

Chapter One

Conquering Alcohol and Drugs

1. The Shock Treatment That Healed My Soul

Key Verse – Romans 3:23

“For all men have sinned and have missed the shining greatness of God.”

As a shy teenager, alcohol seemed to help her courage. That’s how she ended up living with a man she met at graduation. Soon she was pregnant and the two were married. Then his real personality came out, and it wasn’t very pleasant. His drunken rages eventually drove her to the same kind of behavior she hated.

THE BACK DOOR creaked open and banged shut. It was one o’clock in the morning. My husband was back. He had been away for days. By the way he

entered, I could tell it would be another one of those nights. “How come everyone’s asleep?” he demanded. “Because it’s one o’clock in the morning, and keep your voice down because the children are sleeping,” I answered nervously. But he wasn’t satisfied and shot back, “Why are they sleeping? Shouldn’t they be getting ready for school?” Then he slid into a kitchen chair and slumped over on the table.

I asked where he had been and how much he drank. But I was interrupted by his loud and angry voice. “It’s none of your business where I’ve been! And you wouldn’t fool me if you said you’ve been here with the kids all this time. I know better than that! Don’t try to tell me you’re so pure.” I shook my head. Almost from the day we met, he had always been a wanderer. He didn’t travel that much, he just didn’t stay around home that much. And he didn’t just stick to me. There were other women.

That was hard for me to take. I came from a strict religious family and grew up in a rural community in northern Manitoba. Marriage and family were supposed to be sacred. But it didn't seem that way now. My husband was right, I wasn't that pure myself. As a lonely teenager I had used alcohol to fill my emptiness, but it only made me more lonely. When I met my husband at my high school graduation, he seemed to be the special friend I always wanted. We hit it right off and soon we were living together. When I got pregnant several months later, we decided to get married.

After my child was born, I was so happy. But the contentment only lasted for a while. Though I didn't know it then, people cannot take the place of God. The loneliness returned, especially when I started having problems with my husband. Either he had changed, or I was just now beginning to see how he really was. As our fighting got worse, he drank more heavily and spent more time away from home. It was very hard, because he

would leave me with our little baby and go off for days. He never told me where he was going or when he'd be back. He'd just walk out the door. I wouldn't see him for several days and then he would come drunk and often in a rage.

During my difficult times I sometimes turned to church. But more often I turned to what I used to do in school—go out drinking with my friends. After eight years with my husband, I didn't want to be married anymore. He had often walked out on me and was unfaithful almost from the start. To tell the truth, I wasn't always faithful either. But we only hurt ourselves by trying to take revenge through other relationships. I knew it was wrong for marriages to be destroyed, but felt that separation was my only choice.

Deep down the separation bothered me. So I started drinking more than ever. I hurt a lot of people, especially my children, but I just didn't care. Then at my lowest point, God brought a special friend into my life. She told me about

Jesus but at first I didn't want to listen. I wanted nothing to do with another religion, when the faith of my family wasn't doing me any good. Yet one day she said something that made me stop and think. I had told her my belief, that people were at peace when they died and done forever with pain and sorrow. "Only if they are born again," she replied. I remembered a Bible verse she once told me, "For all men have sinned and have missed the shining greatness of God" (Romans 3:23, NLB). After two months more of wrestling with Jesus, I surrendered my life to Him and asked Him to change me.

Still, my old habits were hard to break. I was glad He forgave my past sins, but hadn't really let Jesus take control of the things I was doing now. In time I was back to drinking and fooling around, so you couldn't tell any difference between my life now and my life before trusting Christ. I was doing the things I accused my husband of doing—leaving my kids for long periods and, worst of all, getting

involved with another man. That's when God allowed something to happen that brought me back to Himself. The correction was so difficult I never want to go through it again. I found myself pregnant with another man's child.

It was almost more than I could bear. I knew then that it was totally wrong to live this way. Now God had to "shock" me back to my senses. Yet He brought good from a bad situation, for this unwanted child brought me back to the Lord. This time I gave Him total control of my life—and I meant it. I began to have a real burden for my husband and asked God to restore my marriage and the love I once had for him. But that was not to be, because eight months later he was killed in a car accident while out drinking with some friends.

With my husband gone forever out of my life, I am now responsible for three children. It's a privilege and I enjoy them very much, as I try to bring them up in God's way. The Lord has been faithful in providing for our needs, often

through special Christian friends who help us. Today I am attending Bible college to learn more about God, for my desire is to live for Him and serve Him. I really believe a Christian who lives for himself, and does not practice what he believes, is the most miserable person on earth. He knows better! And it's a tragedy if alcohol keeps him from knowing the Lord and living for Him.