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A Crack in the Mirror: *My Personal Testimony*

I can still smell the sterile atmosphere of my college infirmary. Once upon a time, a month into my senior year in college, I sat in a stark examination room, waiting to see the doctor on call. Sitting atop the cold, stainless steel table, I saw my reflection in the polished paper towel holder on the wall. Silently, I asked myself, “How did you end up here? What a mess you have made.”

A million thoughts whirled through my confused mind. *Imagine the headlines. Miss Chesapeake—pregnant. Imagine my mother. What on earth will this do to my mother?* For a brief moment, it felt like time stood still. I talked to God, pleading my case. Praying he would rescue me.

“Please, God, remember me. Have mercy. Let the test be negative. I promise, from this moment on to serve You.”

The door creaked. In walked the stately doctor. Starched white coat scratching against his pants. Stethoscope carefully wrapped around his neck. I will never forget the look on his face.

“The test was negative, Miss Schoedler. You are not pregnant,” he spoke, lovingly, like a caring father.

I hung my head in solemn relief and buried my face in my hands. Tears began to flow.

"I brought you these," he said. "Make sure you use them." In his hand was a pack of birth control pills.

"Oh, no, doctor," I softly spoke. "I won't need those."

"Go ahead, take them. You never know," he urged.

"Oh, I know. I will not need those."

On the long, silent walk from the infirmary to my room, I wept. I felt so alone. *If people knew the real me. My life is a disaster.* I was so ashamed and so desperately empty. As I walked into my room, I locked the door behind me. There, on my knees before a merciful God, I asked Jesus Christ to come into my life. That bleak, blustery October afternoon was a dark moment in my life. One I rarely talk about, until now. For some odd reason, I have resisted telling this very painful, very private part of my past. The shroud of shame being too much to bear.

But I sense it is time to cast away that shroud and share my story. I can't remain silent. Finally, I am finished with facades.

As a young girl, I looked into the mirror of my daddy's eyes, as little girls do, and found a slight crack in the reflection. Something wasn't quite normal. My father was an alcoholic. He was a great man with a great big problem. Life wasn't easy in my household, to say the least, and for years to come, it left me searching. This one crack in my family mirror left my heart in desperate need of love.

"Yet if you devote your heart to him and stretch out your hands to him, if you put away the sin that is in your hand and allow no evil to dwell in your tent then you will lift up your face without shame; you will stand firm and without fear."

(Job 11:13-15)

My quest for this love was an exhausting exercise of overachieving, broken relationships, empty affection, and mindless, futile nights of parties, senseless chatter and wasted days.

I knew better. My Mom took me to church, week after week. I knew my behavior was wrong. Deep inside, my soul ached. I longed to be free from the heavy burden of guilt and shame. I hated the lies. But, the intricate web of deception entangled me. Tired of keeping up the façade, I began to question.

One by one, God placed people in my path. Lovingly, they shared their faith. Nothing profound to the naked eye, but sincere, humble and authentic. As I watched their lives, I knew I wanted what they had. Their tender love towards me chipped away at the brick wall I had built around my heart.

Jesus remembered me and opened his arms of grace that October afternoon so many years ago. He changed the course of my life. Even though I was in the midst of a tremendous struggle, I felt a love I had never felt before. A love that lifted the burden of shame from my shoulders. A love that cleansed me from my sin and offered me a revolutionary freedom. A love that helped me change and understand the purpose for my life. Because of this, *I am very, very grateful.*

I will never forget the words of my "so-called" fiancé when I told him I had met Jesus Christ and accepted him as my personal Savior.

"How can you leave me for a man you have never seen before?" he asked.

Through blinding tears, I replied, “Because I have to. I can’t stay in a relationship with you. You don’t even believe in God. And so many aspects of our relationship are wrong. I can’t go on this way. I want to walk with God.”

“I’ll never understand it,” he said while shaking his head.

“Hopefully, one day, you will,” I said. “I will pray that you do.”

As I closed the door of the car and walked into my house, I crumbled to the floor in tears. Closing that door and saying goodbye was possibly one of the hardest things I have ever had to do. My need for love, even the slightest hint of love, clouded my ability to think clearly. But, in the depths of my heart, I knew it was the right thing. *He was not God’s best for me.* His vain promises and hollow love left me empty and used. And, somewhere amid the tears, I felt amazingly free. As if a weight had been lifted off my shoulders. I slept soundly that night as I began living a 2 Corinthians 5:17 life—a life in which I now remember what God did for me.