

DANA EMBORSKY

Starting four decades ago and back my life was caught in a morass of abuse, lies, deception, and duplicity. The tools for living were a sharp tongue, craftiness, violence against others, and a willingness to compromise any and all values for personal pleasure and survival. This is all I knew from childhood into adulthood. We were literally a hillbilly clan and violence and narcissism defined the men in particular. We worshipped no god but ourselves. No one knew me, not the whole me. When it served my purposes, some knew me as kind, gentle, helpful, and friendly. Others knew me as a prolific liar, deceitful beyond measure, a thief, a hater of women and quick to use violence with tongue, fists, or weapons.

And then a miracle happened. Jesus reached into that quagmire of immoral living and brought me into His family, gave me a new life and reason to live, extended to me a new hope of freedom, a new joy that was pure and life giving. Since that moment 35 years ago and until this very day I have carried that carcass of lies through marriage, divorce, unemployment, parenting, firings, adultery, ministry in the church, serving among the refugees and ministry in prison. Every single day that dead body of immorality rises as a specter, screaming lies, attempting to define me by my past and current sins. My heart aches and breaks when I consider how often I have succumbed to the unbelief represented in that voice.

Yet I am here to tell you, I praise my God, my Savior, my Rock, my Fortress, the Lover of my soul, my Deliverer, and my Defender. He alone empowers me each day to put one foot in front of the other. He alone enables me to lift my voice in prayer and praise. He is my honor, my praise, my strength. My wife, my friends, brothers and sisters in Christ in the community group remind me almost daily of these truths that stand against the lies. If I love my wife, if I serve others, if I sing and pray, it is not me that has the wherewithal to do such things, but Christ in me who is to be praised and glorified.