

Testimony

Danielle Ward Tells Her Story

No Longer Empty and Shattered



My name is Danielle Ward. I am no longer empty and shattered. I am a Christian. It's not a religion I belong to; He's a personal God; a God who desires to have a relationship with us.

But it hasn't always been like this. I shunned God, just like the world taught me. I grew up around alcohol and divorce, drugs and infidelity, lies and brokenness, but it was normal to me.

Yes, normal —

- The way my relationship with my parents lacked closeness.
- The way I treated other kids in elementary school.
- The way I began to dress in middle school when I knew boys were watching.
- The way I began to drink and party in high school.
- The way I gossiped and judged.
- The way I dated boys and revealed myself to them so easily.
- The way I fell into alcoholism and lust.
- The way I allowed depression and anxiety to overcome me.
- The way I felt about myself.
- The way I looked at friendships and relationships.
- The way I was taken advantage of by an ex-boyfriend.
- The way I attempted to take my own life.

Broken and Empty

It was all normal to me. God had no role in my life. I clung to anything that would bring me the slightest bit of security. I chose alcohol and boys to bring me that structure and fulfillment. How silly of me to think such worldly concepts could ground me, reassure me, and protect me.

I lived for the way alcohol tingled my brain cells and boys made my stomach turn when they paid attention to me. These were my ideas of love and security—intoxication and infatuation. But that was normal to me. I didn't know otherwise.

I threw myself into situations I thought I could control. I poured my own drinks and chose the boys that appealed the most to me. And yet, I felt emptier and more out of control than before.

Mom Wasn't Lying

My mom wasn't lying when she said alcohol doesn't solve problems; it makes them worse. The Bible warns us about drunkenness, but I know it to be true and protective because intoxication leads to mornings of regret and shameful decisions. Intoxication messes with our sense of reality and ability to make decisions.

The Bible, the Word of God, is not meant to act like an overbearing parent, but as a book of wisdom to guide us to a life of pure joy and serenity. Isn't that what we're all seeking?

I promise you no amount of wealth, materials, square footage, nor social status will fulfill you like the Lord. How do I know this? Because God has worked in my life.

Lost and Hopeless

I was lost and bewildered by the world. I attempted to make truth of such instability and deceit. Amid all this, I lost every sense of myself because wherever I turned, brokenness and emptiness filled my heart. Doubt engulfed me and dragged me to a point I never thought I could escape.

As I looked up out of the pit I dug, joy and peace seemed unreachable. I guess you don't realize just how deep you are until there's no more digging that can be done – when you hit rock bottom.

This hopelessness brought me to a point where death seemed like the better option. But just when I thought about escaping this world, the Lord came into my life.

Smiling Faces and Joyous Hearts

In the summer of 2018, I befriended a boy who knew Christ. He invited me to church, a place I never thought would hold so much comfort, hope, and community. The first time I attended, I was welcomed with smiling faces and joyous hearts. I knew these people had something I didn't. I began to ask questions and attend on a weekly basis to learn more about the believers' unique character.

Delightful Breakfast

Three months later, I was invited to a delightful breakfast with four young respectable women. They began sharing their personal testimonies with me, and after each testimony, I felt more captivated than by the last. Finally, it came to one mother who had been in an abusive relationship. Her story captivated my entire heart to the point where I broke down. It finally hit me.

After hearing the Gospel, the “good news” that God sent His one and only Son to the cross to die for me – the reality of God the Father overtook me. I became so awestruck – as if the light bulb went off in my head – as if life finally had meaning and purpose – as if the Holy Spirit sparked within me.

“For God so loved the world – for God so loved me – that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever ... no matter who I was or what I had done, whosoever – believeth in Him, should not perish, but have everlasting life.” John 3:16

Joyful Drive Home

I drove home from this breakfast in my mother's 2013 blue Honda Civic, with tears of joy and gratitude in my heart. It was 1:30 pm as I turned on to Brendan Street, glorifying and rejoicing over John 3:16. I repeated this verse as if it were the lyrics to a never-ending hymn.

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life.” John 3:16

I had accepted Christ as my Saviour.

When I say this moment changed my life, I truly mean it changed my life in every aspect. I saw the world differently. I understood that my old self was dead, and I was made new in Christ. The seemingly unending guilt, regret, and sorrow that I felt was no longer with me. The Lord blessed my heart and my life.

Countless Blessings

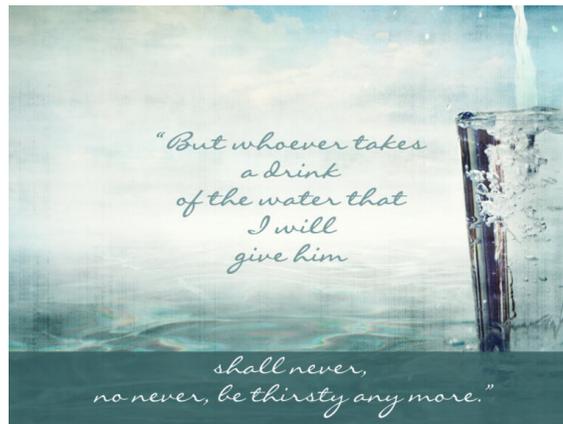
No, life will never be perfect in this broken world. Life will always have its ups and downs, but as someone who has had lows as deep as valleys and highs as tall as mountains, the Lord carries me through those valleys and celebrates with me in the mountain tops. I am no longer fighting a battle I cannot win. He is fighting it for me. He is protecting me and guarding me.

When I placed my faith in Christ, anxiety and stress no longer controlled me. As someone who would lay in bed grasping sheets to feel a sense of reality during an anxiety attack, I am so immensely grateful and at ease because I know the Lord is always with me.

I cannot express to you the comfort that I enjoy in that reality. He is with me no matter the circumstance, no matter the feeling of solitariness. He is and will forever be with me.

If someone asked me if I regret taking Christ to be my Savior, I'd say: "Absolutely not!" Why? He is the key to life.

The Lord preserved me through heartbreak, anxiety attacks, the stress of school, the divorce of my parents, regret, and grief. But most importantly, in 2018, He delivered me from the penalty of my many sins and yes, even a premature death. I should be dead right now. Despite all the hardships, I am so eternally grateful and pleased to have a personal relationship with my Father in Heaven.



Sharing Life's Greatest Secret

Here's the secret to living a successful, joyous, and purposeful life: trust in God. In a world so demanding of independence and self-reliance, it is very difficult to reach the point where you are willing to walk or crawl humbly in repentance to the Lord. However, when you do so, He delivers you. He saves you. He lifts the weight of sin off your heart and unshackles your life. You enter into a personal relationship with God through faith in His Son, Jesus Christ.

During nights of loneliness and sorrow, He is with you. During the loss of your child or friend, He is with you. During dark hours, He is with you. I promise this. I am so grateful because the Lord has brought me to safety in His arms.

I truly pray for all those out there who don't know the Lord. It was a lonely and bitter life without Him. I was so beat down and broken by the world. If you want something that is true, grounding, and secure, the Lord is your answer, and I don't say this lightly. I don't say that He *might* be the answer; I am saying He *is* the one and only answer.

If you're reading this right now, this is not a coincidence. God is calling out to you. Whether you've experienced loss or abuse, mental illness or neglect, stress or difficulty, God longs for a relationship with you.

You will not regret learning and growing in Him. He makes you feel whole. He's brought me more pleasure than the number of sunrises and sunsets. He is love. He is the truth. He is security. He is forgiving. He is gracious. He is the Creator. He has a purpose for you. Why wouldn't you want to seek Him? What could you lose?

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