

(Written some time back Date Unknown)

CALMING THE STORMY SEAS IN MY LIFE

I have come to the realization that I have had nobody help me in bringing me the revelation of living life as a son rather than as a slave or an orphan. Nor, have I had anyone who continued to love and value me during my years of immaturity when I valued the authorities in my life for what they could do for me and not for relationship.

That's why I can honestly say that I have been living my life as if I had no home and as a self-centered, self-consuming, self-referential, or seeks to live for my own advantage by valuing people for what they can do for me and not for genuine relationship. All my life I've had the earnest desire for some achievement and distinction and the willingness to strive to achieve it. I had an insatiable desire to be seen and counted among the mature and successful. This resulted in a deep inner struggle with competition, rivalry, and jealousy, and left me with an ever pervading sense of restlessness--the feeling that there is something more that I have to do or put in order to feel valued, affirmed, accepted, or like I belong. My struggle is attributed to what I now know to be an orphan heart. I was raised in an extremely harsh home environment with parents who were alcoholics, abusive (physically and emotionally) and because of their own orphan hearts, did not know how to express love, I never learned how to be a son. My parent's love did not cover me or give me a feeling of security and acceptance and is why I began to strive and wrangle for any recognition I could get, ~~which~~ which led to a life of trying to hide feelings of frustration, agitation, and restlessness.

In my sea of fear, where the water temperatures are so frigid that every time I fall into the water, I become unconscious instantly and dying slowly. It's the most confusing body of water I've ever had to navigate. Conditions can change from calm to stormy in a heartbeat, and I never know from what angle the waves will come at me. My Sea of Fear has been my watery grave for 36 years. In the midst of the storms I would always try to bring in my sail line, but in doing so I would pile all the extra rope on top of my lifeline that attached my harness to the rope leading from bow to stern. Although I seemed to be tangled, I was still able to move, yet I was frozen to the bow. You may ask, "What was I doing?" Well, I was stuck in numb-numb-ville and have been for 36 years. Along the way I have wounded the lives of my family and all who have tried to love me, and my own life had come apart at the seams. I know now that it's time to let go of the pain of my past and begin to live for the restoration of my family and friends. I just need to let it go. That's why I'm un-snapping my lifeline so I can confront my fears and choose life. I'm risking letting go in order to bring healing and restoration to those whom I have inflicted pain upon in the years before and to myself as well. In doing so, I'm also seeking to crawl out of my entanglement and pull my lifeline free of all the snaky pile of rope that I had piled on top of it all these years, so that I can be safely clear of the entangling rope and be able to reattach my lifeline farther back and crawl into the wheelhouse of warmth and security.

I no longer want to be afraid to trust, afraid to open up even to the ones I love, and afraid of being rejected so that I can experience the defining moment of my life on the bow of a storm-tossed emotional sailboat and confront my fears in my Sea of Fear...and choose life. It's always been easier for me to hold onto the familiar, and make it my lifeline even though it does not satisfy me, than to risk letting go in order to grab hold of something else that will. This fear has made me unable to healthily connect emotionally with anyone else with whom I have a relationship. Living like an orphan means struggling constantly with the fear of trusting. It is a life of independence where I believe I am completely on my own. It means living in a state of agitated resistance against people who do not think like me. When I live my life as if I don't have a home, I see every person--even loved ones--as a potential threat or enemy to my independence. I understand that no one goes through life with-

out experiencing some degree of shame, disappointment, or betrayal and so the question is, "When these and other crises come, where do I hook my lifeline?" Consequently, my orphan heart negatively affected every relationship I had, particularly with my family. This isolation has been going on for 36 years now. What hurts so much is that I know what I have done was wrong, and I can't do anything to make it right. I get to the point where I have not want to talk to anybody and I want everybody to just leave me alone! No matter what I've done or what's going on, I've never had anyone to love me just the way I am. Still on the bow of my emotional sailboat in my Sea of Fear and in the entanglements of counterfeit affections, comforting myself with anger, control, and isolation. I've nobody to tell me to just let it go. There has been many a times I've come and risked opening my heart for a moment of tenderness, a moment of nurturing, or a moment of warmth, only to receive nothing in return. So with me possessing an orphan heart, I've never truly felt at home anywhere. I've been afraid to trust, afraid of rejection, and afraid to open up my heart to receive love. And until I am able to receive love, I cannot unconditionally express love, even to my own family. Since my orphan heart went left unchecked, it grew into a stronghold of oppression--a habit structure of thinking or fortress of thought that is so deeply entrenched that I began to focus on the faults I saw in my parent's authority. Our true personality is revealed in our family relationships. I would wear a mask before the world, but at home is where my mask came off. I received my parent's faults as a disappointment, discouragement, grief, and rejection. But I can only give to others what has been given to me. How can I ever be a father if I have never felt like a Son? There was no nurturing, tenderness, warmth, affection, comfort, or protection. I had lost basic trust in my parent's authority, only trusting them on surface relationships, "safe" conversations, and the like, but no longer trusted them when it came to matters of intimacy and deep personal communication. Because I had been hurt deeply in that area, I did not trust them with my heart or my deep feelings. When I talk about basic trust, I am not talking about the ability to believe or trust another person, but the capacity to hold my heart open to another person, especially if I believe his or her intentions or motives are questionable. Basic trust is the ability to risk being real and vulnerable, to keep my heart open even when it hurts rather than close it off. I moved into a fear of receiving love, comfort and admonition from others because I've lost basic trust and it's difficult for me to receive from others because I'm afraid to make myself vulnerable. So when the inevitable crisis comes, my response is to suck it up outwardly and take care of it myself because I don't trust anyone else or believe there will be someone to comfort me. With my orphan heart, I always feel alone, especially in a crowd or during times of crisis. I've closed my heart to receiving love and intimacy (in-to-me-see). I've retreated within, isolating my heart from outside influence and from all but the most superficial or unhealthy emotional attachments. I've taken on an independent, self-reliant attitude and started controlling my relationships that became superficial and developed a belief that says no one will be there to meet my need. Which is why living life like an orphan and chasing after counterfeit affections has led me to daily battle a stronghold of oppression. I want to start living my life like I have a "home", I'm speaking of a place of warmth, protection, comfort, security, and identity--a place where I receive a sense of purpose and destiny and a reason to get out of bed in the morning. A place I can run to when things go wrong, the place where I can receive affirmation and encouragement, not so much for what I have done but for whose son or father I am. A place where I belong and cease striving and enter into rest. I would like to have the sense of being valued, honored, and loved. There has been countless times I have gotten up in the morning feeling like I don't have a home, that there is so little expressed love, little comfort, conditional acceptance, and a diminishing hope for experiencing lasting peace and rest. I felt a sense of oppression, a sense of foreboding, a sense of impending disaster. Most mornings I faced another day of pain, another day of fear, another day of people saying all the wrong things about me, another day of not measuring

up in the eyes of the people who matter the most to me, another day of wondering whether or not I will survive. I don't know how I went on living like that or how I went on knowing that tomorrow I would have to get up and do battle with all of it again. That's the power of the darkness I've been fighting my way through every day. I want to be able to be loved unconditionally and to give love unconditionally with no fear, anxiety, anger, bitterness, hurt feelings, or resentment. Never has anyone close to me taken me aside and say, "You know, I've been watching the way you relate to others and have observed a pattern in your life that really concerns me. Can we talk about it?" Instead I've subjected myself to my own mission--self-protection, independence, self-reliance, not opening my heart to love or to the possibility of being hurt again and it's why I've been dead inside all these years.

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