

ABUSE BEATEN  
from  
Victim to Victor

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From the author

## The Cycle of Abuse



## A Summary of Clever Tactics Used Against The VICTIM

1. They make you feel sorry for them
2. They make you feel worried and afraid
3. They give you the impression you owe them
4. They make you feel used
5. Sometimes you suspect they don't care for you.
6. They lie and deceive you
7. They take a lot from you and give little back
8. They make you feel guilty, using that to manipulate
9. They take advantage of your kindness
10. They are easily bored and need constant stimulation
11. They don't take responsibility but place the blame elsewhere
12. They tell you that NO ONE can love you as they do.

## **Emotional Abuse**

Being invasive

Belittling through comments or sarcasm

Browbeating

Bullying

Confinement in dark places

Constant criticism

Controlling

Demeaning

Harassing

Humiliating

Ignoring

Silent Treatment

## Foreword

This is a real story. Only the names of the people and culture are changed for my protection. I am the person in this story, and the tears flow, as I remember and write.

I have NOT written every single event as much of it has been deleted from memory.

Why have I waited so long to write this? Over twenty years! Because the scars run deep and can still hurt and perhaps always will? However, I see it as a great accomplishment to have worded as much as I have here on these pages.

My heart is thumping with stress, even as I write.

This story is written in the hope that it may help another woman from falling into similar circumstances.

The Bible tells us that Satan can appear as an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:14). YES! He can fool us in the subtlest of ways.

It also says that we are to watch out, as he (Satan) roams the earth waiting to devour. 1 Peter 5:8. Yes! He can even come in the form of the person you love.

Please, if this is happening to you, if you feel you can no longer cope if you think you need help, then you probably do. On-line today there are many help venues so look them up and then seek that help.

If you cannot do that, then go to a church, the police, the Salvation Army, St Vincent De Paul or similar and ask for help. In Australia, you can also contact your nearest Woman's Health Centre.

Be brave and seek help. You deserve to be loved, and you deserve to feel safe.

DO NOT ~ Tell your abuser you are going to leave them. It may mean your life.

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**Hang on to God's Word every day.**

"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

-Philippians 4:13

**Nothing is impossible.**

## A Christian Woman's Story

### How To

Develop your Best Potential

Special and Unique

Be a Jewel in Christ's Eyes



## **The Beginning of Sorrow**

Isaiah 43:1

She was only eleven years old but thought herself in love at first sight. How could a child of her age feel like that? It happened due to her loneliness and the need for affection.

Riding home on the afternoon bus to the little country community where she lived, she first saw him as he alighted at his stop. Standing still and waiting for the bus to move off she looked down at him, and he looked up at her. Their eyes met, and she was taken in by his handsome smiling face and curling hair. Her heart pounded, and from that moment on, he was all she considered. Paul caught Cara in his magnetic snare.

She often noticed him after that, in fact, she looked for him all of the time.

Everyone in that farming vicinity walked to collect their mail from a small Post Office. Paul needed to pass Cara's home to do that, so she often watched the long winding road to see if she

could catch a glimpse. At twelve she began high school riding the bus seven miles to the local town and seven miles back every day. It wasn't a unusual school bus; there weren't enough children to provide for that, so it was just a bus that everyone used.

It was a time for catching up with neighbors who might live many miles further on. The coach wasn't only for a ride but rather more of an enjoyable social event. Cara didn't talk much, but she liked to listen to what others had to say.

It was towards the end of the 1950s and a time when many migrants flooded Australia to seek a better life. Paul was one of those who came from Greece with his family looking for prosperity. The Greek traditions of working hard, socializing noisily over meals, and introducing a different cuisine and way of life came with them. Everyone in Paul's Greek household worked and pooled their money together to pay for the market garden where they lived and labored.

Life was busy, but etiquette sustained to a high standard. They were in a new country, and no one wanted to share their culture by acting or dressing inappropriately, of the day. There was no traveling to work in shorts and boots when you worked

in them -, no way! Instead, every man dressed in a suit and tie, which were changed for working clothes when arriving on the job site. After working in a trench and handling a shovel all day, it was washed up adequately, dress in the suit again and return home. Socializing with other Greek families in the manner of lively string music and dancing kept the culture alive, and everyone from the old country stuck together in the new one.

Paul worked hard on the job and was expected to continue for a few hours after dinner at night when crops needed picking. During the day his mother and sister spent many hours working in the garden as well as completing all housework. Everyone was happy to do this, as it meant owning their home which was not what they had back in the old country.

Although Paul attended his day job, he was never happy to help again at nighttime and got out of it as much as possible. This time, he believed, was when he had fun, any fun, but mostly girls. Yes, Paul noticed the pretty blond girl on the bus, but she was too young for him. Since she offered herself and seemed to idolize him, he'd enjoy the fun from afar.

Cara was a shy sensitive girl who had been well brought up. Her mother was a religious Christian and very strict about doing

what was right and that included church and rest on Sundays. Cara's parents separated and divorced when she was eight. She missed her father very much and often thought about having a daddy like other children. She envisioned him holding her on his knee or pushing her high on the swing, but it was only a dream, and this made her very sad. She had few memories of her father, but all were good ones.

Cara was born just after the Second World War in which her father served. He came home with a condition they then called war neurosis. Later this became known as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. For a long time, he was in and out of a mental hospital at Goulburn where her mother took the train to visit him. It wasn't a quick visit because trains were slow then. Mother went one day and stayed for two before returning home. Cara couldn't remember who minded her exactly. There were vague memories of staying with her grandparents, aunty, or great aunty.

