

The Dan & Marilyn Cheatham Story

'From Divorce, To Death, To Life, To Love'

By Dr. Dan Cheatham, www.devotional.net



Deathbed Doom

The year 1980. The nurse on the phone said: "Your daughter Marilyn is here in the hospital. She is in a deep coma and paralyzed in a fetus-like position. She is on our life support system and we don't think she'll make it through the night." This news over the telephone from Oklahoma City crushed the hearts of Marilyn's parents in Tullahoma, Tennessee. Their first thoughts were to make FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS. But their next thoughts were FAITH ARRANGEMENTS. With deep pain in their hearts they prayed aloud together for their 27 year old daughter. Almost in shock, they quickly telephoned their friends from the Bible study group and asked them to pray. Preparing to leave for Oklahoma, they paused and telephoned the Oral Roberts Prayer Tower and listened as the volunteer prayed for their daughter. Then a friend dropped by

to help them get ready. While their friend touched and prayed for them, Marilyn's father saw a vivid picture in his mind. Suddenly, in the middle of the man's prayer, he saw Marilyn sitting upright in a hospital bed with a big smile on her face. It was as if Marilyn was sitting before him. But shortly after the prayer he dismissed the experience as wishful thinking or an overactive imagination under emotional stress.

Rebellion Road

Marilyn, an attractive teenager and a talented pianist, had grown up in a good home. But a worsening independent streak caused her to ignore her parents' warnings about the baseball jock she was dating. Soon she found herself pregnant and a rash decision was made to quickly get married. From there it was downhill as two immature college dropouts tried to survive the harvest of sowing wild oats. Marilyn quickly learned to cope with the lifestyle of being a minor league baseball player's wife by smoking marijuana and abusing alcohol. But the chemicals were powerless to stop the endless crises created by her husband's unemployment and continuous marital unfaithfulness. After a seven year nightmare marriage, divorce seemed to be the only deliverance. So Marilyn succumbed to his threats of murder if she took her daughter with her, and resigned the custody of her daughter Marsha to her ex-husband. Broken and hopeless, Marilyn and her best friend from work, Kyle, began the futile lifestyle of going from nightclub to nightclub, doing their best to drown their problems in alcohol.

Overdose!

Marilyn couldn't believe her ears; her best friend, Kyle, was now explaining to her over the phone how she had invited Jesus Christ to be her Lord and Savior and that she no longer wished to go to the nightclubs and get drunk with Marilyn. She even invited Marilyn to come to church with her. Kyle urged Marilyn to return to Jesus Christ like she had once known Him as a young teenager. She told Marilyn that Jesus would forgive her and give her another chance. Even though a part of Marilyn wanted to run into the forgiving arms of Jesus, Marilyn still obstinately refused, letting her rebellion drive her deeper into darkness and despair. A few weeks passed and Marilyn was left alone with her haunting thoughts of failure. Her marriage had gone up in smoke. The hope of ever seeing her daughter again was reduced to ashes. And now she felt she had lost her best friend too. Hopelessly, on a Saturday morning, she took an overdose of insulin and pills and lay down on her bed trying to make all the pain in her heart go away.

Friends in High Places

Marilyn's "EX–best friend" arrived at her place of work, Oklahoma State Board of Regents, on Monday morning. As Kyle walked up the stairs, she couldn't shake the thought of the vision she had experienced at her church altar the night before. Kyle hadn't talked to Marilyn for several weeks now; but at the church altar she suddenly saw a vision. In this vision she saw Marilyn on a floor balled up in a fetus–like position underneath a bed, with her hands and feet tangled up in the bed springs. She kept asking herself what this strange vision could mean or could this just be a busy imagination? So she went by Marilyn's office down the hall and they told her that Marilyn was late to work. Finally after a few hours had passed, it was clear Marilyn wasn't coming in. Marilyn's boss thought Kyle's description of her vision rather fanatical, but he called her apartment complex anyhow. The police had to break in to her apartment because it was security bolted. When they searched, they found her underneath her bed, tangled up in the bed springs and in a deep coma; precisely as God had shared the vision with Kyle.

When Marilyn's father arrived at the hospital, he rushed to Marilyn's room, prepared for the worst. He had not heard of her condition since making the long drive, but he was relieved that she still had a room number and was alive. As he walked into the room, he was shocked that Marilyn was sitting up in the bed with a warm smile on her face. He began to weep, because the site before him was just as he had seen in his vision before driving to Oklahoma. The doctors couldn't explain her snapping out of the coma nor could they explain her miraculous recovery with no brain damage.

The God Of Another Chance

After returning home with her parents, Marilyn struggled each day by delaying her decision to return to Jesus Christ. She knew that God had given her another chance by miraculously sparing her life; but hopelessness and guilt still plagued her, making the way home to her Heavenly Father confusing. During this time she briefly met a young man named Dan at a Christian businessmen's meeting.

Little did she know that I had been trusting God for over four years to bring me a wife. I had become very content with the single life, spending my time sharing Jesus Christ with others and resting on a promise I had received from God four years before. God had whispered to my heart that He desired me to preach and not to date just anyone I wished to spend time with. He assured me that I would instantly recognize the woman He wanted me to marry.

While minding my own business at this meeting, my eyes happened to fall upon Marilyn whom I'd never seen before. Instantly I knew inside of me that she was the one! So without pursuing the matter any further, I began to pray for her on a daily basis. The more I prayed the more I knew "she's the one" even though I'd spent no time with her. But as I prayed I also sensed I was to wait. After 9 months of waiting and praying regularly for her, I began feeling a peace to call her and begin seeing her.

