

Freedom's Gate

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Recently while doing chores, I opened the door to my hen house to find blood spattered on the feeders, nesting box and roost. "What on earth?" I glanced around looking for what had to be a dead hen. I found her, barely alive, tucked under the nesting box on the opposite side of the coop.

The poor girl had blood all over her wings, neck and back. Fifty percent of her feathers were missing and she had holes in her flesh where she had been attacked. She had fallen prey to a common problem known to chicken farmers – hen pecking or cannibalism.

Quickly I scooped her up before any of the other "girls" could take a swipe at her and removed her from the coop. I placed her in an old rabbit cage with some straw, water and feed. With the shape she was in I really didn't expect her to live. But, the next day she was up and pacing in front of the cage door, indignant over her new living quarters.

I left her there until she was completely healed up, which took about a week. The night I decided to release her back into the coop, I deliberately let the feed run out so that the other chickens would be too distracted to recognize a "new" bird amongst them. It worked. She took off into the coop and not one of those other hens bothered her. I had been successful with my strategy.



Suddenly she started making this weird clucking noise, causing the other hens that were busy eating, to take notice of her. Within minutes the pecking began. She immediately fled under the nesting box for cover. The other hens went back to eating, ignoring her. I left the coop, disgusted with the dumb bird. What was that weird sound she made as she ran through the coop? It was almost like she was announcing, "Hello, I'm here, come and peck me!" I rolled my eyes as I started back to the house, frustrated. If she kept it up, the others would eventually kill her and there

wasn't a whole lot I could do about it.

As if "Someone" turned a light on in my spirit, I saw a comparison between that chicken and many of God's children. I believe the term "victim mentality" fits here. People with a victim mentality have a "poor me" attitude and give off signals through their words, body language and choices they make. These signals produce the opposite affect desired. What do I mean?

That hen was sending out a call, "Don't peck me, I've been wounded, I'm afraid of you..." Instead of the other hens cutting her some slack, being patient, kind and understanding they tried to eat her alive.

May is the month that we celebrate Mother's Day and unfortunately there are many of you mothers reading this who suffer from "victim mentality." Your children routinely make you feel inadequate, no matter what you do. They continually hurt you, embarrass you, ridicule you before others, treat you with disdain, disobey you or flat out ignore you...you get my drift. In their eyes you're a failure and in your eyes you're a failure too, or in the process of failing. But no one knows what you feel inside, because you hide behind a face of indifference, unsure of how to change what you know you've created.

Here enters the deadly "victim mentality." You went from a nurturing "cookies and milk" mom to a woman with a sign shouting to your children, "Shoot as many darts as you want, I'm an open tar-

get." How did *that* happen? (Note: I'm not talking just about you out there with teens; I've seen young mothers beaten up by their two year olds!).

THE Victim

For us to fix the problem, we need to go to the root first, and then explore different ways of changing the situation. What do I mean? You could write me, describe the situation and I could write back my opinion (after praying of course), but if the root has not been annihilated the problem will resurface and most likely be worse.

So what's the root of this "victim mentality?" It's fear; fear that you are not the perfect parent and that you knowingly or unknowingly made mistakes. Mistakes that now show up in your children. They (your children) know it and you know it. You fear your children will hate and despise you or that your inadequacies as a parent will be exposed to the public. Maybe both.

This fear in turn produces guilt. Here is where the "what ifs" start. What if I were like so and so? Her life is so much more organized. What if I were more spiritual? What if we didn't live here, maybe if we lived somewhere else? What if ... What if... What if...?

This guilt produces the same thing in you that it did in that hen of mine. You're wounded, afraid your kids are going to be losers (let's face it girls, we never just take a thought and leave it there, we make a drama out of it!), and it's all your fault. Your children are not going to cut you any slack, be kind and patient or understanding any more than my hens were. Why? Self-condemnation repels people, including children. You have just opened yourself up for attack. So now, let's shut the door!

Mother, listen up. God has already provided an answer for your dilemma. In fact it was provided before you ever made whatever mistake it was that caused the situation you now find yourself in. God can deal with it. What He is unable to deal with is a person still living under the burden of guilt. Condemnation comes from the enemy, not the Father. Condemnation will cause you to "cast away your confidence" faster than anything else and the enemy knows it. If he can keep you feeling guilty he holds not only you, but your

whole family in bondage. How do I know that? Proverbs 14:1 says "Every wise woman builds her house..." The woman builds the home, not the man. Hold the woman in bondage, you hold the whole household. So how do we get out from under this "victim mentality?"

Recognize first and foremost that you are no longer a victim! You are a daughter of the Most High King, totally submerged in Christ! You are His and He is yours! As sugar is dissolved into hot coffee, so are you into Him- there is no separating the two without destroying the new thing that has been created by mixing the two!

Understand that God has not given you a spirit of fear, but He has given you power, He has given you love, and He has given you a *sound* mind (II Tim 1.7). In Him is the power to correct paths, make crooked paths straight and if there is no path visible, make a new one. He loves you so much that He made a way out of the situation you find yourself in before you even stepped into it. And you no longer have the mind of a victim, but you have a sound mind which is the mind of Christ.

And lastly, "Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward" (Hebrews 10:35). You are the Mom. The child/children born to you were not a mistake. God did

Continue on back...

Your children are not going to cut you any slack, be kind and patient or understanding any more than my

Continued from front.

not mistakenly give you the wrong kid. Therefore you have the anointing needed to be "Mom." You don't have to have all the answers; you just have to have confidence in the One Who does. He won't let you down, neither will He let your kids down.