Never the less, from the time she was eight no male except her older brother took the place of her father. Her mother began working and with that came responsibilities for the rest of the children. Cara was afraid of her older brother as he laid the law down without any discussion. He slapped her extremely hard if

he thought she did wrong, making her jump and feel nervous around him, causing her to become shy and timid.

So, when she saw this handsome boy, Paul, her heart yearned to be loved. Yes, Paul was aware of Cara, but her sister was more Paul's age so he would have liked to catch her. Cara's sister, Anna was five years Cara's senior and almost one year younger than Paul. Anna was gregarious, beautiful, and all the boys flocked to her. She was also much wiser than Cara. She knew her mind and let nothing deter her, and that included the handsome Greek teenager.

For Cara, being brought up in Sunday school placed a firm foundation of believing in God and knowing Jesus loved her. Many happy hours were spent in that small community hall listening to Old Testament stories and ones about, Jesus, with his tenderness and healing to all. The kids learned to sing choruses with gusto.

"Bring down the roof children, come on!" the minister stamped his foot encouraging while clapping his hands to the beat. His Scottish mother sat at the old piano belting out an accompaniment that stimulated the children to sing with all their hearts. Cara memorized many scripture verses and won

prizes for doing so, and living in a low-income family made earning them an even more significant joy.

None of this being understood as a child, yet Cara learned to cling to them later through all of her adversity. Often in times of darkness, scripture would pop into her head bringing a miracle of soothing calm.

Cara experienced something spiritually profound as a girl of ten. Home alone one day on the farm and playing in the feed shed, she picked up her kitten and placed it in one of the large bins. She knew full well it couldn't escape and peered over the edge watching it struggle. No! She wasn't always a good little girl. From outside a booming, never forgotten voice spoke her name, "Cara!" The sound was so loud and authoritative; she pulled the kitten from its confinement, ran outside and looked up at the blue sky. All was still and quiet, yet there was no need to wonder who this was; she knew it was the voice of God.

Her Heavenly Father knew her by name, and this made Cara feel ashamed. She understood God saw everything — and to identify the eyes of God watched her was an overwhelming consideration.

Then, when Cara turned fourteen, her eldest sister turned twenty-one, and their aunty held a party at her house in town to celebrate. Many people have invited and among them Martin and his best friend, Paul. They only intended to hang about for a short time, but Cara stayed close by enjoying their company, so they remained. It was a fantastic occasion for Cara to be able to sit near the young man she liked and draw his attention.

All night she fetched the pair drinks and food hoping to keep them longer. Cara wore a new dress sewn by this sister. It was different from any she'd ever owned being black with pink roses all over it. Cara also had new shoes, and with her hair curled in a becoming style, Cara knew she looked her best.

Paul's friend Martin was one year older than Paul and very quiet. He lived on the farm next door to Cara and his family knew her family well. Martin had been invited to 'bring a friend' and not understanding this often meant to bring a girl, yet not having a girlfriend, he brought Paul. Cara was glad he did, yet Martin often looked uneasy. Cara was later to discover he didn't approve of Paul leading this young girl along.

It was some time after this that Paul asked Cara if she would like to go to a Saturday night movie. Cara cried to her mother until she relented and said she could go. However, mother insisted Cara's younger brother would have to go also. She was not allowed to go alone. Following this, about once a month, Paul took Cara by bus to the movies; they went alone as her brother refused to go anymore.

Cara's two elder sisters displayed concern regarding her age and being alone with someone much older. They took her into their bedroom, sat her down and talked to her about the facts of life. Cara felt so embarrassed she didn't believe what they said was right, and Paul would never do such a disgusting thing. Because she laughed all the time as her sisters explained, they conceded she already knew and understood what they were telling her. She didn't!

Cara began to complain about pain in her stomach. Her weight dropped, and her doctor decided a few days in hospital and tests would discover her problem. It did. They found a duodenal ulcer.

Another analysis was to catheterize Cara to get an uncontaminated specimen of urine. Cara's mother must have

considered it would be a good chance for the nursing sister to cut Cara's hymen. She likely thought that when Cara finally ever had sex, it wouldn't be as difficult for her. This act resulted in Cara NOT treated as the virgin she was for her first experience. Cara knew nothing about what happened to her. All she knew was that she began to bleed when the specimen tube withdrew, and the sister kindly gave her a pad to use. As the sister turned to leave her bed that day Cara heard her tell another nurse, "I hated doing that!" What did she hate doing?

Cara felt puzzled but knew you never questioned the ward sister, so she didn't. At the time it was explained to her some urine was being collected from her bladder and not even understanding how that happened, Cara was in the dark. The only person she told all this to would be her mother during the next visiting hours. When she remained silent and shrugged her shoulders, Cara conceded it was irrelevant. Little did she know?



## Chapter 2

### **SHAME does not separate from God's Love.**

"Nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

-Romans 8:39

Paul waited until Cara was fifteen before he began imploring her to let him be intimate. It took him a while to convince her, but gradually after continually hearing that if she truly loved him, she'd allow him, she gave in. It happened one summer night in a Drive-in Theatre. It was so painful that Cara couldn't understand it being something nice as Paul had indicated. Straight after and as soon as he finished doing what he did, Paul got out of the car and walked a short distance away. As Cara got out and joined him not knowing what else to do, he told her she had already been with someone else. Cara didn't have a clue what he meant. How could she have been with anyone?

