

SISTER, SET YOURSELF FREE

INTRODUCTION

I have travelled many paths in life and many of them were the wrong ones that I had chosen. This book you will find interesting as we go back over the many memories of what has taken place in my life.

I write this book to help you, to encourage you and to see you make the right choices in your life. I know my life would have been so much different if I had made the right choices, but because I didn't it has also made it possible for me to write these experiences for you to read.

Sit back and as you read always remember that each day is a New Beginning, a New Adventure. Life is what we make it and our choices are the defining factors.

Rev. Anne Skinner

SISTER, SET YOURSELF FREE

Growing up in a wonderful loving home was great for me. Our family came from across the ocean when I was just a small child, looking for a better way of life. Dad had owned a Tobacco Store and a Ladies Hair Dressing Salon and also a Man's Barber Shop, so we certainly didn't lack any money in those days.

I was often told the stories of how mom and dad had met.. Mom walking up the street always wearing nice sophisticated clothing and dad driving by in his Jaquar. He had stopped a few times and asked if she had wanted a ride and of course mom being the independent woman that she was always said "No Thank You".. Well as you may know it didn't last too long and she took that first ride that lasted a lifetime. Looking back I really am glad that she did, I truly was a blessed child even though there were many obstacles that mom and dad faced upon arriving in this new country.

Landing in Newfoundland from Scotland must have been a shock for them as they looked around at the snow and different country. I can just imagine how they felt as they boarded the next plane to Toronto, Ontario. Excitement must have taken over and a desire to see mom's Aunt and Uncle who had travelled a few years before to this new country to start over.

Dad always wanted to keep on going and come to America, but just after a few weeks Mom got word that her parents and brother and his wife were on their way too to this new country, so they decided to stay. Many times Dad would tell me in later years that he didn't really want to stay but he would always say "Anne, you know how your mom is " I would laugh and agree with him. He loved her very much and I know he wanted her happy.

After a few months, dad realized that he couldn't get his money out of the country; they would only give him small portions each year so it started to make things a little difficult for him and mom. They did however buy a rooming house in downtown Toronto and settled there, renting rooms to all those who wanted to stay clean. I see now how mom and dad had really

been protected in the old country and this new life was so much different.

Dad had put an ad in the paper advertising rooms for rent and had put abstainers only... well that wasn't too cool as all those who wanted to stop their addiction figured this was a home where it would be free of drugs and alcohol and they wanted to live there. By this time I would be about four years old and remembered a lot of things going on in the house. Once a man who was very kind said he would bring me a soda and leave it in my doll buggy on the porch.. The next morning I was so excited to go out and find a bottle in my buggy. When I went running in to my mom to show her the soda I had got I thought she was going to faint, it was a bottle of beer and she quickly took it from me. Of course I didn't understand and started to cry that the gift I had been given was taken from me. Mom just said that it was best not to drink it and that she would buy me a soda next time we went shopping, which she did.

There was also a fire I remember on the third floor, one of the tenants had been cooking in his room and had fallen asleep forgetting all about the stove being on. The fire department was called and all I really remember was the large amount of water flowing down the stairs to each floor. It was a different life there and mom and dad always kept me away from the guests that lived there. I didn't really know why but managed always to be able to play happily by myself.

One day mom and I came home from church, I was about five years old and I remember walking into the kitchen and here was my dad really upset, he had to have our dog put down and yet he kept talking about other things. My small little mind picked up on the seriousness of it all but mom quickly got me out of the kitchen and into another room. It wasn't long before the police showed up and took daddy away. I remember standing at the front door and crying that my dad was leaving, I looked around at mom and asked her why? It was the first time and the last time I ever saw my mom cry, she told me it would be alright and that was all I knew.

