

THE BURDEN WAS REMOVED

Name withheld

After being abused as a child, I struggled for years before deciding to tell someone about it.

Recently I sat in a Relief Society lesson where a sister read a quotation regarding the effects of physical and sexual abuse on children. My first thought was, “How sad.” Then I was filled with the Spirit, who bore witness to me of the miracle of the Savior’s Atonement. I had been a victim of sexual abuse at a young age. During that Relief Society lesson, I realized that I no longer felt pain and fear attached to something that had consumed and frightened me for years. It was a miracle. In my heart I thanked the Savior for healing me.

As a child I struggled and felt shame for years before deciding to tell someone that I had been abused. When I was 13, I felt an impression that it was time to talk about it. After a service activity at Mutual, I went to a trusted leader, who spoke with me tenderly and took me to see the bishop the same evening. I was relieved by the bishop’s warm countenance as he invited me into his

office. I remember feeling the weight of years of secrets lift as my bishop listened. I recall his pure tears as he heard my story. I felt the love of Heavenly Father, and I felt reassured that the abuse was not my fault and

that I was still pure and virtuous. This was the beginning of my path to healing, a path that would continue for many years.

There wasn’t just one moment of healing—it was a process of peace,





GETTING HELP

“Healing may begin with a thoughtful bishop or stake president or a wise professional counselor. If you had a broken leg, you wouldn’t decide to fix it yourself. Serious abuse can also benefit from professional help. There are many ways to begin healing, but remember that a full cure comes through the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, our Master and Redeemer. Have faith that with effort His perfect, eternal, infinite Atonement can heal your suffering from the consequences of abuse.”

Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “To Heal the Shattering Consequences of Abuse,” *Ensign*, May 2008, 42.

understanding, and answers that came as I studied my scriptures, prayed daily, and became more acquainted with Jesus Christ. As I studied the Savior’s life, I felt increasing love for Him. The Spirit testified truths to me, including my own worth as a daughter of God. As I submitted my heart to the Lord, obeyed His commandments, and sought His will, I was filled with comfort and peace. As I came to know Him, I began to know myself. Eventually, my past didn’t hurt

anymore. The burden was removed. The Savior had healed me.

I have an eternal family now with a wonderful husband and three beautiful daughters. I am blessed to work with youth and to testify that the Atonement of Jesus Christ can heal us from sin, physical pain, and broken hearts. I know this because of the mercy that was extended to me—because I was “encircled about eternally in the arms of his love” (2 Nephi 1:15). ■

HOW DO WE BRING THE LORD’S HEALING INTO OUR LIVES?

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, helped answer this question in his April 2013 general conference talk “The Hope of God’s Light”:

“First, start where you are.

“ . . . We don’t have to wait to cross the finish line to receive God’s blessings. In fact, the heavens begin to part and the blessings of heaven begin to distill upon us with the very first steps we take toward the light. . . .

“Second, turn your heart toward the Lord.

“Lift up your soul in prayer and explain to your

Heavenly Father what you are feeling. Acknowledge your shortcomings. Pour out your heart and express your gratitude. Let Him know of the trials you are facing. Plead with Him in Christ’s name for strength and support. . . .

“Third, walk in the light.

“ . . . [Heavenly Father] sent His Son to this earth to illuminate the way and show us how to safely cross the stumbling blocks placed in our path. He has given us the gospel, which teaches the way of the disciple. It teaches us the things we must know, do, and be to walk in His light, following in the footsteps of His Beloved Son” (*Ensign*, May 2013, 75–76).