

# God at Work

By DJ Welteroth

The Bible, particularly the Old Testament, relates to me in many instances as...

- ◆ God tests an individual
- ◆ God blesses an individual
- ◆ God uses an individual to bless others

Most people I know have lifelong friendships, or people who have been in their lives for many years. I don't have relationships like that, mostly because I learned that vulnerability was something that caused pain and people shouldn't be allowed in too close. My protective armor was personal strength and I found pride in that. As I get older, I am realizing that closing myself off from everyone prevents me from fully allowing God in.

It all started when I dropped out of school at age 15 and ran away from home. I did this because I had a very violent home life. I was immediately put into survival mode. I needed a place to live and I needed income. I found a small apartment above a furniture store and took advantage of the landlord by lying about my age and ability to pay rent. Due to my need for money I soon found myself stealing checks from a neighbor which led to getting arrested. The judge was very compassionate about my situation and let me off with little more than a warning.

At age 17 I met my first husband and we got married when I was 18. He had a good job and seemed stable. He could provide for me. The truth was that he was an alcoholic and emotionally unavailable. But through this marriage God blessed me with my two wonderful daughters!! They became my life! At age 24 I ended this marriage.

My second marriage came along not too long after this. This marriage was comfortable. Finances were stable. We bought a house in Brownston and worked hard to do everything right the second time around. However, my husband and I eventually started living separate lives and soon the marriage fell apart. My husband then moved downstairs along with his girlfriend.

I became severely depressed and thought that I had failed once again. I have a special needs daughter and could not support myself and my children on the income I had at that time. I didn't see any way out of this situation and felt defeated and trapped! The Lord tests, sometimes to our limits, but not beyond. I had always believed in God but never made Him a priority in my life. I decided to go to church to give myself something to do, a place where I could join in. I then saw a video that said, "When you don't know what to do, ask God for help". So I started to pray.

During this time, unknown to anyone else, there was a couple at church who received an inheritance. They prayed to the Lord asking Him what they should do with the money. They found out that I needed help, that I needed to find separate housing for myself and my children - something that I could eventually own. The couple found me a house in Maple Lake which was close to my family. They bought the house and rented it to me. I soon got a job with True Friends (Camp Courage/Camp Friendship), and within 9 months I was able to rebuild my life. I qualified for a mortgage and began to repay the couple. I now have my own home!

I visited several churches in the area but never found one that felt just right. One Sunday God prompted me to try out that blue church, the one I drive past all the time. Day one I knew that I had found a home at Anandale Evangelical Free! Soon after, I was baptized.

Today, even though I know life will always have challenges, I find myself filled with so much joy. My daughters and grandsons have started to attend church with me. God has also given me a passion to reach out to the people at my work (FRANC - coworker). One coworker has come to church and another one just might! I am learning, through the beautiful people here at my new church home, that allowing people in – being vulnerable – is giving me the chance to accept kindness and compassion in a way I've never known. And as a direct result, I am growing ever closer to God in a way I didn't know was possible.

I live a new life in Jesus filled with hope and expectation. To God be the glory!