Paul didn't live far from Cara's home, and in a small community, he would have heard if someone else was in the vicinity. Still,

he insisted, she had not been a virgin, and from then on, he treated her like soiled goods. He took her straight home, dropped her at her gate and took off in anger driving his brother's car like a maniac. Cara was left confused and hurting physically and mentally. It was not until years later that in hindsight she realized what her mother had done.

But that's rushing the story. Always feeling nothing but love and loyalty to Paul, Cara was too naïve to understand he was running around and having sex with many other older girls. In fact, Paul was glad to have a reason to dump Cara who was becoming an ever-tightening loose around his bachelor's neck. In the early 1960's and in her family's way of life, Cara knew nothing of people using others or how a man could play games to get what he wanted. She had two good friends at school, but they never spoke together of such things as having sex or letting anyone touch them inappropriately. It was an all-girls school, no boys allowed, and Cara's mother had only seen the polite, well-mannered side of Paul. There was no reason for her mother to suspect Cara might have allowed Paul to go all the way. Cara's eldest sister was away in Sydney completing her nurse's training. Cara was often called on by her aunt in the next

town to mind her cousins as her aunt worked as the district nursing sister.

Cara's dreaded secret was kept closeted in her heart.

Cara finished high school obtaining the Intermediate Certificate and coming first in her class. She didn't even tell her family about this and should have attended the presentation to collect her prize, only was too shy to walk up the aisle of that huge auditorium. Her Greek girlfriend collected it instead, on her behalf. It was a difficult time of confusion, mixed feelings, and fear of her secret being uncovered. What should she do, in who could she confide? As Cara turned sixteen, Paul was in and out of her life. Everyone in her home was busy pursuing their own activities. They all worked except for her younger brother. He was somewhat isolative, spending hours wandering the hills beyond their home with his rifle. He helped to provide an occasional rabbit for meals. He and Cara rarely spoke to each other unless out of necessity. As time with Paul became less and less, Cara knew in her heart that she meant nothing to him, yet being young, lonely, and inexperienced Cara grieved. Paul was out and about still enjoying himself with different girls. Much of this Cara again learned years later.

Cara began working for a photographer as his receptionist. He used the pretty teenager as his model on one occasion and then gave her a set of photos. Since Cara rarely received any attention from anyone, she felt this was very special. Proudly, Cara gave all except two of these images to Paul who came to see her at her job. Later she was informed by her Greek girlfriend that he visited her where she lived in another town and showed her the photos. Cara couldn't comprehend this. Why would Paul do that! So, she informed her friend, she didn't believe this. In return, her friend told her to ask him for the photos back. She said he wouldn't be able to return them because he tore them up and threw them from the car window to show he cared nothing for Cara.

Cara's heart shattered. She had no one to confide in; no one in her family had time for her. Her mother worked and slept most of the time when at home. Her elder sisters worked away from home now as did her older brother. There was no one to talk to, and Cara didn't know what to do. So, she allowed Paul to keep putting life over her.

Then another Greek boy— we'll call him George— took an interest in her. Cara didn't realize his attraction was probably only to get sex from her also. She decided to go with him for a

drive in his nice car. Nothing happened —, yet when Paul found out he was like a roaring lion. He took her for a ride and raped her in the back seat of his brother's car. That was her punishment for going out with someone else! Later, he would blame Cara for making it happen.

Again, Cara was treated like a bit of dirt hardly seeing Paul. She would hear he was seeing different girls and this hurt was distressing. One such girl by the name of Cheryl stopped Cara in town one day to enjoy filling her in on all the places Paul took her. This girl was rough and cheap looking with vulgar clothes and lots of make-up. She looked down her nose while chewing gum and reciting what she and Paul had been doing. Cara said nothing. What could she say? Here it was and probably the truth right in front of her, yet Cara's heart denied it could be so.

After missing her second period, she realized she might be pregnant but said nothing to anyone. She prayed it would just go away and was sure her prayer would succeed. WRONG! At about three months she visited the family doctor, and he confirmed she was expecting. What to do??? The doctor told her she must tell her mother and the man responsible. Seeing Paul's friends loitering when walking in the local town, they would laugh and mock her saying Paul loved her Greek friend

and NOT her. Cara felt like her heart would break, the pain was too intense. She always felt alone unwanted and afraid.

Trying to contact Paul, she wrote him a letter and posted it to him telling him what was happening. He soon turned up at her home again, insisting she get rid of the baby. Cara didn't know what she should do; she didn't even really understand that this was a little life growing inside of her; she just considered that somehow, it would dissolve away. By this time Cara was working at another job and had made a close friend called Nancy. She confided to her friend about the baby, but her friend knew nothing about sex or babies so was of little help. Everything to do with boys and sex was hidden in secret with nothing ever spoken concerning such things.

Paul said he would arrange everything and take her to a doctor who would take the baby away. Cara had no comprehension of how this would happen. Paul told her it was easy, and she would be away from home for a night and go home the next day without anyone finding out. Nancy was asked to go with her, and like a good friend, she agreed. So, the two girls, Cara and Nancy worked out that both would tell their mothers they were staying at each other's house. Instead they would be at an old farm cottage way out in the country. Paul took Cara to a

backyard abortionist in Sydney, and after cutting her insides, the doctor sent her away. It cost Paul a considerable amount of money, and later he took Cara and Nancy by car, many miles to the abandoned property.

