

Nicky and Jim's Story

Nicky had struggled for years with depression and feelings of rejection. As a young girl, she had suffered one illness after another. During her grade school years, Nicky's mother was embarrassed for having such a sick child. Nicky had two older sisters who were beautiful and healthy and therefore accepted by her mother, while Nicky felt ugly and was rejected. Those feelings were validated as her mother rarely hugged or showed affection for her.

More painful than the physical problems were the cutting remarks from her mother and siblings. The rejection from her family created feelings of humiliation, loneliness, unacceptance and worthlessness. Her mother began unfairly blaming her for things that went wrong at home. No matter how hard Nicky worked to please her mother, she could never measure up to her expectations. Nicky felt rejected. She felt inferior, as though she didn't belong. Nicky began to blame herself for her family's problems believing that if she was not there, her family would be better off. Nicky's acceptance of that blame caused her to reject herself in the same way her family had.

After high school, she met and married a Christian man, Jim. They soon found out that her childhood medical

problems were preventing her from conceiving a child. The thought of being childless overwhelmed her. When she shared her frustration and despair with her mother and sister, they were not sympathetic, but told her it was probably for the best. Their callousness reopened old and painful wounds of rejection. No one seemed to care for, or respect her feelings.

Fifteen years later, Nicky and Jim went for counseling. In a safe environment, she shared the painful memories of being wrongly blamed, of rarely being held, of enduring, cutting remarks, of never living up to her mom's high expectations, and of not feeling acceptance. The list seemed endless. She was angry, hurt, and wanted justice. Her bitterness was destroying herself and her marriage.

But, in Nicky's thinking, her mother ought to pay for the pain and hurt that she had inflicted. However, Nicky soon realized that there was no way her mother could make that payment. Her need to forgive became obvious. Nicky had to be willing to pay the emotional pain that her mother had caused her all those years. She also had to forgive herself for accepting the blame for the family's problems.

Years of bitterness, resentment, anger, and feelings of rejection caused her to feel self-pity and depression on a daily basis. It had also created walls between Nicky and

her husband. The fear of being hurt kept her from being close to him. She had pushed him away through her rejection and anger, unable to let him in. Through counseling, she began to peel layer after layer of bitterness from her heart and to forgive each of those individuals who had hurt her. She allowed Jesus to heal and bring peace to each painful situation.

She then had to deal with her anger toward God for allowing her illnesses, for allowing her to be raised in an unloving home, and for her infertility. She had blamed God for all of these. After sharing her heart with God and experiencing His mercy and grace, she began to see Him and her life from a totally different perspective. She could openly respond to God in trust and began to develop a close relationship with Him.

During counseling, Nicky and Jim visited a pottery shop. While watching the process, she observed the potter changing a lump of clay into a beautiful pot and this reminded her of the Scripture in Isaiah 45. She realized that she was that lump of clay and that God, the Potter, was fashioning something very beautiful out of her life and her marriage. He had been molding her and her husband – applying pressure, causing her to look deep within in order to purge her sin, that she might extend forgiveness to

those who had hurt her. She could now see how God had used all of the painful experiences of her past to mold a useful vessel for His glory.

After forgiving each person who had hurt her, Nicky allowed God to heal each painful memory deep within her heart. She admitted the negative thought patterns that had developed over the years and broke them with the truth of Scripture. While confronting the thoughts of worthlessness, being unlovable and feeling so much blame, a verse came into mind. "For I know the plans I have for you, declared the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you; plans to give you a hope and a future" (Jeremiah 29:11). She took God at His Word and began to enjoy freedom for the first time in her life. She prayed, "Lord, please melt me, mold me, fill me and use me—all for Your glory!"

God gave Nicky new life and gave her a new marriage.