Years later I was told that my dad was having a nervous breakdown and the Doctors just weren't helping him, one Doctor said that the only way he would get help in to have to police take him for evaluation. Well it seems

that because of the stress of this rooming house, dad was just not sleeping well. He had been to the Doctor for help and he had given him a heavy medication that he was allergic too and he started to see all these things and thought that he was going crazy. He did go to the hospital for about three months and then came home but you know he never was the same dad that I had known before. He slept most of the day and was up all night; he didn't joke around as much or play with me as much. Mom too had been pregnant and I had a little sister and here she was again pregnant with my little brother so she sure had her hands full. I always felt like I needed to help her and many times I ran away from kindergarten to help. I was going to be expelled... Can you imagine in Kindergarten and getting expelled but of course when mom went down and spoke to the principal it all came out about my home life and how sick my dad was and they understood. I always hated school though and thought I really didn't need it, even at that young age.

It wasn't long until our family moved to go and live with my Uncle and his wife in a smaller town. Mom felt it would help my dad to be away from all the craziness of the rooming house so we packed up and moved.

I liked it a little better because I had someone to play with, my cousin. Her and I were good friends and had a lot of fun, but that didn't last long as we moved again to another City which was smaller again.

We ended up living in this little shack and I always remember playing with a small ball and it rolling to the front door. The floors were slanted and underneath the house lived a family of skunks. It actually was funny at times to hear the fight and then we all knew what was coming. You are right the smell that accompanied that. Even to this day I seem to like the smell, ha ha not really but it always brings back memories of those days.

One thing I did learn though through all those difficult times that my mom was a praying woman and that God was first in her life. One night mom and I were coming home from a Bible Study and on the way walking home she said to me that the scripture kept going through her mind to "Be Still, and Know the He is God". I remember her saying to me on the lonely walk home in the dark, "Anne, I don't understand it much or why I have this

scripture going through my head but I guess I will find out”, and that she did. We just walked in the door and here was my dad sitting. He looked up at her and said that my rich Aunt and Uncle had come for a visit and looked around the little shack and laughed. Then they asked where mom was, when my dad had said church they commented “This is what her God has done for her” and said they had to leave and did. Mom just smiled as dad was telling her the story because she said that God had already told her to

BE STILL AND KNOW THAT HE WAS GOD.

For many years I saw little things take place and I began to see that the God that my mother served was a living God and she loved Him and He loved her. Dad eventually got better after about 7 years and got a job at the Board of Education, life was slowing changing again and for the better.

Moving again seemed normal for me in those days and mom and dad was able to purchase this home which had two bedrooms, so much different from the little shack. My bedroom there was in the kitchen as the one room that was available had mold all over the walls no matter what the season.

So it was a new adventure to be able to have my own room to share of course with my brother and sister. They were younger of course than me and I don't think they much cared if we moved or not. Mom and dad always made us feel happy no matter what the situation was and we sure were protected from all the events of that season of life.

Our new home and a new school was fun and I started to feel better about myself too. I was getting older now and my first year of High School was an awful year. I really hated school and didn't like being around so many people or getting involved in the different events that took place, so I kind of became a loner.

MY TEEN YEARS

When I turned 13 years old I really felt cool. You know that feeling you have when you have just done something that made you feel important, well that is how I felt. Here I was a teenager and happy. I still stayed alone a lot and didn't like to mix much with anyone, but life was good and I always thought that one day I would be 21 years old and out on my own. I still went to church and had a few friends there, but not good friends I guess you could say. The Pastor had two daughters that I hung with at times but they just seemed to be much better than me and always flaunted it in front of my face that they were the Pastors kids. Anyway life was good and I was looking forward to my future.

My first year at High School was awful and I remember coming home at 15 years old telling my mom I just couldn't go back to school, I hated it. Mom was cute many times and did spoil me I am sure.. She just looked kind of sad and said not to tell my father and that she would see what she could do as she knew I couldn't legally leave school at that age. It wasn't long before I was told that I was going to a Business College, now this was for adults but luckily my mother's friend owned it so they had said they would enroll me and teach me everything that could be taught. I loved it as I was with adults and learning how to type, do shorthand, bookkeeping and all those grown up things that I knew I would need to get a job. I was well on my way and graduated with a Bookkeeping degree just like the adults and the first week got a good job in an Insurance Office as a stenographer. Life was going good I was now 16 years old and earning a wage, my dad purchased a small car for me and I felt so good. I was president of the Young People's group at church and my life was going in a positive direction. Well that didn't last long as one night at church I brought up the fact that I had many friends who didn't go to church and drank a lot but needed to get involved in our Youth Group. I was told that the church kids couldn't mix with the other kids and that they didn't want to get involved. I was sickened by their attitude so I gave up being President and decided that I didn't want much

