but sometimes that's not always the best to say to someone. If she could have a lens into her future, I think it would be brighter for her. I think she would not have dwelled so deeply on things that the Lord would provide and put together for her.

My name is Jesse, and Jesus is enough.

Closing Remarks:

We're so glad that you were able to join us for this powerful testimony about the love of God and His faithfulness to us always. If you felt a pull in your heart, a tug wanting to know more about the Lord, wanting to receive the Lord as your Savior, then this is your day.

If you want to take me up on that, then just pray with me:

Dear Jesus,

I love you, and I know and believe with my heart that you died for me on the cross for my sins, to pay for my sins once and for all, so that when I leave this earth, I can be in eternity with you. Right now, Lord, I ask you into my heart, and I make you the Lord and Savior of my life. Touch me, heal me, and make me new. Father, in Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

If you prayed that, you're saved! When you leave this world, you get to be in eternity with our Lord and Savior Jesus and our Father God and all the believers forever. This is something that the angels rejoice over when somebody comes to the Lord.

We're so glad you made this choice. Now, there's something else we want to ask of you: if you made this choice and received Jesus, we want you to get connected to a local body, a local church, a Christian church where you'll receive help and support. It's so important that we, as believers, have church and that connection with each other

because we grow and learn so much more about the Lord, and we're strengthened together when we are together.

So go and find that local church, and you'll begin your journey. Also, I'd like to end by saying that if any of you are feeling hurt, dejected, or rejected and have been through things that are so difficult for you, remember that there are people around you that you can reach out to. It might be somebody in a school; it might be someone that you've been close to. Don't hesitate to seek out help if you need it because there are people there for you. There's support there for you.

Okay, and we'll be praying for you. Be blessed!