

Out of darkness into the light

Today I want to speak to troubled teens and young adults.

From Devotions for everyday of the year Sarah Young
Jesus calling Enjoying Peace in his presence April 7

I am The Potter; you are my Clay. I designed you before the foundation of the world. I arrange the events of each day to form you into this ~~pre-~~con~~~~ preconceived pattern. My everlasting Love is at work in every event of your life. On some days your will and Mine flow smoothly together. You tended to feel in control of your life when our wills are in harmony. On other days you feel as if you are swimming upstream, against the current of my purpose. When that happens, stop and seek my face. The opposition you feel may be from me, or it may be from the evil one.

Talk with me about what you are experiencing. Let my Spirit guide you through treacherous waters. As you move through the turbulent stream with me, let circumstances mold you into the one I desire you to be. Say yes to your Potter as you go through this day.

Who am I: my mother named me Jennifer Johnson
So I am identified by my name that my mother gave.

Who Did I become and why?

At early age of 10 years I became the product of my circumstances. I was molested at the age of 9 years until I was 13 years old. I begin trying to ~~ste~~ have sex with little boys at the age of 10 years because that was what I was taught by the three people who molested me. I grew very rebellious by the age 13 years old. By this time I was being molested and beating all the time. I begin to steal out

The stores, my mother introduced prostitution to me. She told me all the old men wanted to do is touch me. I could make up to hundred dollars. So I tried it with a couple strangers a couple of times. I didn't like it, so I stop. Everyday I was running away from home a couple hours get scared and come back. I would skip school because I didn't like certain teacher or students. Then I got involved with a 27 years old and 30 year old I had a miscarriage. at the age of 13 years old. wouldn't wash dish was always talking back. I would always fight my siblings, fight other children in the community and sometimes at school. I was bullied in school because I was the tallest they called me too tall Jones and I need braces on my teeth they said I look a fish. I cut all my hair off at the age 13 years out of anger. my mom had me going seeing a ~~prob~~ juvenile probation officer for 90 days on a trial basis. I did them 90 days after they was up I went back to my old ways.

Speaking out the house and having sex, etc. I was teenager spiral out of control. I was hanging with the sex two girls who liked to fight as well. One day my mom said I better not catch you hanging out with them anymore. We use to steal together. when my mom snatch me away from them I was made but I was still see that at school but my mom begin to send me to grandma house or pick me up from school to make sure my contact was limited with them. Two weeks later after a football game they ~~beat~~ beat another girl with a base bat. They end up in juvenile detention center then when they got older enough they was transported to adult prison.

Then I begin to hang around some new friends who like to go to the river without supervision. Many people had drowned in this river. My mom said stay out from down there. One day I put my bath suit on under my

Clothes and slipped out. My mom didn't know where I was at. But a family member of ours was making his rounds on his police patrol car. He told my mom. She came in got me. She and my stepdad beat me so bad with a plastic bat and window stick. I ran out the house to my friend's mamma house. She immediately took me to the police station. Then I was put into foster care for 90 days.

I cried all the time and was having sex all the time in the foster care. Cause my foster mom was never home. My life was spiral out of control my mom would come to the school harrassing me. Nobody wouldn't do nothing. Suddenly I was put back in the home of the abuser. I thought I was going to lose my mind. My mental health counselor wasn't ~~trapper~~ helping. I over dose on pills they put my stomach to bring me back. All I know was trauma and pain.

My dad got me, I moved to New Jersey. Most the area we lived in was drug infested I been to mess around with big time drug dealers, partying all the time; sleep with this one and that one. Fighting with my sibling all the time and skipping school. Each time I try to change my mindset and environment behavior. Satan would send someone along to distract me. Then the spiral starts all the way back over. I got pregnant at the age of 18 years. I start the baby daddy was cheating.

I ran back to Georgia only for every cycle to start d. over. I was homeless & stay with mom for a little for them to mistreat me. Then I had my first child moved in my apartment. was going to get my God. Then I met this man who would become my second baby daddy. who wouldn't pay bills, was cheating on me, got someone else pregnant and was abusing me.