to do with their crazy ideas. I loved God but yet I couldn't understand why the people who said they loved Him didn't act like He had done. I always had a desire to open a home to help the homeless and those who were in need of food. Once I remember going and looking at this big old house, it was gorgeous and the lady who owned it said that if I could get a co-signer she would sell it to me.. I was so excited but when I started asking around for people to get involved they told me to wait until I was older to get involved in things like that. I was pretty disappointed that no one seemed to see what I saw. Almost every week I would pack a loaf of sandwiches and go down to the canal in our town and sit with the men who were drinking down there, they lived anywhere they could lay their head and they became my friends. We would eat the sandwiches and laugh and talk about things, I really enjoyed those times. I would even let some of them sleep in the back seat of my car but told them they had to be out of there in the morning before I came out for work, and they always were.. I look back now and laugh at myself, here I was 16 years old letting a homeless man sleep in my car, but I knew that something had to be done to help them. My heart used to break many times when I saw the conditions they lived in and I vowed that one day I would help get them out of that situation.

A few months after I had my new job I was walking home one night, I loved walking at night and the warm air on your face just seemed to bring me a peace. Well I was at home and I heard this voice say "Hey, can I talk with you?" I looked up and here was this guy walking toward me. He was a few years older than me and had these big brown eyes.. and here he was wanting to talk to me, I guess I was kind of flattered so we talked. He wanted to take me out and I decided that I just would go and have coffee with him. That first date lasted three months. It was a good three months and we did have a lot of fun. He was such a gentleman and my heart was getting really involved with this man. When you are 16 I guess you tend to look at life as a big dream and that a special man will come like a Knight in Shining Armor and sweep you off your feet, all that romance and no reality gets into our heads and we live in a dream world. That was me. It didn't take long for me to wake up.

One night I got a call from the police station saying that Gord was there and he was drunk and could I come down and pick him up. I really didn't understand it too much because for three months he never drank anything but coffee or water and now here they are saying he was drunk.

I drove down to the station and the police officers helped him into my car. Still totally confused I said thank you and drove away with him. Now a 16 year old girl should never be in a situation like that anyway and here I was driving a drunk home alone. I helped him into his small apartment and on to his bed, he seemed to pass out so I took off his shoes and started to head to the door to go home. By the time I got to the door, just got my hand on the knob when I felt him grab me from behind and start hitting me. I was in total shock when that happened and within a few minutes my both eyes were black and my mouth and nose was bleeding, my body also had bruises and I felt so sick. Now, I had never been hit like that in my life and as I looked over to the bed he had passed out. I lay on the floor sobbing for a while and then decided I should call my mother. It was so good to hear her voice but I knew I could not let her know what had happened to me.

Honestly I don't know why I couldn't tell her the truth and have Gord charged with beating me so I told her something terrible had happened and that I had to go away for a few days. My mom was special and trusted me completely, all I could hear was her soft talking asking me if things were alright and I said yes but I couldn't talk about it then. I told her I would call her the next day and hung the phone up. I lay on the floor that night and sure didn't sleep, just trying to think of how I could get out of this crazy situation I had found myself in. It was terrible and I knew that my life that night had taken a different direction and yet I was lost really lost to know what to do.. Like I said too I was too scared to tell anyone what had happened so I just lay there and cried in shock.

All night my mind was racing and I just couldn't believe what had happened to me, why this had taken place and what made him get so angry at me. Looking back now I realize that this night was the beginning of the end for

me and I was on a road to destruction, one I had not chosen but had found myself travelling on.

Many of us find ourselves in situations that we just don't know how we got there and always think that it will change as time goes by, that was me, I thought for sure this was just a onetime event and that it would never take place again, but it did.

