

"... seeing my precious child being hurt..."

by Judith Dooley

My name is Judy Dooley. I was born and raised in Bismarck, North Dakota along with six sisters. Our Dad was an alcoholic. His drinking greatly affected our family.

As a little girl, I used to pray each night, asking God to make my daddy stop drinking.

By the time I was a teenager, in the 1960's, I was so disappointed that my dad had not changed, that I became angry and rebellious. Where was the love I wanted from God?

Then I read a Time magazine article about the hippie movement in California. It told about young people finding "true love", so I ran away from home, and joined the movement in Berkeley CA. I wanted that "true love".

My search led me to every spiritual philosophy available, as I looked for God. I dabbled in Transcendental Meditation, Eastern Mysticism, the Occult, and drugs. Each experience was worse than the one before, and left me more disillusioned. Would I never find God?

I tried the "free love" movement, which told me that "no commitment" between a man and woman was the highest form of love. This left me pregnant and in great despair. I joined the women's movement in Berkeley, which told me to disdain marriage even if it meant being a single parent.

After my son was born, I went to work in San Francisco. I found a boyfriend, who was a heroin addict, who would watch my son during the day. One day, when I picked my son up from daycare, his teacher showed me some strange bruises on his little body. I learned that my boyfriend had beaten him.

The picture of my son's little face, swollen and red, will forever be etched in my mind. My heart broke as I thought of my helpless three year-old, it made me cry out to God. It was one thing to hurt my family, and abandon my friends, and throw away my own life, but seeing my precious child being hurt was more than I could bear.





The next day, I walked down to a church during my lunch hour, sat on a pew, and cried out to the Lord. I begged Him to help me find Him, and to forgive me, and to get me out of the terrible mess I was in. Desperately sobbing, I asked Jesus to help us.

It wasn't long before my boyfriend's abuse escalated, and he started to beat both my little boy and me. I wasn't able to work, we lost our income and soon we were evicted from our apartment. While homeless, someone told us to go to the local Rescue Mission. I was very nervous, but as soon as we arrived, I was at peace and encouraged.

We attended the chapel service and ate a meal. I was so encouraged by the kindness and great care with which we were treated. I thought to myself, "This place has the real key to knowing God, the

God I cried to when I was a little girl, the true God I have been searching for all my life!"

A few nights later, during the worship service, a little old lady said that if I would ask God to forgive my sins, He would come into my life and never leave me. For the first time in my life I felt safe and secure. At last I had found God. I knew that my son and I were going to be fine.

A few days later, I entered the Gwen Wilkerson Home. (See Photo above) This was the very first Teen Challenge for Women and located in the Haight Ashbury District in San Francisco. For the next 12 months, I learned to follow Christ. He began to heal and change me. He saved my little boy and healed him, too.

Before long, God placed a longing in my heart to see my family back in North Dakota. God allowed me to return home, and each of my sisters and my mom received Christ. God even delivered my dad from alcoholism. Our family became loving and involved in reaching others for Christ.

After arriving home my father introduced me to a young Christian gentleman, an attorney, Fintan Dooley. We have been married for over 25 years now. We have two more children, Luella, age 25, and Jocelyn, who is 22. Our son Nereus is 34 and a graduate from Harvard Graduate School.

Luella and Nereus both live here in Milwaukee. Luella is now finishing up her MBA at Marquette. She and Nereus started their own business and Finn is semi-retired and teaching school. Jocelyn just finished at the Air Force Academy in Colorado and is now in pilot training. I am so proud of my family and what the Lord has done!



Looking back on my life I am grateful for the rescue mission that took me in when I had no where to go. I am grateful for Teen Challenge that provided a one-year program that helped me learn how to live. Please know your help of Teen Challenge is providing a life line to those in desperate situations.

Your help to us is a partnership with Judy. Judy has served as our Office Manager for three years and is doing a great job. Every day she is an encouragement to the residents and those who work here. She is a great example of hope and God's love.