

My childhood was alright for the most part. At the age of 14, I moved out of my father's house, and into my mother's. My mother had rules. My father was an over-the-road truck driver, so I didn't have to worry about rules. I lived with my step-mother, who I constantly fought with every single day. Not just arguing, but actual knock-down, drag-out fist fighting. Not a day went by that I didn't fight with her. So I moved out and lived from place to place with friends and, *some* people I barely knew. I started fighting at school, and from my freshman year to the first day of my senior year, I was suspended 27 times and expelled five times for violent behavior towards peers. I hung out with the wrong crowd in school, and started drinking and selling marijuana to take care of my brother and sister's needs and myself. Then the first day of my senior year, I quit school and started attending Alternative School.

The High School told me I would never graduate. So, while going to school everyday and working a full time job at Long John Silver's in Booneville, I stopped selling drugs and started applying myself to my job and school. Only four months after starting, I graduated with a lot more credits than I was required to have. When I was five months pregnant with my son, I was put on bed rest and told that I would not be able to carry him full-term because I had cervical Cancer. So while on bed rest, I took an at home college course for Teacher's Aide/Substitute Teaching, and graduated with a high score. Three weeks before my due date, he was born, healthy as a horse – a miracle from God. Six months later, I left my husband, due to the fact that he impregnated another woman.

It was for the better, because for the five years we were together, he was abusive. Very controlling, he wouldn't allow me to do *anything*! He would not even allow me to go to the hospital because he did not want to go to jail. The abuse was verbal, emotional and *very* physical. There were times I thought I would die, but God watched over me. I lived in an abandoned shack with my son off and on for four months until my mother found out, so I moved back in with her. That was when I started dropping my son off before work everyday with my mom. I would come home between 2-3 every morning, park in her driveway – beyond intoxicated – and get up at five when my step-dad went to work. I would drink a gallon of *Captain Morgan* and orange juice everyday just to cope.

Six months after my divorce, I met someone new, who, unbeknown to me, was a meth cook. Two years alter I was pregnant with our daughter. The only drug I used for those two years was marijuana. In October of 2004, I learned that my husband was cheating on me with a married woman. To spite him, I moved into the trailer behind him. December of 2004 was the first time I ever tried meth. My children were both with their dads at the time. From that night on, every day, non-stop, I was addicted. In July 2008, I miscarried twins. Two days later, my husband and I were pulled over by the K-9 Unit. The dog found meth and pills on me. I was charged with five "D" felonies.

It was the best thing that could have happened to me. If my kids had not been taken from me, I probably would still be doing the drugs. That was my "rock

bottom.” I wanted to change my life. I prayed to God for five days straight, and then went to Court. Even though I didn’t think I would ever get my children back. God was by my side, and gave me a second chance. I started attending *Celebrate Recovery* classes at *The Way* three times a week, along with Relapse Prevention and Substance Abuse classes. Social Services also came into my home for frequent drug screens for nine months. I also started attending Church, reading the Bible, and praying regularly. My road to recovery was a rocky one, but I promised God and myself that I would make it. So far, I have done well. God is shaping me into the mother I want to be, more and more everyday. If you had asked me a year ago where I would be today, I would never in a million years think that I would be here.