

"What do I do now?" From a mother who's been there, discover comfort for your heartbreak, practical help for your circumstances, and more in this 30-day devotional. Find the hope and healing you long for.

Help! My Husband Has Sexually Abused Our Daughter: A Devotional Guide for Mothers of Victims

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Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful to me!
For my soul trusts in You;
And in the shadow of Your wings I will make my
refuge,
Until these calamities have passed by.
–Psalm 57:1

May the LORD answer you in the day of trouble;
May the name of the God of Jacob defend you;
May He send you help from the sanctuary,
And strengthen you out of Zion.
–Psalm 20:1-2

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Names in the “My Story” portions of this book have been changed to protect the individuals' right to privacy.

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By
Debra Butterfield

Day 2: In Denial—Seek Truth

“Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts, And in the hidden part You will make me to know wisdom” (Psalm 51:6).

My Story: I sat that August morning in the living room in my favorite chair, an orange swivel rocker, with my knees pulled tightly to my chest. Undoubtedly, my eyes were puffy and red from my night of tears and fitful sleep. (I dared not look in the mirror.) The pink of sunrise painted my view out the front window. Despite the promise of a beautiful summer day, I felt swallowed in darkness. Two days earlier my daughter had been admitted to a local psychiatric hospital for attempted suicide. My husband sat in jail, arrested for sexually abusing her. In the darkness of my denial and grief, I cried out to God. *How can this be happening?* Deep inside, I sensed His presence. I knew He was the rock of strength who would carry me through whatever was to come.

The Lesson

Denial. Webster’s dictionary defines it as “an assertion that something said, believed, alleged, etc. is false.” Denial is a psychological defense mechanism the mind uses when a situation a person faces is too painful to accept. I was no exception; I didn’t want to believe my husband could do such a vile thing. Even after he admitted it was true, I struggled.

Are you asking yourself, “Is it true that my child has been sexually abused? Did her father really do this horrible thing? Why? How long has it been happening?” Are your questions overwhelming you?

Denial distorts your perception and impairs your judgment. It prolongs and increases your agony. Most likely this abuse has come to light because your daughter had the courage to tell someone. Your denial will send the wrong message: “You don’t believe me or support me.” It will lay the groundwork for betrayal in your daughter’s heart.

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Rather than deny what's happening, determine to seek the truth, however gruesome. Your determination will give you focus and enable you to make wise decisions.

Take Action: Seek the Truth

- Allow the proper authorities to investigate and fully cooperate with their investigation.
- Support your daughter. It is important for her to know you believe her.
- If your husband (or son) is the accused and both he and your daughter are still living in the same house, I recommend your husband (son) move out of the house until the investigation is complete. This will provide all of you with protection.

Prayer:

Father, your Word says "there is nothing hidden which will not be revealed, nor has anything been kept secret but that it should come to light" (Mark 4:22). Shine Your light where darkness reigns. Reveal the truth of this situation and make it known to all concerned. Be with me, heavenly Father; show me the truth and give me the strength I'll need to face it. In Jesus' name, amen.

"Oh, send out Your light and Your truth! Let them lead me"
(Psalm 43:3).

Day 11: In Family Responsibilities—Don't Neglect Yourself

“Trust in the LORD, and do good; dwell in the land, and feed on His faithfulness. Delight yourself also in the LORD, and He shall give you the desires of your heart” (Psalm 37:3, 4).

My Story: When incest struck my home, I was home schooling two children and had a two-year-old to care for. My social life consisted of a women's Bible study group. Everyone's needs came before mine.

Even now as a mature woman of 50, I tend to neglect my needs. I feel selfish when I'm spending time pampering myself in some way, especially if it means I'm having fun without my son. But a healthy life is a balanced life. I must keep my body, mind and spirit healthy. I have to remind myself that taking care of me isn't the equivalent of living it up and leaving the family at home every weekend.

The Lesson

Psalm 37 is an ideal daily-living guide and encourager.

Vs. 1: “Do not fret” (worry). No amount of worry is going to make things better. It drags you down—body, mind and spirit. “A fretful, discontented spirit is open to many temptations.”—Matthew Henry⁵

Vs. 3: “Trust in God; ...Dwell in the land and feed on His faithfulness.” This is the answer to your worry. Remember, you are a citizen of heaven and a child of God. All that He has is yours. Ask for what you need. “You will keep him in perfect peace, Whose mind is stayed on You, Because he trusts in You” (Isaiah 26:3).

Vs. 4: “Delight yourself in the Lord.” Praise and thank Him regularly. Rejoice in His love for you. This will stop anger from taking control and ward off depression.

⁵ *Concise Commentary on the Whole Bible*, Moody Press

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Vs. 5: “Commit your way to the Lord.” To commit something is to “give in trust.”⁶ Give Him your concerns and your dreams, your life and your children’s lives, give everything to God and trust Him to work.

Vs. 7: “Rest in the LORD and wait patiently for Him.” When you live the four steps mentioned above, the logical conclusion is to rest, believing you have received, and wait for God to act.

The psalm ends with a promise. “But the salvation of the righteous is from the LORD; He is their strength in the time of trouble. And the LORD shall help them and deliver them; He shall deliver them from the wicked, and save them, because they trust in Him” (verses 39, 40).

Take Action: Don’t Neglect Yourself

- Just as you see to the needs of your family, be sure that you see to your own. Here are some ideas:
- Spend time with God at least 3-4 times/week (daily is even better) in prayer and reading the Bible.
- Once or twice a month do something just for fun—hike, take the kids to the park, take in a movie, have coffee with friends, etc.
- Take time weekly or monthly to enjoy a hobby. Hobbies are great stress relievers. Practically anything you enjoy doing can be made into a hobby. Examples: hiking, rock climbing, needlework, sewing, scrapbooking, cooking, woodworking, painting, quilting.
- Know what rejuvenates your physical and emotional energy and make time for it. I need alone time. Others need the companionship of friends. Learn to recognize the things that energize you and include them in your life regularly.

Prayer:

Lord, thank You. Thank You for Your Word that gives me strength, encouragement, comfort and guidance. Help me to find rest and balance in the midst of this chaos. In Jesus’ name, amen.

⁶ Webster’s New Universal Unabridged Dictionary

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*“I will both lie down in peace, and sleep, For You alone, O LORD,
make me dwell in safety” (Psalm 4:8).*

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