Take Heart, Daughter!

He turned and faced her, acknowledged her, valued her, validated her, and commended her for her faith.

From her downcast position, Jesus elevated her to the position of daughter. He did not just call her woman but endearingly called her daughter. Just let that thought penetrate your mind. Daughter! In the midst of her shame, Christ called her “daughter.” At the time of healing, Jesus removed her shame!

Many of us walk around with the weight of shame. Some has been inflicted on us by others and some we have dumped on ourselves.

Shame of . . .
• A broken marriage
• Divorce

• Failure
• Being sexually abused
• Addictions
• Not measuring up to others expectations
• A lack of higher education
• Not being pretty enough
• Low paying job
• Not having the “right” clothes, house, car etc.
• An abusive family of origin
• An alcoholic family
• Our children’s addictions/behaviors
• Being in an abusive relationship
• A disability
• Being poor
• Not having a higher economic status

The list could go on and on.
You can fill in your own blank.

Oh, downcast one, place your focus on Jesus and reach out to Him. He will heal your wounded heart and remove your shame for He calls you, Daughter!

Paula Silva

Matthew 9:20-22

20 Just then a woman who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years came up behind him and touched the edge of his cloak.
21 She said to herself, “If I only touch his cloak, I will be healed.”
22 Jesus turned and saw her. “Take heart, daughter,” he said, “your faith has healed you.” And the woman was healed at that moment. Matthew 9:20-22

This woman was clothed in shame from the illness she suffered for twelve years. Year after year she had been considered unclean. This affected any kind of relationship she would have. This had to have caused immense isolation and loneliness.

One of the things she possessed was great faith that she could be healed if she would touch Christ’s cloak. She took a great risk to reach out for help in spite of the shame she felt. She probably wanted to just touch and then fade into the crowd.

Christ knew what had happened even though he was surrounded by a crowd of people. He could have just let the woman retreat into the crowd, but he chose to heal her physically and emotionally as he removed the shame.
Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a desire fulfilled is a tree of life. Proverbs 13:12

Hope deferred is more like a wish with no real basis for truth. It can be unrealistic expectations. We say things like:

- “I hope he will change.”
- “I hope he will treat me with respect.”
- “I hope he will not yell at me the next time he is angry.”
- “I hope this time he is truly sorry.”
- “I hope he will go to counseling as he promised he would.”

When there has been no evidence of change, the word “hope” needs to be replaced by “wish.” If we keep using the word, “hope” as the cycle of abuse continues, we soon become hopeless because nothing has changed in the relationship. We are hanging on to false hope.

False hope consists of ….

- Letting our neediness and desires run our life so we can maintain control
- Idealizing one’s situation to formulate hope when in reality it is only wishing things would change
- Spiritualizing (suffering for Jesus) while forgetting all reality and then blaming God

As we move into the reality of our circumstance, we can identify realistic hope which can exist during the raging storms of our lives.

Realistic Hope . . .

- Consists of fulfilled expectations
- Endures present difficulties for a future good
- Makes one grow and mature
- Allows God to work instead of playing God by controlling one’s situation
- Changes one’s focus from self and the relationship to God, the author of hope

Storms in life will come and go. Some are more severe than others. How do we find hope in the midst of the storm when the darkness of uncertainty and fear reign in our hearts and when our life boat is being tossed to and fro? We begin by looking for safety in a peaceful harbor.

In the darkness, our eyes look for the light beaming from the lighthouse on the shore. We focus on the light, Jesus Christ, who points the way as he calls out to us and offers eternal hope in the shelter of his arms.

“Because he loves me,” says the Lord, “I will rescue him, I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name. He will call upon me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honor him. With long life will I satisfy him and show him my salvation.” Psalm 91:14-16

The foundation of our hope is Jesus Christ, Emanuel (God with us). He has proven to be faithful. “For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope.” Romans 15:4

In the book, Irrepressible Hope Devotional, Marilyn Meberg states, “the presence of hope opens the portals to happiness and peace. Our hope is authored in God.”

Where is your hope?

Paula Silva
The Other Side of My Rainbow

I want to be proof to AMAZING things that God does. I have walked on a road without my children for 6 years. This was not by my choice, but by someone else’s choice based on a very controlling spirit that stopped and blocked my every attempt.

I was married to a pastor for many years and lost my identity during those years and my soul was dying. There was nobody to reach out too at my church because they all loved him way before they loved me and I had fear I wouldn’t be believed and I was right.

It started after I met an amazing woman through my autistic son’s behaviorist who brought to my attention to the fact that I can be healed from my wound from losing my identity that was a result of a marriage with a man who had a strong and devious controlling spirit.