Life took many strange turns as time went on and I began to realize that I should have walked away that first night. The police should have been called and Gord should have been charged but it never happened like that at all and here I found myself the next morning when he apologized when he saw my face and telling me he would never do it again, blaming the booze of course. "It is OK, I heard myself telling him as he hung his head".. but did I really mean it was OK? No, I sure didn't but there was something inside of me which made me say those words. Fear had set into my inner being and I really knew that if I didn't say it was ok that I may be hit again. At that time I did think though that it wouldn't happen again.

Time passed and I found myself in this relationship with Gord that was taking over my life, I was being isolated from family, friends and all those who I came in contact with. I remember one day walking down the street with him and saw a girlfriend of mine which I hadn't seen for a few months.

Deep inside of me I was happy to see her, I mentioned to Gord that I wanted to say hello to her, he just looked at me and said that if I spoke to her I knew what would happen to me when we got home. I will never forget that day looking straight ahead and walking past her like I never knew her.

She yelled out hello to me and I totally ignored her knowing the consequences of what would happen if I did acknowledge her. My heart was breaking inside of me and I found that I was becoming a person that I never knew. The person I had been wasn't there anymore as I was being molded into Gord's image of me.

I was caught in a web of lies, hurt, pain and disappointment and all because I had chosen to be with this man who beat me and disrespected me. But, I

couldn't seem to get myself free from his clutches or the abuse that was being shown me every day.

I remember many times after the beatings that I would get a terrible migraine headache, looking back now I am not sure if the pain in my head was from all the crying and the swollen eyes but it sure hurt. Once my brother came over to visit me, I was laying in my bedroom with the curtains drawn and the lights out. When he came into the room, thinking that I had the flu I told him not to turn on the lights as it hurt my eyes so bad. I had a cold washcloth over my eyes and told him that I had a bad headache. I remember him sitting at the edge of the bed and asking if there was anything he could do for me or if he could get me anything. I told him no that I would be ok after the flu had left me. How wrong I was and how crazy to tell him those lies when I knew that Gord had caused all this pain I was feeling. My brother left that day and I cried some more wishing I had told him the truth and asked him to help me get away from Gord.

When you are in a situation like that you are scared, and really don't know what to do. Many times Gord had threatened to kill my family and me and I knew that he would probably keep his words if I didn't obey him and do everything that he told me to do.

THE FIRST DRINK

It wasn't too long before I decided to get drunk so I could survive the mess that I was in. I really figured that it would kill the pain a little and for a short time it did but then of course I had to drink more and more and much more often than what I even wanted too.

One day I remember telling Gord I needed about \$50 for the electric bill or they were going to shut it off the next day. That night he went out drinking and I sat at home just waiting for him to return. I didn't answer the phone for fear that he would come home and find me talking to someone. In he walked about midnight with this guy. I found it a little strange and they went into the living room and sat down. Gord called me in and as I went over to him this guy started staring at me up and down, I was so uncomfortable it really gave me a creepy feeling. I went out into the kitchen and Gord came in and said "I know how you can make the \$50" and then proceeded to tell me that if I had sex with this guy he would give us the money. For a split second fear took hold of me and I really didn't know what to do. Then a thought came to me and I said "Sure, take him back to the bar and get him real drunk and I will go have a bath and get ready". Of course I had no intentions of doing anything with this guy. Gord fell for it and they both left. The minute they drove away I ran and got in the old car that I drove and just kept driving. I parked along this quiet country road and just stared out the window all night. See, I couldn't even sleep I was so scared he would find me.

As the sun was coming up I decided to go back home because I figured that Gord would have slept the alcohol off and he would maybe be ok and I had to go to work that morning too so I knew I better get ready. I pulled in the driveway and went into the house. Gord was asleep so I started to get ready for work. Then there was a knock at the door. I looked out the window and saw a police car. "OH NO" now what do I do? I thought. All of a sudden I realized that the knock at the door had woken Gord up and he called for me. He asked me to come into the room. I went in and he motioned for me to bend down like he was going to whisper something into my ear. I leaned

over and his fist connected with my stomach. What a blow, I clutched my stomach in pain and started to cry. He told me to go answer the door and tell the police that I hadn't seen him and didn't know where he would be, he said if I said anything else he would finish the job. Well, I knew exactly what he meant and I went to the door, opened it still holding my stomach. The officer just looked at me and I guess he knew but of course I followed my instructions and said exactly what I was supposed to say. The officer looked at me and said "I know you are lying, if you tell me where he is we will take him to the police station and charge him" I looked right into the police officers face and said "Yes and then you will let him out in a few hours and I will be dead". I closed the door and watched the police officer drive away that day wishing inside that I could have told him the truth but fear was just too strong in me.