By this time Cara was in labor and excruciating pain, she was sixteen weeks pregnant. Left by themselves both girls were terrified. Nancy didn't know how to help her friend, and Cara thought she was dying. The labor pain was relentless. All night alone in that old house with only land surrounding them and no way to lock the doors, both girls were petrified. By the next afternoon, Paul returned believing it was all over. It wasn't, and Cara was in trouble as she had been over twenty-four hours in labor. Finally, the fetus of a boy delivered. Paul laughed; proud of the fact that it was male, he bundled it up and took it away. Cara was still in excruciating pain and seemingly delirious. She kept slipping in and out of consciousness. Not long after the birth, the afterbirth expelled. Cara didn't even know what that was either, until Paul laughed, hugged her, and expressed she'd done an excellent job.

Cara hemorrhaged, and Paul was frightened, he needed to get rid of her and the responsibility. Dropping both girls back at

Cara's place, he left to return to his home, off the hook she was no longer pregnant and not his concern.

Cara's mother was waiting, and so was Nancy's. Nancy's mother had discovered a note written by Cara to Nancy and put two and two together. Cara's mother wanted to call the police, but Nancy's mother stopped her. Both mothers were understandably upset, with Cara's mother also very vicious to Cara. Nancy and her mother quickly departed to drive back to their home.

By the next day, it was apparent to Cara's mother that her daughter was septic, as she began to smell and have a nasty discharge. Not wanting anyone to know that her daughter was such a shameful girl and a disgrace, her mother drove her to a hospital a long way from their home. Cara was dropped off and left with the staff after her angry mother explained why she was there. Cara was abandoned, understanding she was bad and would receive no love and no compassion because that was what happened to like her. Frozen that was how she felt -, as if she was dead inside.

Put into a large room with four beds and only one other occupied, Cara tried to make conversation with the other girl. She said nothing about what happened to her or why she was in the room. The other girl received many visitors who at first spoke to and included Cara in their interactions. But the following day she was snubbed by both the girl and her family, so she got the message; the staff had informed them why she was there. Nobody wanted anything to do with such an evil girl, so she was isolated. In those days when you did something wrong, there was no excuse or reason; you suffered for it.

Cara's mother didn't visit. So, Cara wore the hospital gowns, unlike the other girl who wore pretty pajamas. She had no soap, toothpaste, toothbrush or comb so went without, and this was upsetting. Her mother came to pick her up when it was time for her to return home a few days later and following a curette and Cara infection free. But she wasn't taken to her home. Instead, her mother drove Cara to Nancy's where she was to stay for a few weeks until well enough and when no one would guess what had happened. This family were Salvation Army Officers and kindly caring folk. Nothing was spoken of or about what Cara did, and Nancy remained her friend. It was the first genuine love Cara had experienced in years.

They were exceptional times with Nancy's mother coming home in the middle of the day to make sure Cara was alright and had something to eat. Nancy and her sister went to work as usual, and Nancy's parents walked up the street and around the corner to the church and store they managed. Nancy's mother took time to have compassionate conversations with Cara about the Saviors love. Cara felt empty of love; she felt devoid of any feelings at all.

However, she knew this was a Godly family who lived their faith and expressed it in forgiveness and caring. Would Jesus understand that she couldn't read the Bible or pray? Cara expressed this to Nancy's mother who assured her that Jesus loved her unconditionally. Cara now realized that her mother, while professing to be a Christian didn't live her life praying or reading her Bible. She had done when Cara was smaller. Cara's mother, due to her divorce and feelings of shame had become bitter with her life. That bitterness was now evidently displayed in poison towards Cara and her guilt.

## Chapter 3

Unwanted and sent away to be a nurse.

"Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, also believe in Me."

-John 14:1

On her return home, Cara's mother threw hatred at her with every opportunity. She was reminded daily of her terrible actions. There was never anything spoken about Cara's feelings or hurt.

Nothing she did was right. The house they lived in became Cara's cell with housework and cooking not being done unless Cara did them. It was a relief when Cara's mother went to work in the morning until she returned at night. Weekends were hateful. Her aunt and uncle visited on occasion with them sitting and whispering together. Her uncle looked on sadly if Cara entered the living room. Her aunt looked at her with disdain. It distressed Cara so much that she did what she didn't think she had the strength to do. She ran out of the house into the pitch dark one night and all the way to Paul's home over half a mile away. She had never been there before.

She knew his parents were strict and that they considered Australian girls beneath them. But in her distress, all she wanted was Paul. She couldn't cope on her own anymore. Running up his long driveway to his house, her uncle came after her in his car with her mother driving. It was this uncle who she rarely saw; who took her in his arms and held her, while Paul's parents came out of the house to see what was going on. Holding Cara against him while she sobbed, Uncle Bill gently explained the whole story to them. The mother couldn't understand English very well, but the father did, and he said he was very sorry. With that, Uncle Bill led Cara back to the car, and they took her home.

Since Cara was told to go to bed, she wasn't sure what her mother, uncle, and aunt spoke about yet after that her mother wasn't as nasty. Did they pray together? What was said? Cara was unsure, but if anyone spoke in her defense, she knew it was her uncle. Cara loved her uncle so much for his caring and wished he was around more. In all her hurt, he was the only family member, related by her mother's sister, who showed her any form of kindness.