After beginning to see truth and beginning to see the woman I was intended to be, divorce followed in the near future. As fearful as I was to stand up for what is right I did it but the cost was my Ex-husband’s control to step up and try to stop my motherhood. That’s all I was, a Mama.

I lost my church, my friends, my family, my children and years later I am not the same woman. I am healed from that loss. The last six years have been the most painful times as a Mom missing her babies like only one in my position could understand and sadly I’m finding there are other women like me.

At the same time the last six years have been incredible and beautiful. I have learned a deep understanding of my relationship with God. He has brought me through healings of different sorts and I have grown. I have found love with a good man that can only be sent from God because he has been my rock and I have been blessed with such happiness with my life with him. After that, everything else just falls into place.

By divine circumstances I found Focus Ministries 7 years ago and I was validated. I needed that so bad because of the false guilt I went through being a pastor’s wife going through a messy and painful divorce. Self-doubt was so overwhelming.

Focus Ministries was a kick start for me to know that I wasn’t alone, sadly, that other women were going through what I was going through and that breaks my heart even today. Having insight and validation to my situation only gave me the strength to keep moving forward and to not stay stagnant. Thank you Paula!!

I have found friends that stick closer to me than a brother. One of the hardest things during those years was to “keep on keeping on,” and “pressing on for that goal, for that prize that God promises,” and that His promises were really for me too. The people surrounding my life encouraged me this way.

As I became more healed I became bolder. I learned to mother my children in prayer because I was still called to be their Mom. So many awesome stories and situations that blew my mind lead up to the picture you see here. It happened, I did it with God who loves me and
The Other Side of My Rainbow

with those surrounding my life now.

Recently everything came like a whirlwind and God swept me off my feet! I just had the most incredible time with my children! YES! It happened! I saw them with my eyes, I kissed their cheeks and never stopped. I hugged them, squeezed them, smelled them, held their hands and we laughed and we loved.

Moment by moment it changed and rapidly. It was as if our bond and connection just picked up right where it left off 6 years ago. My oldest had a wall that came down and it was astonishing! It was like 6 years was made up and packed into the short days of our visit. Everybody around was amazed with what God was doing!

I want to share my story because it’s miraculous. I want to share it with those in my position and with those who need hope in any situation. If I didn’t have hope during these past years I would have had nothing. I’ve seen hope come alive and I have felt hope sustain my heart and soul.

I also have wanted to give up, I have been fearful, I have been so alone, I have been through not trusting God, I have watched other Mom’s unaware of how blessed they are to even be at a grocery store with their children, I have been intimidated by my Ex and I have been at the lowest of my own value.

At the same time blessings have come down on me like crazy during this journey. I have felt love, joy and peace that passed anything I can understand. My heart has been on such a healing adventure that I’ve learned to write songs on my guitar that express my heart, I’ve been writing books, I’ve found what it means to “delight” while there was so much against me and most of all I’ve found “good life” while in the midst of such loss.

I was not meant to go through this alone, and I have not. We are never meant to go through things alone. I’ve learned to open up and let God bring people into my heart and in turn to be there for them like they’ve been there for me during such painful times.

My friends have heard this over and over, “One of my most painful things these past years was how do I live my life without my children?” I hated to even say that sentence. I just could not wrap my mind around that. It was unnatural because I’m a Mom who loves her children.

My answer was a daily answer; I live the moment that God has put in front of me and keep hope alive for what He’s going to unfold in the days ahead, because He will unfold something so great and way beyond what we could expect.

I have gained so very much over the past 6 years and at this moment I have gained even more.....my children are back in my life. This all changed radically and unexpectedly in a matter of a couple of months! I’m no longer looking at the other side of the rainbow watching other Mom’s with their children and feeling the intense sadness of my loss, now I’m on the other side of my rainbow.

God called me to be a Mom to each of my children. Nobody can take away what we had in the beginning and nobody can remove God’s calling. He will shut the mouth of lions for us. Pressing on with hope!

“We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure...”

Hebrews 6:19

Wendy Bova
Dating

What You Can Live With . . .

