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I met Jesus in my earliest years. I met him through my mom, before her fears overtook her. He was warm and protecting. Then mom changed and her heart escaped me, just about the time the molestations began. I was three.

Alone with a memory of love, Jesus seemed to have left me too. I concluded in my child mind that I'd done something wrong to merit the abandonment of my mother, my Jesus, and love. Hiding was my refuge. Hiding my pain, fear, loss and humiliation. So like mom I turned to food for comfort and performance to attain love. I danced, sang, played sports, and did well in school. Years passed and I found myself in two separate worlds: truth and mendacity.

At 14, my brother died in a car accident, and once again I was alone and scared. I turned to drugs, and before I'd graduated high school, I was a heroin addict. I became homeless, desperate, and in trouble. Fortunately I received help at the Santa Barbara Rescue Mission. I cleaned up, but within a few years I found alcohol and fell even deeper into addiction: alcoholism and my eating disorder.

It all came to a screeching halt at 24 when suicide seemed my only out.

Yet God had another plan.

That was Summer 2002. Since then, I've given up my vices and begun to learn what love is. Therapy has helped me to find myself. Tom and Dottie Hooper have become the parents I've always wanted. My life with Jesus has now picked up again where it was left 23 years ago. There is now purpose, love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness and all the rest in my life. It's almost as if I get to start over again with Jesus as the author to my story.