Cara's very eldest sister was a Double Certificate Nursing Sister by now and returned home after completing and passing her

midwifery. Cara loved both of her sisters and held them in high esteem. This sister began working at a hospital closer to home so returned on her days off; it was beautiful to have her close by once more. Just having her near without a word spoken was a comfort. Could Cara confide in her sister? Probably, but how can you talk to someone you feel so far above you? To Cara, her sister was a saint, someone she admired and wished she was more like but knew she never would be.

Cara didn't see Paul after this; her Greek Adonis disappeared, and no-one knew where he was. Then one day she received a letter and with unknown handwriting on the front. On opening it, she discovered it was from him.

He couldn't write English well, but the message said he was traveling by train to South Australia, and a girl he met on the train was writing for him. The letter informed her, his family had sent him to their relations because of what happened between them.

There was no word of sorry, or that he hoped she was all right; just that he would be living and working in Adelaide. Cara felt another stab in the chest, but she instructed by all that she must keep going.

She didn't want to keep going. Didn't anyone understand she wanted to die? Nothing ever went right, and everything was always against her.

Cara was gifted by God, with a forgiving spirit. Whether this was a blessing or a curse, she sometimes wondered. There was never any hate, anger, or resentment held against Paul, his parents, or her mother. Cara just felt empty and drained inside her spirit. Suicide was a sin she knew, so there was no outlet anywhere.

Her mother spoke to a friend who had been a nurse and who had a friend who was the matron in a large Sydney hospital. Cara should be taken to see her for an interview with the intention of becoming a student.

Cara's older sister went with her for this visit, and after the meeting, Cara got accepted into nurses training. Cara's dear friend Nancy decided she would train there also, so they began a career together. What a joy to Cara to be free of her mother's ever watchful eye. To be living with Nancy in the nurse's quarter and only a couple of rooms apart was also a delight. It was an adventure for both girls meeting all the other eager students. No-one knew what to expect, but it was a challenge and one

they were all in to experience together. These new students soon became close associates, with Nancy and Cara who hardly believed the antics of the other girls. It was a complete eye-opener of how worldly girls, acted and lived.

Nursing was strict discipline, and the students lived in the five-story nurses' home within the hospital grounds. For the first six weeks, they attended nursing school in the basement of the nurse's home. Then they went into uniform and were given shifts to work. Teaching lectures were participated in between shifts. They were under constant supervision by nurses higher up the scale and the sisters. If they took the lift to the floor they were to work on; they must stand back and allowed doctors, sisters, and higher up nurses enter first according to rank. This completed with their hands held behind their backs, and if the lift was full, they waited for the next one. They were told never to answer back or question anyone who was superior. Cara came to like this because all in all; it was fair and much like being back in regular school again. On her two days off but only once a fortnight, she walked miles to Sydney to catch a train and then a bus home. By this time her mother and one sister were on a three-month working holiday to Tasmania, so there was no one in the house but herself. Isolation was welcome.

Paul came back from South Australia after spending months away. Cara wrote him a letter telling him she was nursing and where so before long he drove to see her. They were distant with each other.

Cara was gaining more self-confidence, and when not working, she and Nancy attended all the Salvation Army fellowship meetings. It was here that Cara met Con another Greek but also a Christian, and they became friends. They had one date together, and that was to see a Cliff Richard motion picture. Con sang all the songs with the movie in the theatre which utterly embarrassed Cara, so she never went out with him again. They did remain friends in the Salvation Army but nothing else. Some reading this will wonder why Cara ever had another thing to do with Paul after all she had been through because of him. Being a different cultural era, a girl felt obligated to marry the man she became involved. Besides, it was hoped true happiness would eventually happen.

Paul did not approve of Cara being a nurse. He told her that 'in his country' only prostitutes did that type of work. If he were honest, he would have admitted that women had no life except for doing as their husband commanded.

On duty one-night Cara was called downstairs to clean up a treatment room used for a girl who just had an abortion. This procedure performed elsewhere; the patient was brought in due to complications. Picking up the tiny broken pieces of fetal parts sent Cara into hysterics and not long after that, she quit nursing.

Often her mind traveled to the perfectly formed body of the little boy she had aborted.

When able she questioned Paul as to what he did with the body. He assured her he buried it, yet Cara always worried that a dog might have dug it up and eaten it. She could never speak about this to anyone, and for years she cried about it—, it was forever painful.

Cara began nursing at seventeen. By eighteen her friend Nancy asked her to attend a large gathering at the Salvation Army Citadel at Lewisham. Being Cara's first time in such a large church full of worshippers, she determined it was close to what heaven was probably like. As usual at the close of the service, there was an altar call. The song sung over and over was, "Just as I am, I come." With heart beating fast Cara wanted to go forward but the walkway to kneel at the altar was a long one,

and she felt too shy to walk it alone. Nancy realized the struggle her friend was having and asked Cara if she wanted her for the company. At Cara's yes! Holding hands, they walked the long aisle together, but when Cara kneeled, Nancy walked away. Cara wasn't happy to be left alone! However, it was only a moment or so before a Salvation Army Officer knelt with her and led her in praying the sinner's prayer. Following this, Cara was walked out to another room, seated and prayed over. She received her Declaration of Faith Certificate. Some people remember the exact time and date they gave their lives to the Lord, but Cara didn't. She was sure she had always belonged to him; it was the one certainty in all the hurts of life. She was a child of God.