As well a drug dealer. He became so abusive that I had to pack me and my children up. We was homeless for months. Then I started dating baby dad number 3 while I was homeless. He took me on drug runs and I also find out he had from multiple women that had babies from. I got out on the relationship he began to stalk me and brutally rape me one day. I keep kept my baby because it wasn't his fault.

After that I decided to be alone, we we're still homeless struggling now I was pregnant and had my other two toddlers. In my early stage of pregnancy I went to the club. This guy was trying to talk to me, I said I don't even anybody night now. After three month I end up with him and ~~her~~ her mom. His mom became a blessing as well as him. We end up with a place to stay. Every thing was going good until we allowed another family live with us - all hell broke loose for us a young couple.

I didn't have myself esteem and didn't know who I was as to why I was except anything before ~~my husband~~. Came to prison. yes I end up here because I was lost in so many ways. Many days I would ~~feel~~ ^{feel} worthless. I don't know if your in foster care, group home, shelter, juvenile facility or even prison. Are just running wild out in the streets. Your life spiraling out of control your on drugs or selling them. Having sex, skipping school, fighting or just hanging out on the corners because you feel like you and your homie run this block. I am talking to you today.

I had to realize that Satan the thief John 10:10 comes to only to steal, kill and destroy. I have come ~~only to steal~~ that they may have life and have it

to the full.

God allowed me to be in prison for a purpose.

- (1) Save my life
- (2) to save myself from self and the people who I connected myself to that don't mean me no good but I forcing them in his will for my life
- (3) He knew that if I remain in the free world living the lifestyle I was living. I would not had time to serve him
- (4) He seen something down the line that would have destroyed his ~~pr~~ purpose for me to live for him and touch other people lives

God chose me for such a time as this - do not despise where you at instead ask God what is your purpose in this and get to moving on what he shows you to do.

God showed me my purpose to minister to broken people who have lost their children to death. Gave me a writing that was title purpose comes with pain.

I am here to tell you it doesn't matter what people, friends, family, juvenile courts, prison's staff, courts, or our enemies has to say about who they think you are. God will clean you up if you allow him to according to 1 John 1:9. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us of our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness - you see the devil meant it for evil but God will use you for his glory and to be that light in a dark world to lead others to Christ if you allow him to use you.

Your self esteem matters!

Gen 1:1 The creation story in Genesis teaches us about God and ourselves. First we learn about God (1) he is Creative (2) as the creator he is distinct from his creation.

(3) he is eternal and in control of the world. We also learn about ourselves: (1) Since God chose to create us, we are valuable in his eyes (2) We are more important than the animals see Gen 1:28 for more on our role in the created order

Luke 12:17 our true value is God's estimate of our worth, not our peer's estimate. Other people evaluate and categorize us according to how we perform, what we achieve and how we look. But God cares for us, as he does for all his creatures, because we belong to him. Thus we can face life without fear; we are very valuable to God.

Gen 1:26 found in knowing we are created in God's image
In what ways are we made in God's image, God obviously did not create us exactly like himself because God has no physical body. Some feel that our reason, creativity, speech, or self-determination is the image of God. More likely, it is our entire self that reflects the image of God. We will never be totally like God because he is our supreme creator. But we do have the ability to reflect his character in our love, patience, forgiveness, kindness, and faithfulness knowing that we are made in God's image and thus share many of his characteristics provides a solid basis for self-worth. Human worth is not based on being made in God's image, because we bear God's image, we can feel positive about ourselves. Criticizing or downgrading ourselves is criticizing what God has made and the abilities he has given us. Knowing that you are a person of worth helps you love God, know him personally, and make a valuable contribution to those around you.

God saw that all he had created was very good. You are part of God's creation and he is pleased

with how he made you. If at times you feel worthless or of little value, remember that God made you for a good reason, you are valuable to him.

