

So  
You Think  
Your Family Is  
Messed Up



JULIE ANN BAILEY

*There are so many messed-up families around today; broken families produce broken children. No matter how bad things are in your life or family you can experience a miracle of transformation. If you are in a similar situation you will find keys to bring release and hope.*

## **So You Think Your Family Is Messed Up**

by Julie Ann Bailey

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## **Chapter One**

### **Totally Messed-Up**

Complicated, messed-up families are very common these days. Many people find themselves living in horrendous circumstances which destroy any hope of them reaching their potential and destiny. I know this reality personally as I was in one of them.

My life was complicated and full of pain, rejection, heartache and disaster because I came from a messed-up family.

The brokenness in my parents was the result of the family and circumstances they had been brought up in. My Mum and Dad became parents at age seventeen. They were far too young and broken to make family life work, and both brought their own problems into the marriage.

Sadly, I don't have any memories of my parents being together. They had a pattern of living together then separating. When I was ten years old they finally parted for good.

After my Mum left, my brother and I stayed with our Dad. We spent most of the time alone as Dad worked during the day and attended night school after work.

The weekends were also spent alone. We never saw my father from Friday until Sunday night.

It was a very sad, hard time in our lives. I remember hearing a song that described how I felt at that time. The lyrics went like this:

*I'm nobody's child  
I'm nobody's child  
Just like the flowers  
I am growing wild.  
I've got no mammy's kisses  
I've got no daddy's smile  
Nobody wants me  
I'm nobody's child.*

I remember other children's parents calling them inside, but there was no one to call us in.

This is when so much of my world changed, and so many things happened that changed my life forever.

In this book I don't want to major on the details, or place blame. Most of us have had bad things happen to us. You can't change the past, but you can change the future.

This book is about how I learnt to walk in victory and how my life has changed. Because of these changes the lives of my children and children's children have changed.

Neither of my parents had any idea where they were going or what they were doing with their lives. They had no vision,

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no sense of purpose, and no role models to speak into them or show them how to do life well.

What we call the 'cycle of life' began from their families' brokenness and was passed onto my parents, and from my parents onto me. How can you stop this madness? How can you break the cycle?

In 1982 I made a decision that changed my life and the life of my family. This began to change what seemed inevitable. I was lifted out of the sinking sand. For me it was a cycle that God fixed and made right.

I also discovered a family of ages past which a number of people can relate to. They had their own crazy, mixed up life. But in the midst of all the hurt, betrayal and brokenness there was a turn-around, just as there was in my life.

I gained so much hope, strength and insight into how to change the inevitable spiral for me and the generations to follow.

Let us start our journey by looking at the lives of Leah and Rachel in the book of Genesis.

*Genesis 29:20-25 So Jacob served seven years to get Rachel, but they seemed like only a few days to him because of his love for her. Then Jacob said to Laban, "Give me my wife. My time is completed, and I want to lie with her." So Laban brought together all the people of the place and gave a feast. But when evening came, he took his daughter Leah and gave her to Jacob, and Jacob lay with her. And Laban gave his servant girl Zilpah to his daughter as her*

*maidservant. When morning came, there was Leah! So Jacob said to Laban, "What is this you have done to me? I served you for Rachel, didn't I? Why have you deceived me?"*

Let's look at the chain of events. It was the beginning of a disaster. This whole family's life changed in one night. Oh, how one night can change so much!

One night, one event, or one action by someone else has changed many of our lives forever.

Jacob had served Laban for seven long years for Rachel to become his wife. Every day I am sure that through his toil all he thought about was Rachel. He took comfort after a hard day's work when he was with her, his beloved Rachel. They talked together of their hopes, dreams and plans. The passion grew between them and they longed for their wedding day. Now that day finally arrived.

Jacob does not hold back, he wants her as his wife, so he can be one with Rachel in every way. His passion and desire is burning within him. After all, he is a red-hot blooded young man and he has waited seven years for this day.

Rachel is thinking about her 'knight in shining armour' who has worked so hard for her and is now going to make her life complete. She has dreamed of this day. She knows what she will wear. Every detail is covered even down to the perfume to be used. Rachel has thought about the endless, romantic candlelight nights under the stars with her beloved Jacob. She has envisaged the children they will have together and the life they will live.



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The wedding feast is set in place and all the people gather to celebrate the event. Jacob was so besotted by his burning desire to sleep with Rachel he does not notice a devastating deception has taken place, a deception that will affect his life forever.

Interesting – if we take a look back into Jacob’s earlier life we see that Jacob was known as the deceiver. Jacob stole his elder brother’s birthright by deception. Could this be Jacob reaping from the deception earlier in his life? The deception of this day begins a life of misery and destruction for this family.

Not only do we have a bridegroom who has been deceived, but we have a father who has now set his daughters up to a life of competition and jealousy between them.

These sisters were probably very close before this incident came to ruin their lives. They would have discussed their future plans, hopes and dreams for their lives, their future husbands, weddings, and the children that would come from these unions.

The lives of these two girls would never be the same again. Leah is dealt a double blow. Not only is she living with a man who does not love her but she also has to live with a sister who despises her.

It must have been the lowest point of her life. Everything that was done this day was not her choice. She was not consulted about what she would like, she had no choice but to do what she was told. Her future and destiny were now a foregone conclusion.

Leah would have felt very lonely and unloved with no way of escape. She had lost so much that day. She did not ask for it, and certainly did not deserve it.

All Leah wanted was what everyone wants, someone who would love and cherish her, someone who would respect her and the qualities she would bring to marriage.

For so many of us today our future gets chosen through circumstances or incidents at the hands of others. Many of us are too young to know why or how everything suddenly changed. In reality it has, and how do we deal with that? Life will never be the same again.

Just like Leah, I had a desire for someone to love and cherish me. I had a dream like most little girls do of 'Prince Charming' coming on his white horse sweeping me away to live happily ever after.

What is it with all those Disney movies where Prince Charming comes and rescues the princess and they live happily ever after? The reality is that most of us never get to experience this fairy-tale without God in our lives. Statistics are so high of both male and females being sexually abused, either by family members, or by someone close to them.

I was one of those statistics! When abuse or rape happens you feel unclean, used like second-hand goods, worth nothing. You ask the question, "Did I do something to attract this? Maybe I deserved it?" Your whole perspective of love changes along with perspective of yourself. You have

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been robbed of your purity, your gift to the man who would be your future husband.

Suddenly your dreams turn into a nightmare. All your innocence, security and dreams are gone in an instant. You ask yourself, "Will I ever feel the same again?"

Life suddenly changes forever and things become a blur. You feel alone, even in a crowded room. You want to scream and tell someone what has happened to you, but who would believe you?

You feel so unclean and do not want anyone else to see your uncleanness, so you keep it all inside and get on with life hoping that one day you will wake up and find it was all a bad dream.

Leah had all her dreams taken from her the night her father made her go into the wedding chambers with Jacob. Imagine the feelings that would have overwhelmed her. This was not how she had envisaged her wedding night to be. She knew from that moment on she would always be second choice to Rachel. Imagine how that made her feel.

What a horrible night that must have been for her, knowing that at some point Jacob would realise it was her, not Rachel he had spent his wedding night with. Imagine the rejection she would have felt when Jacob said to her father, "What have you done to me?"

Leah would have felt worthless, lonely and abandoned. She and Jacob would have to complete and fulfil their bridal week. I am sure that this bridal week would have been

shattering for Leah knowing that Jacob only had love for Rachel.

Leah, like all of us who have been a victim, could never imagine how something so beautiful could go so horribly wrong. BUT God had a plan for Leah, just as He has for each one of us.

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