Leaving nursing was when Cara and Nancy lost their close friendship. Nancy remained in Sydney as by now she was going steady with a young man in the Salvation Army. Cara secured work for a Pharmacist who was strict yet kindly. This became another life experience which would benefit her as time passed. One morning when alighting from the bus across the road from her work, she saw an unfamiliar car and someone apparently watching. No face was visible from a distance, but in her heart, she knew this was Paul. Coming out from work that afternoon

he was waiting, and without hesitation, she got into the car with him. Somehow her mother guessed that Paul was on the scene, and the ranting at Cara began again.

On one such night Paul pulled up in front of her home and seeing her mother grab something from the kitchen and run towards Paul's car, Cara yelled at him to "GO"! Her mother turned around and threw a handful of salt into Cara's eyes before laughing and walking back into the house. Cara struggled down the road eyes burning and unable to see. Paul suspected something happened and returned to pick her up and take her away. There was no relief from the pain, but Paul drove Cara to her work friend's home, and she remained there for the night.

Next day she went to work, and her boss kept putting drops into her eyes all day, without asking her what happened. The pharmacist was a nice Christian man, and he and his wife were forever kindly.

It was due to her mother's actions that Cara moved out of the home. She could take no more of the intense hate. A room in a boarding house shared with other girls became home. The landlord and lady were a Greek family and very kind to Cara. The lady was a dressmaker and worked all day at home sewing

for others. This family took an interest in the shy young girl; they liked her, and she was often invited to their home next door for the evening meal. Their eldest daughter was a year younger than Cara, and the two struck up a friendship. With this family, Cara learned more of the Greek customs and way of life. Sophie, the daughter, taught Cara to cook and to enjoy eating olives and homemade bread. But she didn't like wine, and they laughed good-naturedly at her preferring a cup of tea.

It was about six months after Cara got to know this sweet family that the parents took it into their minds to visit Paul's family. They liked Paul and felt it was wrong for his family not to welcome Cara as one of their own. Getting Paul to drive them to his parents, who by now had moved from their farm into a suburban home with their married daughter, was a delight to watch.

This new residence was only about three miles from where Cara was boarding. Cara remained in this couple's home with their children until they returned over an hour later. The woman walked back into her home with a huge smile on her lovely face and her arms open to embrace Cara with exaltation.

It was due to them visiting Paul's family and persuading them to take Cara in, that it was agreed on. The Greek way of life was very different from the Australian casual fashion and Cara was very thankful for all she'd learned while staying with this sweet family.



## CHAPTER 4

### **Struggling to be loved and accepted.**

“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her.”

-Ephesians 5:25

In a Greek home to take Cara to his home and his parents meant marriage. Cara felt happy, to be accepted by Paul and his family. Little did she know the difficult times that were ahead! Living with them was nothing like being with the other Greek family who had acknowledged her with love.

Paul had three brothers, one already married, another two years older than him and one four years younger. He also had a younger sister; Paul was now twenty-four years old. So, the three unmarried brothers all became engaged at the same time.

Paul’s mother, sister, and sister-in-law went with Paul to buy Cara’s engagement ring. The couple did not go alone and choose the ring together; it was the custom for the family to do that.

Cara thought the ring beautiful! UNTIL she was told by his sister and mother, behind Paul's back, that it was the cheapest and on special in the shop window, another slap in the face.

The other two Greek girls each received a gift of gold from the homeland after money was sent there by Paul's two brothers. Both girls received an engagement ring, gold necklace, gold earrings, a watch, and bracelet. Then Paul's mother went out to buy each girl a lovely dress. Cara was thrilled when she received hers, UNTIL, shown what the other two girls got. They were double the price, and it was easily seen by the see-through patterned fabric and petticoat sewn into the dress. Paul's mother watched Cara's face when she saw the dresses for the other girls, and she rejoiced with glee.

Next— Easter was approaching, so Paul's mother and sister took the train to Sydney, to buy the biggest and best Easter Eggs for the two Greek fiancés. The giving of all these gifts was a Greek tradition for newly engaged women. Cara had no idea why they should go to Sydney to purchase them, but very soon she was made to understand. On a long day of searching around for the very best, they could find, (she got told), when the two women returned. Cara saw each large egg beautifully boxed in an inlay of satin material. She had never seen an

Easter egg this enormous; actually, in all of her life she had never received an egg for Easter. Readily Cara was informed by Paul's mother that this gift wasn't for her, because she wasn't getting one!

Paul's father, however, was different. He became very angry with their actions to Cara. Casting his wife and dirty daughter looks and muttering in Greek under his breath he stomped out of the house. In the kitchen next morning as Cara ate her solo breakfast preparing to go to work, Paul's father got out of bed earlier than usual. He wanted to reassure and inform her he was going to the nearest big shopping center to look for a particular egg just for her. He smiled at her while looking into her eyes as he told her this, to reassure that someone cared. He left the house to catch the bus when she did and stayed away all day arriving back after her that evening.

Handing her the beautifully presented box that contained two big eggs and chocolates all around them, he explained that it was the biggest and best he could find. Cara knew he'd probably spent the day socializing in the park with other Greek men to stay away from his wife. She was moved to tears by this kind act and thanked him sincerely for his compassion. When she kissed him on the cheek, his wife fumed, and

swearing in Greek cast them both, looks to kill. She ranted on and on at the pair of them. Even though he cared and did this, it was half what the other two girls received, and Cara finally comprehended the rejection by the women.