Gen 2:7 Comes from the breath of God

"from the dust of the ground" implies that there is nothing fancy about the chemical elements making up our bodies. The body is a lifeless shell until God brings it life with his "breath of life". When God removed his life-giving breath, our bodies once again return to dust. Our lives and worth, therefore, come from God's Spirit, many boast of their achievements and abilities as though they were the originator of their own strengths. Others feel worthless because their abilities do not stand out. In reality, our worth comes not from our achievements but from the God of the universe, who chooses to give us the mysterious and miraculous gift of life, value life, as he does.

Relying on achievements for Judges 3:15-30

In this instance, Ehud ~~delivered~~ delivered Israel from its enemies. This unusual story demonstrates how God can use us just the way he made us. Being left-handed in Ehud's day was considered an exceptional ability. Many Benjaminites were left-handed see Judge 20:16, making them highly specialized troops, able to use a sling or bow with tactics designed to repel right-handed warriors. Eglon's body guard never checked Israel's messages for left-handed weapons. But God used Ehud's over look ability to give Israel victory. Let God use you the way you are to accomplish his work.

you have great value to God ps 8:3-5

To respect God's majesty, we must compare ourselves

to his greatness. When we look at creation, we often feel small by comparison. When we look at creation, we often feel small by comparison. This is a healthy way to get back to reality, but God does not want us to dwell on our smallness. Humility means proper respect for God, not self depreciation. When we look at the vast expansion of creation, we wonder how God could be concerned for people who constantly disappoint him. Yet God created us only a little lower than himself and the angels! The next time you question your worth as a person, remember that God ~~do~~ considers you highly valuable. We have great worth because we bear the stamp of the Creator (see Genesis 1:26, 27) for the extent of worth God places on all people) Because God has already declared how valuable we are to him, we can be set free from feelings of worthlessness and abuse of everyday life. Those who stand up for Christ in spite of their troubles truly have lasting value and will receive great rewards.

What are these great rewards? Do not lose yourself in what people say about you.

Matthew 5:12 Jesus said to rejoice when we're persecuted. Persecution can be good because (1) it takes our eyes off earthly rewards, (2) it strips away superficial belief, (3) it strengthens the faith of those who endure, and (4) our attitude through it serves as an example to others who follow. We can be ~~comforted~~ comforted to know that God's greatest prophets were persecuted (Elijah, Jeremiah, Daniel). The fact that we are being persecuted proves that we have been faithful; faithless people would be unnoticed. In the future, God will reward the faithful by receiving into his eternal Kingdom where there is no more persecution.

Romans 12:3 how to honestly evaluate yourself

Healthy self-esteem is important because some of us think too little of ourselves, on the other hand, some of us overestimate ourselves. The key to an honest and accurate evaluation is knowing the basis of our self-worth - our identity in Christ. Apart from him, we aren't capable of very much by eternal standards; in him we are valuable and capable of worthy service. Evaluating ~~you~~ yourself by the worldly standards of success and achievement can cause you to think too much about your worth in the eyes of others and thus miss your true value in God's eyes.

Romans 13:9 comes from focusing on others rather than your self

Some how many of us have gotten the idea that self-love is wrong. But if this were the case, it would be pointless to love our neighbors as ourselves. But ~~the~~ Paul explains what he means by self-love. Even if you have low self-esteem, you probably don't willingly let yourself go hungry. You clothe yourself reasonably well. You make sure there's a roof over your head if you can. You try not to let yourself be cheated or injured. And you get angry if someone tries to ruin your marriage. This is the kind of love we need to have for our neighbors. Do we see that others are fed, clothed, and housed as well as they can be? Are we concerned about issues of social justice? Loving others as ourselves means to be actively working to see that their needs are met. Interestingly, people who focus on others rather than on themselves rarely suffer from low self-esteem.

Finals thoughts:

Jeremiah 33:3 Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know.

Jeremiah 29:11 For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not harm you, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

Remember you are:

psalm → ~~ps~~ 139:13-15 God's character goes into the creation of every person. When you feel worthless or even begin to hate yourself, remember that God's Spirit is ready and willing to work within you. We should have as much respect for ourselves as our maker has for us.

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