

# My Life Journey

by Betty Helmer

At the age of eighteen I gave birth to a baby girl. I graduated from high school and then started college. We lived with the baby's father's parents for about two years before moving out. For about three years we lived on our own. We grew apart and then the legal system was involved since we could not come to an agreement on what our child's future should be with two parents who separated.

This time was the most difficult time of my life. I could not understand why the legal system could make decisions when we both were good parents. At the age of five the court decided she would reside with her father and have visitation with me. My whole world shattered like a mirror. I remember this day very clearly. My conversation with God was deep and intense. He spoke very direct to me stating, "You may not understand why this has happened but you must be focused on yourself continuing to be healthy and think only about what your child's needs are. She needs you more than anyone to be strong." Sometimes I think He knows I am the strongest one and the only one out of everyone involved that could and needed to sacrifice. That is what we do as parents: sacrifice.

You see, I did not have much control over the decision that was made by the legal system, and believe me the pain is very strong some days. I have had a lot of despair, hatred, depression, among other feelings. God has surely softened my heart. He has helped me heal by bringing me to a point where He filled the void with love, knowledge and maturity.

Now today I can say I have a better relationship with her father and his family where it is all about that one gift from God: a young lady who did not ask to be here, but God chose us to be her parents and now I consider her father and his family to be friends in Christ.

This story was not easy to share, but I know I am not alone and many women who are mothers have to make big life changing decisions or sacrifices for their children every day. Some examples of these sacrifices we make are choosing adoption rather than keeping a child we do not have the resources to care for, choosing life rather than abortion, and healing from a death of a child rather than hanging on so long we build a shield around us. So, I am sharing my story to encourage healing and peace that comes from our relationship with believing in Christ.

I want to personally thank my family, close friends, my daughter's father, and his family for always loving, guiding and nurturing the young lady who is now fifteen. Thank you!

Today if I ask God, "Why did you lead me here to the Perry Center?" He would say, "I have a plan for you that only I know your path, you just need to trust, believe and listen." So here I am!