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shells” so we wouldn’t upset Dad. We didn’t want to do anything to cause him to go back to the hospital.

As a result of my young, fearful foundation I developed some protective coping skills that were not healthy or right. I continued to believe I needed to please people in order to earn their love. I still felt the need to be indispensable to the point that if things went wrong, I reasoned that somehow I must have caused it. I put pleasing people above pleasing God which resulted in being cowardly, deceitful and in making being the most popular in school my goal.

One of my most painful hurts was realizing I had been “groomed for sexual abuse” by a religious leader. He took me places and did things for me that my parents could never afford to do. He made me feel special until the day I was taken to a back room of the church where his actions made his intentions very clear. With burning tears in my eyes I ran. My CONCLUSION: I can’t trust anyone who shows me love and attention, not even a religious person.

This and other relational disappointments profoundly affected my love and trust in God. Christianity became to me cultural rules to follow more than a beautiful relationship with God. Thankfully, as a young mother, I began to hear messages about the true nature of God and his love that spoke to my heart and life.

With new understanding of the nature of God I began to see that I had been seeking his love on “my terms.” In my relationship with God I was trying to earn his love by being good enough, charming enough, nice enough and hardworking enough so he would of course have to save me. I had earned it!

It took time to break down my faulty foundational thinking to believe God loved me unconditionally. Most important of all, I came to truly believe that only Jesus’ shedding his blood on the cross and his resurrection was what forgave me and saved me. So I resigned control of my life, made Jesus my Lord and Savior and was baptized.

Thankfully, God gave me THE MOST TRUSTWORTHY MAN I know to marry. (Yet, because of my lack of faith and trust, I did not trust him either until I let God do his work to heal and renew my heart.)

My enemy, Satan, made sure I had plenty of evidence to pull me back into my faithless, fearful old self. Daily the “father of lies” works hard to attack my faith and convince me to go back to doubting and unbelief. I used to think that unbelief was no big deal. It was one of the “fluffy sins.” I no longer believe that. In my life unbelief is disgusting and dangerous!

“And it is impossible to please God without faith. Anyone who wants to come to him must believe that God exists and that he rewards those who sincerely seek him.” – Hebrews 11:6 (NLT)

The irony of Satan’s attacks and life’s circumstances is that God can also use them to teach me to unconditionally trust him. Satan kept trying to hand me my old tools and faulty beliefs, but those tools are useless when big life challenges happen. Here are just few areas that have challenged my growing faith AND my old need to feel indispensable.

Editor’s note: Please visit www.DisciplesToday.org for the rest of the story, this version was cut for space.

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• **Phnom Penh Church Celebrates its 25th Anniversary**

MJ Cheng, Phnom Penh, Cambodia — Wednesday, 15 November 2017
Phnom Penh Church of Christ celebrated its 25th anniversary on November 9-12, 2017 under with the theme The UNSHAKABLE KINGDOM! The Lord brought brothers and sisters from the USA, Japan, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam...

• **OYC: Your People, My People**

One Year Challenge — Wednesday, 29 November 2017
This week we celebrate the wedding of a disciple who met her husband on a One Year Challenge! As Ruth said to Naomi in Ruth 1:16: “Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be...”

• **ICOC 3.0 Structure Task Force Update**

Dinesh George, Bangalore, India — Sunday, 26 November 2017
The Structure Task Force would like to thank all the brothers and sisters who have shown their support by praying and joining the discussions regarding ICOC 3.0. Several of you have accepted the challenge and are sharing your passion and insight by becoming a part of one of the three Subgroups tasked with further...

• **One Body Many Parts**

Patrick Genova, Fairfield, CT, USA — Friday, 24 November 2017
My wife, La Micia and I began our new journey leading the Youth and Family Ministry in Southern Connecticut Church of Christ on May 1, 2017. If you would have told me how this all would have happened, I wouldn’t...

Five Year Old Me

Marcia Lamb, Boston, MA, USA

When I was five and one-half-years old, my father was committed to a psychiatric hospital 50 miles away from my home. Mom was left alone to care for five little children; my oldest brother was 7, I was the oldest girl, and the youngest three were in diapers (3, 2 and 8 months old).

Mom did not know how to drive. Although she was a Registered Nurse, there was no place to work within twenty

to thirty miles of our little town of 900. In later years I asked Mom how she got through those chaotic times. Half-jokingly she said, “I was planning to have a nervous breakdown, but he beat me to it.” Marcia siblings
The doctors had little hope that Dad would ever come home. They diagnosed him with Paranoid Schizophrenia. No doubt, two and a half years on the battle fields of World War II and PTSD also contributed to his state.

A day came when Mom took my older brother and me to see a “really cool place.” There were lots of toys, food, and even our own beds. The promise of not having to share beds with little kids who peed the bed every night sounded pretty good.

In spite of all that, my older brother Mel was crying. When I asked him what was wrong he said, “This is an orphanage! Mom’s going to give us away!”

Another option for Mom was to “farm the kids out” to relatives. We had kind aunts and uncles who were willing to take one or the other of us to raise. All were farmers and could use the “extra help.” Thankfully, for some reason, Mom was determined to keep us together and make it work.

From then on I believed that my survival was dependent upon becoming INDESPENSIBLE so I wouldn’t be given away. Therefore, I pushed myself to be the “perfect child.” I took care of the little kids, and did a lot of cleaning and dish-washing. I hid my hurts and kept quiet about the sexual abuse I was experiencing.

I knew Mom could not handle it. I felt my main job was to keep people laughing and happy, especially after Dad was released from the hospital after one and a half years. His sadness would last for days unless I could do or say something really funny to pull him out of it. We were all “walking on egg-



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• UPCOMING EVENTS

Ring in 2018! New Year’s Eve Party

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania USA
December 31, 2017

Spring Leadership Meetings

Orlando, Florida USA
March 19-23, 2018

International Campus Ministry Conference

Cincinnati, Ohio USA
July 5-8, 2018

2018 NE US Christian Conference

Providence, Rhode Island USA
July 20-22, 2018

International Singles Conference

Phoenix, Arizona USA
August 30 - September 3, 2018

Central American Conference

Panama City, Panama
October 5 - 7, 2018

2020 World Discipleship Summit

Orlando, Florida USA
July 2-5, 2020

CONNECTING DISCIPLES IN
CHURCHES AROUND THE WORLD



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