That began many nights of men coming home with Gord and me being the toy that they played with. All I remember was crying and crying as the events of each night went on. Tied in chairs with butcher knives being swung past my throat and him asking me all these stupid questions and everytime afterwards going to shower and trying to get myself clean.

I don't know if you have ever been standing in a shower crying trying to wipe away the dirt that only exists in the inside of you ... well I did, it was awful. What I was made to do was torture for me and yet I felt I had to listen to him or my family and myself would die.

Years went by and I found myself shooting up drugs, going to all these Doctors and getting prescriptions for all the pain pills, muscle relaxers and anything they would give me to help me cope with the pain of what I had to do and make me numb to the way I was living.

Living life in the fast lane now and hating it and yet it was my lifestyle that I had chosen. Fear had helped me make that decision and I had followed the road that was leading me straight to hell, or was I already living in hell. If you asked me back then I would have said life was great and I was having a great time but deep inside I knew I was telling a lie and would only pray that one day my life would change.

I remember telling a friend once of my life and asking her to help me get out. Boy did that backfire, she went directly to Gord and told him what I had said and I got the worst beating ever.. So I learned that no one could be trusted at all not even those in the church that I used to go to.

One night I got high and went to the little church that I was raised in, I thought if I was in church maybe I would meet God or something but guess what happened the total reverse. I sat thru the song service and when the preaching began I hear the door open to the sanctuary, it was Gord, he had found me. I sat thinking that I was safe as I was in church and they would protect me, but I was sure wrong. I saw the preacher nod to the usher and the usher went out to talk with Gord and came back in and whispered in my ear “Anne, you have to leave, we don’t want any trouble here” I looked up at him and said that he didn’t know what he was sending me out to but he told me again to go. I got up out of my seat and slowly went to the door leading outside, here was Gord, I got dragged to the car and beat once again. It was many years later, after I had got clean and left Gord that I went back to that little church. When they asked if anyone had a testimony I stood up and started to talk. I spoke of that day I had come in and was asked to leave.. Many faces turned to look at me that day and I really didn’t care much I just kept talking. I told them how I was put out of their church and told them how I had got beat. I went on about the beating and then I said to them to be sure when someone comes in their church again never to send them away, hug them and be there for them because they never know what is going on in that persons life. Then I sat down.

Many just looked at me with a strange look on their face, see I had met Jesus and had given my life to Him by then so I felt pretty good. After the service many came up to me with arms wide open and I just stared at them and said “ I don’t need a hug now because I found the Lord, save your hugs for the next girl that walks in here who needs it” and I turned and walked away, out the door and to a better life.

Going back to years before that happened I ended up with Gord homeless, the drugs had taken over and every penny that we had went to support our

habit. My mother had run a Salvation Army store in town and I used to go help her in the store, she would give me a few dollars and it always helped me get more drugs. With us not having a place to live I got a copy of a key to the store and when she locked up at night I pretended to be going to my apartment and when I saw her drive away I would circle back and go into the store. See, in the basement I had an old mattress on the floor and a few odds and ends, it was a terrible dirty place but I didn't really care because now the drugs were my life along with the beatings. I had fallen into a hole and just didn't know how to get out of it. Of course I would pray and ask God to get me out of the mess I was in but never believing that it would ever happen. I guess I figured death was the only way out.

One night I took a razor blade and slit my wrist, I didn't want to live anymore the way I was living and felt it was time to end it all. I hadn't cut deep enough and in walked Gord's brother who slapped me and took the razor and bandaged my wrist up. He tried to talk with but I wasn't listening at all, my mind was made up to end it all and I started on a downward turn from that night on.