Paul never seemed to notice that Cara wasn't treated with the grace given to the other two girls, and this troubled Cara. Life seemed to show her she was never good or worthy enough. It wasn't long after the engagement that Paul began to show his violence which his mother often encouraged yet until now, Cara had not experienced.

They were alone one day when he slapped Cara hard across her face for the first time. It was in retaliation at her for voicing her hurt at being treated differently. She responded by taking off her engagement ring and throwing it onto the grass. Paul got stuck into her then and yelling for her never to do that again he slapped her heavily around the head. Falling to the ground and bewildered from the shock, she didn't know what to do. Sick at heart and crying she wished she could run away and hide forever.

This was the early 1960's, and you took your medicine without question or complaint.

In October 1964 they were married. Cara would have liked to have her own wedding dress but was told by Paul that he helped to pay for his sister's, so she could wear that. Cara was slimmer and taller than his sister but had to be content with what she got. She wanted to have the dress cleaned as the hem had dirt stains, but his sister said, NO! It was her dress and would stay as it was. Cara's mother was still vindictive to her and didn't attend the ceremony or reception. Instead, Cara made sure she wouldn't know where or when it would be. She didn't want her mother visiting and causing a fuss to ruin the day. She didn't need the stress!

However, the most significant thrill was to have her father give her away and her new step-mother fuss over her before they left the house for the church. They made her feel loved and special.

Cara had not seen her father in over ten years, but while living with Paul's family and knowing the suburb and more or less where he was, she endeavored to find him.

Her father married again, and his new wife was a friendly woman who was pleased to see her husband reconciled with one of his children. Cara's father had been born near London,

England and migrated alone to Australia in 1925 at the age of twenty-two. Cara loved to hear his beautifully clipped English accent. She felt so proud of him, and she knew he impressed Paul and his family by the sharp way he dressed and his good manners. He even won over Paul's mother who although she couldn't understand all he said, still became coy by the way he kissed her hand on the meeting. Cara's father was nobody's fool! He carefully watched and listened to everything said to and in front of him. Just his intense look at someone when they did wrong, spoke volumes. He was ever the gentleman and in control.

Her father was thrilled to be back in her life. He wanted to do all he could to help his younger daughter; he showed no disappointment in her for choosing a Greek husband. To Cara's knowledge, he knew nothing about Paul's abusive nature. Taking her and Paul to a furniture store, he showed her a beautiful polished timber dining room suite he would like to purchase for them as a wedding gift. He wanted their approval which they were both delighted to give. On delivery of this, they discovered he had also bought a very sturdy folding ironing board and folding step stool to go with it as a

surprise. Cara was taken aback by his generosity. He was a Godsend of love that she cherished.

Having always been a saver, Cara had a small amount of money in her bank book that would give them a help towards a deposit on a home. The Australian government incentive of five hundred pounds (yes Australia still used pounds back then) was given as a gift to first home buyers with a catch. This catch said they must have been saving the deposit for at least three years before the purchase. Paul's bank account was only from the time of their engagement seven months before. Before this, as per Greek custom, his money went into the family pool of resources. So, Paul could not apply for the Government grant, only Cara could and did. They looked for and found a brand-new home in a community of other new houses. This house cost them just over four thousand pounds which seems cheap on today's market but was in line with the salary of that time. Cara was working and earned seven pounds ten shillings for a forty-hour week.

So, their married life began. The first night in their new home Cara and Paul placed sheets at the kitchen windows and slept on the floor. Hard flooring was very uncomfortable, yet it was also exciting to Cara. Soon their sparse few furnishings arrived,

and blinds put on the windows. The rest needed would come as they could save for each item, and life for Cara seemed happy. Money was tight, but by budgeting carefully their house payments could be made every month and an adequate diet of good food eaten.

They had an old car that got Paul to work, and Cara was only a mile in walking distance to her job at the Pharmacy. Cara wasn't attending church as she didn't understand about the Greek Orthodox faith and Paul wasn't interested in going. He was an Orthodox more by culture than as a means of following Jesus. Knowing Cara had a firm belief, Paul announced that if she wanted to attend church, then it would be the Orthodox one or nothing, and so for a long time, it was nothing. Paul often went out alone in the evening or at weekends. Cara soon learned from her old Greek school friend that Paul was calling in to see her at the hair salon where she worked in the next town.

Cara often cried herself to sleep from loneliness. Yes, she informed Paul that she knew he was going to see her friend on occasions, and she got beaten up for mentioning this and questioning his whereabouts. In the first seven years of marriage with two children, Cara was a wife and mother. She'd

worked in the pharmacy until her second trimester of pregnancy with her first child. Paul was angry that she stopped working, yet with nausea, vomiting, nose-bleeds, and fainting turns it was impossible to work full time. However, on weekends she worked in Paul's eldest brother's takeaway food bar. Next door to that was a doctor's surgery, and one of the general practitioners became the doctor for her pregnancy. He was a friend to both herself and her sister-in-law who was more like a sister to Cara. She was the same sister-in-law who befriended Cara right from the beginning, and she also had a strong faith in the Lord.