No one is perfect! Even Prince Charming will let you down and disappoint you. Here are the traits of some “imperfect” people who are worth getting to know:

- They have a growing relationship with Jesus Christ.
- They can accept criticism and admit when they have done wrong.
- They strive for honesty and integrity in everything they do.
- When they hurt someone, they can see the pain they caused.
- They are truly sorry for hurting other people, and make a definite change to prevent doing it again.
- When they do wrong, they repent and ask forgiveness instead of just feeling guilty or sorry they got caught.
- When they seek help for a problem, they do not quit working on the issue until it has been resolved.
- They are committed to growing as a person, both intellectually and spiritually.
- They give and receive forgiveness.
- They have a teachable spirit, and are willing to work on their imperfections.
- They are willing to talk about uncomfortable issues without getting angry and defensive.
- They are interested in other people, and do not focus all the attention on themselves.
- They are willing to take responsibility for their own actions, and do not blame other people for their mistakes.
- They may be messy and disorganized, but they are willing to work on these issues if they know it is important to you.

What You Can’t Live With . . .

Someone who is . . .

- Defensive instead of open to feedback
- Self-righteous instead of humble
- Apologizes instead of changes
- Avoids working on problems
- Demands trust instead of proving himself trustworthy
- Lies instead of telling the truth
- Is stagnant and not growing
- Is an addict
- Thinks only about himself instead of the relationship and the other person
- Is controlling and does not respect your limits
- Is condemning
- Is a negative influence
- Is overly jealous and suspicious
- Is overly angry
- Avoids closeness
- Denies pain he causes other people
- Justifies his actions or blames other people
- Is religious instead of spiritual
- Acts like he has it all together instead of admitting weakness

(list is adapted from “Boundaries in Dating,” Dr. Henry Cloud &Dr. John Townsend, Zondervan, 2002)
Thoughts to Ponder

At this present time in your life, what storms are you facing? Have the situations caused shame in your life? How do you handle the shame? Does your shame cause you to lose hope? If you have hope, where does it come from?

Words that Heal

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Romans 15:13

Domestic Violence Training for Churches/Groups/Organizations

Topics:
- What is Domestic Violence?—A Closer Look at Verbal, Emotional, Sexual, Physical, and Spiritual Abuse
- Characteristics of an Abuser/Why Does He Do That?
- Recognizing a Victim of Domestic Violence
- Why Women Stay or Leave/Developing a Safety Plan
- How Does Domestic Violence Affect the Family Especially Children
- Teen Dating Violence
- What Can the Church Do?
- Do’s and Don’ts of Counseling
- Signs that the Abuser Has Changed
- Church Safety Plan/Risks
- Becoming an Anchor in the Storm/How to Help Someone in an Abusive Relationship

Development of Domestic Violence Program in Churches
- Do’s and Don’ts of Counseling Victims and Abusers
- Development of Domestic Violence Policies and Procedures for Churches
- Step By Step Approach for Churches to Address the Issue of Domestic Violence
- Training for support group leaders
Prayer Requests & Urgent Needs

Praises:
- Two successful fundraising events in November and December
- Dedicated financial supporters
- Dedicated support group leaders
- Devoted volunteers
- Transformed lives in our clients
- Churches that financially support the ministry

Prayer Requests:
- Pray for our TEEN FOCUS team as they develop our teen program
- Pray for funds to hire much needed staff
- Pray for board members as they make critical decisions regarding the direction of the ministry
- Pray for women and families who contact our FOCUS Women’s Center.
- Pray for pastors’ wives that are being abused.
- Pray for individuals, churches, and businesses to commit to monthly giving.
- Pray for all the FOCUS support group leaders
- Pray for houses in IL, to be donated for use as transitional homes.
- Pray for churches to understand the gravity of domestic violence and will develop appropriate responses.
- Pray for FOCUS as we plan for 2015.
- Pray for those that come to the ministry for help that do not know Jesus.

Upcoming Events

- Dec. 10, 2014: Restaurant Benefit at Montecasino Café in Villa Park, IL
- April 10-11, 2015: Partners in the Journey Training, FOCUS Office in Villa Park, IL
- October 23-24 2015: Partners in the Journey Training, FOCUS Office in Villa Park, IL

The FOCUS team is available to come to your church for a women’s retreat, seminars, workshops, DV training or other speaking engagements.

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The mission of FOCUS Ministries is to provide a safe place for teens, women, and families who experience domestic violence and abusive relationships to find hope and healing in Jesus Christ.

Funding: FOCUS Ministries is a not-for-profit 501 c3 organization funded by contributions and grants. If you would like to help us minister to hurting people through our educational materials, support groups, counseling, and financial assistance to victims of domestic violence, please send your gift to FOCUS Ministries, Inc., P. O. Box 2014, Elmhurst, IL 60126 or online at www.focusministries1.org. A tax-deductible receipt will be provided for all contributions.

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O Lord, You Alone Are My Hope! Psalm 71:5 NLT

Ways You Can Help FOCUS Ministries

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