Life didn't ever get any better and I found myself in more messes than I can even talk about. We started hanging with Biker clubs and of course drugs got even worse. I remember one night there were a bunch of Bikers in the living room and Gord decided to lock the door after then came into the old house that we had got. It wasn't much but to me it was home. He started yelling at me and I made a dash for the door, but it was locked. I turned and leaned my back on the door wondering what he was going to do. He had a butcher knife in his hand and I guess I was the target, he threw it at me and it landed in the door skimming past my ear.. I screamed and started crying, I noticed the Bikers started leaving I guess they didn't want to be involved in what might happen and none of them had the guts to stop him.

Another time I was home alone and a voice inside of me spoke saying to go upstairs and unload the guns that Gord had, so I listened to that little voice. I was so glad I did for I just got the guns unloaded and sat back down when in walked Gord, he looked me straight in the eye and said tonight you are going to die and ran upstairs for the shotgun. He came down and

pointed at my face and pulled the trigger.. God was with me that night and I know it, he ran back upstairs to reload and I ran as fast as I could to get away. That night too I stayed in my car and watched the sun come up.

You ask me why I am telling you these stories? Well they are true and they only skim the surface of my lifestyle with Gord which lasted 12 years. I hated my life and hated everyone around me, I always put on a smile to people when I saw them and I was always told how lucky and blessed I was to have such a wonderful man in my life. Little did they know what was going on behind closed doors. This is what happens when someone is being abused, no one knows what is happening and most don't tell anyone for fear of what will happen to them. I have heard many girls say that they are getting beat up and hate their mate and yet I laugh and know that if that were really happening they wouldn't be talking about it at all.

My twenty first Birthday was a day to remember. I got beat so bad I was in bed trying to get rid of the pain, I had a cold cloth on my face trying to take down the swelling but nothing seemed to make me feel any better. Gord had taken off and left me and I was really in a mess that day. I heard someone knocking at the door. I could hear my mom and dad talking and saying how I must be having a great birthday. My heart broke that day as I heard them talk, they loved me so much and I knew it and yet here I was all black and blue and in pain. "Our little girl is now twenty one years old, wow where have the years gone" I heard them say and then I could hear their footsteps as they walked down the hall and out of my life again. I loved my family so much and wanted it to be like it was when I was a kid, dad had been sick a lot but we had love in our home and I knew it. Now things were different for me and I felt so alone and lost but I vowed that one day I would kill myself and it would be over.

The day came and I decided to take all the drugs I could and that I would hopefully overdose and it would end for me. I used the needle so I just kept hitting up the drug, heroin, speed, whatever I could find. Well, all of a sudden I got this pain in my chest.. Here I was living in the basement of the old Salvation Army and happy that my life was about to end. I couldn't move the pain was so bad, so I just sat there. I looked down and a book was

on the floor the title of it was “How God Answers Prayer” I sure didn’t care about that but I did pick up the book, I turned to the back and read how this man had lost everything even his kids and wife and yet God gave him a new life. I thought about this but really figured that it couldn’t happen to me. The pain was terrible and I was hoping to pass out when Gord came in, he wanted to take me to the hospital but I told him to just carry me to the old mattress on the floor and I would go to sleep. He didn’t know what I had done and I wanted it that way. He carried me through and I lay there, I told the Lord that I wanted to do and to let me or the next day I would walk in front of a truck and end it all. I knew then that not only was I in a mess with Gord but I was hooked on drugs and that each day I was breathing that my life was involved around finding my next fix.

