

Anonymous (49 years)

“Now I’m sleeping on the floor”

I grew up with my mother and my stepfather. We have four brothers and three sisters. I did play netball. The pole fell on my head when I was ten years old. I needed to go to the hospital. From that time, you know what happens? I have a problem with my head. They didn’t figure out what is actually happening. Now the doctor tells me the nerve at the back of my eyes, it’s damaged. I can only read big words.

As time goes on, I got married. We had a nice family together. But eleven years later, I went for the divorce. You know I had a good husband. He’s got his good points and his bad points. But something did go wrong there. He had somebody else. I did learn in life. Life wasn’t easy for me. At the age of fifteen I went to work because my brothers and sisters were very small. I did help my parents, even though he was my stepfather. Me and my husband, we went out for five years before we got married. He was a very wild person, he was a gangster. I did bring him down. I saved him a lot. He was like, nothing can tell him in life. I fell in love with him because sometimes we look at the person’s outside, but we never look at the person’s inside. His personality was very good and he got a good heart also for people. He liked to reach out to others.

We had a success marriage, he put me in a house, I can complain nothing about it. But I had a tough life. I did go through lots of things. He got lots of women. Every time I took him back. He abused me with his gun. He threatened me a lot. He had like how can I say... I can’t go out, I can’t go do what I want to do. Nobody knows what I’ve been through. I never tell anybody. We were like... nobody must know our things. I never give up. My mother used to tell me when you make a bed you sleep in the bed. For twelve years it was good times, bad times and sad times. I did eat tears for food and all that. That was part of my life, I just went through that. You know sometimes when God puts two people together, nobody can separate you.

“I just collapsed”

One day I went to court once and I said can’t you give him another chance in life? I told them I honour the court but me and my husband will sort it out. He never went to jail. How could I put somebody in jail? We did say for better or worse. I went through better and worse. But I was standing with him. Since that day I can’t take it anymore. My best friend was staying on my property with her husband and children and I never knew... She was my best friend. I knew about the other women, but her... One day I told my husband I’m going to buy some fruit, but I didn’t go to the shop I just went around the corner and then I saw him with her in one bed. I don’t know what happened after that. I just know I was out and I went into hospital but I never knew what happened around me, what went wrong. I just collapsed. Thank God he did take me through that. The Lord did take me out of the hospital. It was for me very hard. I still don’t want my family to get involved. I want to stand on my own two feet. One day, that was in 2006 I went for a divorce.

I never went for counseling, I never went for nothing. It was very hard for me. That is something that you can’t explain. You know that nobody will understand that you have a bond with one another. Nevertheless as time goes on we went for a divorce and he asked me can’t I cancel the thing? I said no I’m too hurt inside, I can’t do

it. That was the hardest time in my life. My mother knew nothing. I don't want my family to get involved in things like that... I was a person, I didn't talk to nobody, I kept everything in. I always say you love all but you can trust no one.

"From everything, he must have the half"

I left the house because she, my friend, she don't want to leave the house. You can't fight with fire. I went to stay with my mother and my husband and friend stayed on with the house. I went to this lawyer, I went to that lawyer and everywhere the door was close. Then I got saved. I took a walk and this thing says in my mind, I just went straight to that church. When I came there that lady, she takes my hand and they let me sit there. I just spread my hands out and I said Lord I don't know what to say. And something said don't worry my child I am with you. I gave my heart to Jesus. After that I get a letter from a lawyer from the agency when you don't have money. After that I win the case. My husband got a private lawyer, he paid a lot of money, but nothing helped. My lawyer told me that lady must go out of the house; it's only between me and my husband. When the divorce was signed, my lawyer said, this is the end of the story. Are you going to give him half from everything? The choice is yours. I told her she must give me a week, two weeks, to think. Then she phoned me. Are you ready, she asked me. I said, yes I'm ready. I phoned lots of people, they must give me strength. I told her no matter what I did go through; from everything he must have the half. He did also work, I give him the half. We sold the house and I did get my half, he did get his half.

As I sometimes walk past the house that me and my husband lived in, I get sad. But I think sometimes you must go through a test. Through this, I did encourage a lot of women. Wherever I move I get people on the road and they are telling me their problems. I can tell them what happened to me and encourage them. I know what it is. You must go through a test to encourage other people. One day I was sitting in the bus to town and here came a lady from Claremont, she sits next to me. She gets a phone call and she says: *"I don't want you any more, please leave me, you hurt me a lot."* The tears came out of her eyes. And I just turned and hugged her and encouraged her. I told her I also went through this.

"Even the cups and the saucers, I gave them away"

After the divorce, I thought I was gonna buy me a small house. But most of my money I did take and I said Lord what do I do? I bought bread and I would go to the community people that haven't got children and I blessed them with the bread. I know there is a need in the community. And I did go with my furniture and I did bless people with my furniture. People that I saw, they sleep on the ground; they don't even have a carpet. I give them a mattress and a bed. All my furniture I did give away. Even the cups and the saucers I gave them away. I never said nothing, I just came into their house and saw: *"Oh, there's nothing in here"*. Then I put my furniture in there and said *"Okay, bye, thank you"*. I also gave my money away. I never even bothered to ask it back.

I am on the waiting list for a council house since '92. But every time they tell me stories. At the rent office, it goes like this: if you put something in my hand than I'm gonna see to you. The day you have money you have everything. But the day you have nothing... I sleep on the floor now. I haven't even got money to make a phone call.