Unbeknownst to me at that time, a few days before I called her she had walked through the woods behind her parent's yard and gave her heart back to Jesus. Marilyn prayed: "Lord Jesus, I'm through trying to do it all on my own. I ask Your forgiveness for my sins and failures. Right now I'm turning my whole life totally over to You. Do whatever you want with me. I'll serve You even if I never get married again or never see my daughter again. I surrender my whole heart to You, and place my future in Your hands."

Furthermore, the very day I called her on the telephone to date her was the same day on which, just a few hours before, her mother had knelt before her sofa in the den and desperately cried out to God. Her mother prayed: "Lord, please bring something or someone good into my daughter 's life, and that quick!" So today I tease my mother-in- law by reminding her that I showed up the same day she prayed for "SOMEONE GOOD".

Marriage Made In Heaven

The Year 1981: After three weeks Marilyn and I knew beyond a shadow of a doubt that it was God's will for us to be married. So we went to one of my Christian friends to see how they felt about it. Don McCaslin greeted us at his door with a big grin on his face as if he knew something we didn't. While we talked he reminded me of an incident during a prayer group held in his home 4 years before. He reminded me that once after we had all been praying, I shared what I felt might have been the voice of the Lord speaking to my heart in prayer. I had said that I felt like the Lord had told me the last name of the woman I would someday marry. But I had forgotten what I had said, dismissing it years ago as religious fanaticism. But he remembered. He reminded me that I had said that the name was something like "Wyatt or Lyatt, something with a Y-att to it." Marilyn's maiden name is "Myatt". We sat there amazed as we both realized that God had shown me who I was going to marry four years in advance. Then He caused me to forget it until the right time, in order to serve as a divine confirmation of God's plan for us.

Miracle Family

After marriage, we began praying for custody of Marilyn's daughter that we might raise her in a Christian atmosphere. We also began claiming the Bible promises of fertility in prayer because Marilyn had not ovulated monthly since her daughter's birth 10 years before. While Marilyn was 8 months pregnant with Matthew, we received custody of Marilyn's daughter Marsha. When we picked up little 10 year old Marsha, she innocently asked her mommy: "Mom, you're huge! Is tomorrow, Labor Day, the day that all ladies go into labor and have their babies? Are you going to have my baby brother tomorrow?" "Of course not," we replied, "that is not the kind of labor that Labor Day refers to." Little did we know we would have baby Matthew on the next day (Labor Day) which proved Marsha's theory correct! Shortly thereafter I adopted Marsha and we are closer in our relationship than most natural fathers and daughters. She's still my my "Marsha-Pie" and she's given us five grandchildren! God also gave us three boys; two of them with the help of fertility drugs (both on the first try which doctors told us was rare and improbable in Marilyn's case). Our middle son we had without fertility drugs and without Marilyn having a previous monthly cycle (which is supposed to be impossible). Our family is one big continuous miracle from God. Together we serve Jesus Christ. Marilyn is a great pastor's wife, as well as a Christian educator, and a gifted by-ear keyboardist, songwriter and composer too. We often travel and share the love of Jesus Christ in churches, crusades, pastors conferences and overseas. Because of God's faithfulness, as of June 2010, we've been happily married for 29 years.



Got Life?

How To Receive Jesus Christ As Your Own Lord & Savior

1. The Bible says in Romans 3:23: "...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God..." Accept God's Word, about this sinful condition of your heart, as fact. We've all got a sin problem and we all need the Lord!
2. The Bible says in Romans 6:23 NIV: "For the wages of sin is death...". Accept God's Word, about the penalty for your sin (Eternal Death and Separation from God) if you reject Christ, as fact.
3. The Bible also says in Romans 6:23 NIV: "...but the **gift** of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." Accept God's Word, that there is a free gift available as a remedy for your sin, as fact. We cannot reach God, so God reached us, by sending Jesus as a free gift to us. We have only to receive Him. All it takes is a quality decision to accept this free gift! You can't earn Him. He is a gift!
4. The Bible says in Ephesians 2:4-5 NIV: "But because of His great love for us, God...made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions..." Accept God's Word, that God truly and unconditionally loves you, as fact. Who in their right mind would reject a God that loves them no matter what? God wants to

be our Father. He doesn't want us to become more religious. Getting religion is NOT the answer! Receiving a close personal relationship with Jesus is the answer!

5. The Bible says in Romans 10:9 NIV: "That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." Accept God's way to be saved, as fact. You must do two things to receive Christ: Believe and Confess. BELIEVE that He actually died for your sins, was buried, and has been raised from the dead. And CONFESS aloud through the invitation of your own mouth -- asking Him to be your very own personal Lord. Say His name aloud now, "Jesus!" Take Him as your own! Make Him Lord of your life! Life will not be harder with Christ – life will be happier... and more fulfilling!

Having accepted these facts from God's Word, the Bible, may I suggest you open your heart and talk to Jesus as candidly as possible. Come to Him just like you are and trust Him to forgive you and make you a brand new person in your heart. Be sure to tell Him that you believe that God raised Him from the dead and invite Him to take control of your life from this moment forward. Talk to God aloud. The Father loves to hear you say the name of His only begotten Son, Jesus!

Now purchase an economical Bible in a version you can understand, and begin reading a chapter a day from the Gospel of John and the book of Romans. Email me at DrDan@devotional.net and I will recommend a good church in your city and send you some literature that will help you grow stronger in your new relationship with Jesus. Also feel free to download any of my mini-books or posters at www.devotional.net. At this website you can sign up for my free weekly email devotional that has nearly 2500 subscribers worldwide. Your email address is secure and you can opt-out at any time at the click of a mouse!

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