Morning came and I awoke, I couldn’t believe it and I decided that I would just get up and get dressed, wash and go help my mom at the store. Now I was used to cold water to wash my hair so it wasn’t anything new to me to wash my hair that morning. It is funny how the simple things of life don’t mean anything to you when you are stoned all the time. I didn’t care if I had hot water or not. I got ready slipped out the back door and walked in the front greeting my mom with a big smile and asking how I could help her. She of course was happy to see me even though I was down to 103 pounds and not looking so good. Make up works wonders on a person and I of course always loved my makeup and even though my life was a mess my face was always made up. I just started to fold some clothes when this old lady came in and asked if she could talk to me. Wondering what she wanted I said of course and we went into a corner of the store. As she started to speak Gord walked by signaling that he was going to buy some drugs and would be back soon. The old lady started telling me of all her problems and all of a sudden out of my mouth came the words “God answers prayer, just trust Him” I was floored to hear myself say that and here I was telling a lady who had spent most of her life in church. She smiled and walked away thanking me for the help. I walked away apologizing to the Lord for saying those words, it really bothered me that me being a drug addict would tell this lady to trust in God.

It wasn't too long when Gord walked past and signaled to me that he had the stuff The drugs I always needed, BUT something was different that morning I didn't want them. Now I know that may sound crazy to you but something had changed inside of me, I didn't have any desire for them at all and I couldn't understand it. What was wrong with me I thought, but it was gone, the desire to use was totally gone. I didn't even understand it myself. Now looking back I can see where God had taken that desire from me totally. God does answer prayer, so if you have been praying about anything I urge you to just keep trusting God for the answer because it will come. Sometimes it doesn't come the way we want it to come but He always answers us. This day I was totally delivered from drugs.

It didn't take long for me to realize that things were changing within me, I wasn't the same and each day I became stronger. I knew too that I had to get out of this relationship that I was in. Twelve years is a long time to go through the many things that I had and now that I was free from drugs I could think better and make decisions that need to be made.

Each night I would pray that God open a door for me and that day came. It was almost a month later when I woke up that morning and new that this was the day I was moving out. I still had an old convertible that got me around when I was able to afford the gas, so I knew that would be the one way to leave. One thing I noticed was I didn't have any fear inside me anymore. Gord didn't scare me like he used to and this morning I gathered a few things and went over to him, kissed him on the cheek and said goodbye. I got out to the car and started it up, the tank had some gas and I knew it was enough to get me to another place. As I looked up at the front door I saw him standing there and for a split second inside of me thought maybe I should just stay but that song came into my mind. "When I remember that He died for me, I'll never go back anymore". I knew going back was going back to the old life and doing the things that were totally wrong.. I had to move forward and follow God no matter what the outcome. Serving Jesus was what I wanted to do now and nothing else seemed to matter to me anymore. I now was strong inside, a feeling I hadn't felt in

many years. My past was gone, the hurts, the tears, the trials and the beatings were over. I was a new person in Jesus Christ and I was determined to follow God at no matter what the cost.

For many years I had been miserable and in total bondage to this man and now I was free. What a great feeling to have when you are free, nothing else seems to matter. I didn't have much money at all and didn't care, I didn't have much gas and didn't care. All I was thinking about was my new life that was about to take place and wondering what God had in store for me.

I have written this short part of my life to help all those in bondage. You may be a woman who was in the same situation as myself and feel that there is no way out. When I was going through some of the things I felt like no one understood me and if I dared to say anything it would only get worse and always thought that no one would believe me as everyone thought he was such a great guy. Those are all deceptions and when mixed with fear we become helpless and start to rely on our abuser. We become a puppet that our abuser controls all the strings and even tells us how to talk, walk and be. We lose our own identity and start to take on another identity of someone we don't even know.

Today if you are in a relationship and are going through some of the things that I have mentioned I urge you to seek help, start telling someone what you are going through. It could mean your life. I look back at the time he tried to shoot me and how my life was spared only by the grace of God too.

But you might be sitting there in fear and that same thing may have happened to you or could happen to you in the future. Don't take any chances you are too special for anyone to treat you that way.

I have told only some of my stories, if I told you all of them you would start to believe this book is fiction. Anyway I am not here to tell the gory details of my life but I am here to tell you that I found the answer to it all.

I found my freedom and found that God will give you the strength to move forward in your life and not live in the hell that you are living in today.