So stop trying to "be" what you think God wants you to be and recognize that you already are what He wants you to be, right now at this very moment. You did nothing (no good work) to be put in Christ, and there is nothing (no bad thing) to get you thrown out of that position either. God did it all for you. It is a done deal. Rest in this..." I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end. Then shall ye call upon Me, and ye shall go and pray unto Me and I will hearken unto you. And ye shall seek Me, and find Me, when ye shall search for Me with all your heart. And I will be found of you, saith the LORD: and I will turn away your captivity," (Jeremiah 29:11-14a). Rest in His plans for you and your children.

Now, Mother, throw your shoulders back and hold your head high. Look on the faces of your children with confidence found in Him. Stand and watch as your confidence draws your children back to you, opening up the way for His wisdom to help you finish the task ahead of you.

And for those of you wondering about that hen-pecked hen – she died. But for the rest of the coop we're in the process of looking for a good chicken whisperer. Eating each other is just no way to live! Happy Mother's Day!

~ Robin Clifford



After getting married, I decided I was going to make jelly and learn how to can. I had never done these things before and the terms: water bath, pressure cooker, seals, rings, were all quite foreign to me. The stories of the pressure canner blowing all over the ceiling put enough fear in me for me to know I didn't need to can anything with that thing. I tried to talk with my mom and mother-in-law and they would explain things to me but you must know, I had to look up in the cookbook how long to boil an egg – I knew very little. Finally, I decided I needed to work along side my mother-in-law so I could observe what those 'terms' meant. I needed to watch as she would troubleshoot any problem that would arise. She worked quickly and confidently in the kitchen but she would always take time to answer my questions or show me what she was referring to. Today, several years later, I work confidently in my own kitchen canning and cooking. I still seek advice and will always enjoy working with her but now I can work on my own, she taught me what she knows.

I want to teach my children what I know, I want to pass to them what God has taught us. God uses His children daily to minister to others. Am I including my children in this ministry or am I sending them off into the other room. If they are not with us when we minister or share with others how will they learn? How will they have the confidence to speak truth when asked questions about the things of the world?

Jesus' followers (His disciples) were always with Him. They witnessed everything. Sometimes they would ask questions. Sometimes they were amazed, confused, or even scared. Jesus took time to answer their questions, He reassured them when it was needed. Most importantly, they were always there, observing, watching so they could carry on the work in time. Jesus taught by letting them work with Him and be with Him.

Just like Jesus, God has asked us to share with others, heal others, pray for others and minister to others. Just like Jesus, we have little followers (our children) – will they be able to carry on the work in time? Have we taught them what we know?

~ Bethany Days

This year will mark my 19th wedding anniversary to my husband. Our life has been full of adventure, laughter, head butting and raising children with strong wills who get it honestly. I have often reflected on seasons where we thought what we were dealing with would definitely be for a lifetime. The only way out seemed to be no way out. I since, have learned differently. Life is full of seasons and a saying that has been passed down to me from my mother is, "This too shall pass."

I can see the Lord at work using those who have gone before me, mainly my mom, mother-in-law and my older sister. Older women have such a divine call and necessary anointing that younger women need. I have heard it said that when the last child leaves the nest some women experience what is known as *Empty Nest Syndrome*. That should not be! That is a lie from the devil. Mothers and Grandmothers are as much needed when the house is empty as they are when it is full!

I have spent countless hours on the phone receiving counsel on honoring your husband, staying in unity, how to build a happy home, child training and how to make meals and memories.

There have been many training moments in my life. I remember a specific day Mom came over to help me. At the time my life seemed like one roller coaster ride after another. The old saying, "When it rains it pours," was not funny to me. Mom walked into my laundry room with laundry that could stack over her head. Her comment was, "This looks like your life." My instant reaction inside screamed, "How dare you!" but because of my fabulous upbringing the thought "A wise man hears instruction and receives correction," raced through my mind. You know, sometimes the truth hurts. It was true; my laundry room was a shining picture of my life. I was neck deep in housework, four little kids, a workaholic husband and a bunch of cattle who needed supper every night too. Who had time for God?!

I learned quickly to listen to the Spirit while you work, pray in the Spirit while you fold laundry, catch a scripture on the fly and medi-

tate on it throughout the day and listen, listen, listen to the women who had already done it. All three ladies used real life stories to teach me, gave encouragement and correction when needed and wove the love of Jesus into every conversation. There were times when their hugs were necessary, laughing with me worked better than crying, and crying on their shoulder was the only thing that eased the pain and pressure.

The Word of God is full of references to honor, esteem and submit to our elders. 1 Peter 5:5: "Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble." 1 Peter 3:5: "For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands:" Both of these verses make reference to generations of women.

If you're like me, you carry a desire within to be a woman of God that will help those who follow to succeed. There are so many in desperate need to be taught how to build a home, train a child, love a teenager, cook a meal and be Jesus in the midst of it all.

Maybe you haven't had the privilege of women in your life like I have, but you still have the Holy Spirit. He will teach you everything you need to know and more. Do not be surprised if you find another woman sharing parables of her life like Jesus used to do. Learn to listen, listen, listen, be wise, receive correction and instruction and then apply it to your need. Make no excuses for yourself. As you reflect on the seasons in life, you will be able to look back and laugh instead of cry, knowing that the bare ground you once were, is now lush with fruit from the ones who sowed into you.

Thank you to Mom, Lois, and Robin for teaching me how to have heaven in my home.

Happy Mother's Day!

~ Shelly Diehm

Heaven in my Home