One of my problems was that not only was I being abused but I was trying to please everyone. People thought he was a great guy, he put on such a front that everyone told me how blessed or lucky I was to have him in my life. They didn't know what was going on behind closed doors and I thought that if I told them they wouldn't believe me. I was lied too, my thoughts inside of me were certainly not from God for sure. The thoughts I believed and the fear was so real that it made me keep staying in this crazy relationship. I just thank God that I wasn't killed or my family weren't killed, as he threatened to do many times.

You can be set free too, you can know the feeling of freedom and peace that I now know. It is so simple and yet back then I couldn't see it at all.

God has a plan for your life that will bring you the joy and peace that we all seek so badly. Honestly it is a hard thing to believe that when we are in a situation where someone is telling you every day that you are no good and that you never will be any good. More things were said to me than I ever experienced in my life, I was degraded constantly and when that happens you actually start to believe you are no good and that things will never get any better but that is a lie. Stop believing the lies that are told to you.

Many times I would be told growing up that Jesus was the answer and yet I never really understood how He could be the answer. I remember one day walking up the street feeling like I was in this big bubble and looking up to the sky asking God where He was and how could I ever reach Him.

We sometimes think we are all alone in life and that no one understands what we are going through, many times people don't understand because they have never walked in our shoes but we have to start searching ourselves to get help. If we sit in our situation day after day and expect others to take us out of our problems it just isn't going to happen. For me to get out of my problem I had to make a step forward and do something. First I prayed, now I prayed for a long time but the answer came and then I was able to move forward. When I was sitting in the car and looking back

at Gord standing in the doorway, that was the time that I could have made the wrong choice and ended back in the same mess. I had to move forward with my life and take the door that God had opened for me to get out.

Today you may be in that same situation, a door may be open for you but you are hesitating to go through it. We think so many times that if we did leave the abuser might find us, that was me back then. I remember a few years after I had left that town and started over that I was driving in a car going to visit my mom and dad. Never being back to that same town since I left I felt a little funny, when I started to feel those negative thought I could feel fear take hold of me again and found myself trying to crouch down on the floor in case the abuser would see me. Looking back now I can't even believe that I would do that, but when we live in an abusive relationship for so long we tend to find that memories of that abuse haunt us at times and that was one of the times that it got to me.

I remember too the first week that I had left, the dreams that I had were terrible. Gord kept walking towards me begging me to come back, he was crying and begging and I would wake up in a total sweat. Never had I prayed so much for God to remove those dreams and He did.

Your life is important and what you do now with it will make your future totally different. God has a plan for your life and it certainly isn't getting beat up or being abused.

Here are the first steps to freedom. Give your life over to Jesus Christ, ask Him into your life today .. don't wait .. today is the day. Then get yourself a Bible and start to read it, pray each chance you get too. Now prayer is simply talking to the Lord, tell Him how you feel and express all your desires, ask HIM for help.

When you have given your life to JESUS CHRIST, you are a new creature, a new creation in Christ.. old things have passed away. You will never be the same again. Here are some scriptures for you to read.

2 Corinthians 5:17 - Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

Galatians 2:20 - I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

These are only two scriptures but there are many more that will help you on your new journey.

If you have any questions or need help at all please contact us today at

Hannah House,
MPO Box 2813,
Niagara Falls, New York, 14302

Website: <http://hannahhouse2002.org>

Email: hannahhouse2002@gmail.com

Remember that nothing is impossible with God and your situation right now can change just as mine did. My life from that day didn't become perfect as I have been on a road that has had many bends and curves in it but I have learned that serving God and getting out of my situation was the best move I had ever made.

Have a blessed day and know that you are not alone. Many have gone and are still going through abuse of all kinds, it is out place to tell others and especially tell God, He loves you and will make a way for you when you think there is no way out.

Don't wait till it is too late, life goes by pretty quickly and before you know it years have gone by. I waited 12 years, 12 wasted years all because I was afraid of someone who had taken control of me.

We have a Prayer Chain also and if you would like your name added to our Prayer list just contact us at hannahhouse2002@gmail.com

A NEW LIFE IS AWAITING YOU....

Anne Skinner

Hannah House

הַבַּיִת



Lev Echad

One Heart, One Purpose