Cara and this other girl, Mila developed a strong bond which was to last all of Mila's life. Mila had a sweet-natured sister who also became a treasured friend. Her name was Kari. These two young women became as close to Cara as her sisters. She spent time with them as permitted, like when all the men went away shooting for a weekend. These two were terrific cooks and even knew how to make cheese, which Cara never developed the knack for doing. Otherwise, they also shared invaluable tips with Cara on being a wife and mother. And Cara didn't know how she would have managed without them.

They were her baklava among the Amita sour Greek cherries.

They brightened her life and made her laugh.

Relationships between the in-laws were fearful, with Paul's mother often putting Cara down in some way. She was picked on for her hair which because it was blond, her mother-in-law said she '*painted it*' that color or she was too skinny and needed to eat more. Paul's father, however, was always kind but couldn't stand against his wife's nagging. He'd give her side way angry looks and mumble in Greek while then escaping outside to his garden. In time Cara became proficient in the Greek language, much to his delight.

## CHAPTER 5

### Being blessed with little ones to cherish

“Behold, children *are* a heritage from the  
LORD.”

-Psalm 127:3

With the birth of her first baby, a little girl, the privilege of naming her child was not to be. It was the tradition that she must call the first girl and boy after the husband's parents. Consequently, there ended up many children with the same name within the one extended family, so Cara gave her children a second name also. Paul promised her that if she abided with this custom, then any subsequent children could be named whatever she desired.

It was customary for a baby baptized in the Greek Orthodox Church. The church saw this baptism as a covenant between God and man. God promises to be our, Father, and we promise to be his children. There were specific steps taken in the procedure of the baptismal rites, and all must as custom demanded. One of the Greek traditions of the day was that the mother could not be permitted to enter the church or to witness this entire event taking place for her baby. Mother-in-

law and sister-in-law were adamant that they remain at home with Cara! She was NOT to go, and she was not to be discontent about this! They informed her they did not want to attend either. Instead, together they would have all the food set out for when the father, babe, godparents and other family members returned home. Other than not attending the service for her baby, Cara had a pleasant time, and her baby looked beautiful clothed in her unique garments. But Cara's father and stepmother attended and later informed Cara about all that took place. Her father took the customs in his stead looking on quietly and watching his daughter with pride shining from his eyes.

He came to visit on different occasions taking a taxi from where he lived miles away to call on her. Alas -, there was never that father-daughter intimate closeness which should have been; it was always somewhat strained possibly due to their years of separation. Never did her father ever express his love for her in words. However, she saw it in the way he looked at her and in the things, he tried to do to make her happy. One thing his pride didn't like and that was to be called a grandfather. So, Cara resolved his name to his grandchildren could be Poppy, and he approved of that with relish. He had a

great sense of humor and used his wit often making everyone roar with laughter. His favored word was buckshee, which meant something without cost or otherwise free. Cara cherished hearing that word come out of his mouth.

Cara was like a child in many respects as she only knew as much as she was allowed. How difficult this was for Cara because she possessed a keen inquiring mind and loved to learn. Being left alone so often at home, Cara had the time to read and study her Bible which she took with avid interest. She tried to talk to her father about this, and about Jesus but that was one subject where he displayed no interest. He did give her appreciation for English literature, though.

What Cara read in God's Word, was not always clearly understood, yet she endeavored to keep learning and later purchased a Good News Bible. Becoming the one she mainly read with occasional reference to the King James Version for further verification. These two together with an exercise book, concordance and pen were kept hidden beneath her side of the bed. The Holy Spirit was her teacher, and she became very close to the Word.

Often Cara suspected Paul was seeing other women, but he got furious if she questioned him and she was slapped hard in retaliation, so she soon stopped asking. The beautiful treasures in her life were her children. Two years after her daughter was born came a son, and they were her absolute joy. She loved sewing little things for them to wear and dressing them up.

One of the sweetest memories she recalled was of her mother sewing and singing when she was small. So, she also sang to her little ones.

Her female neighbors were friendly although they often criticized her way of life as being alien from their own.

All were Australian with the acceptance of one. An Italian lady lived on one side of Cara's house and had five sons. Her husband was white Russian, and they had met and married in England. Cara loved listening to this woman speak as she was heard from across the fence. Her accent was thick cockney, and very different from every other migrant Cara ever heard speak. Most had the Australian emphasis.

For the first eight years, Paul hit Cara or beat her up whenever things weren't his way. Finally, this stopped in front of their

children when the eldest began to cry and scream with terror at witnessing her mother's hurt. From then on it only occurred in the bedroom with the door shut and mostly at night. Finishing a pounding, Paul would be very sorry, cry and ask her to forgive him. Often, she was told it was her fault and that she made him do it.

Before the birth of her third child, Paul's older brother, and Mila's husband died of a heart attack. This brother had been one of Cara's worst enemies, always criticizing her and causing trouble for her with Paul. He even told her when she was pregnant the second time that she was carrying a baby rat in her stomach. His hate for her was always apparent and the main reason why was because she wasn't the same nationality as the rest of the family.

His wife Mila was a Greek girl, and from a good background, yet she suffered from his jealousy, anger, and abuse on many occasions. Mila never spoke of this, yet Cara was aware as she witnessed it between them herself. He was thirty-four years old when he died to leave his wife with four young children to rear alone. Mila later expressed these words to Cara, "now you are free!" So, his hatred was evident also to her and yet while he lived Mila never acknowledged she knew this! Cara's

admiration for Mila's discretion gained momentum, primarily because of the loving way Mila tried to make up for her husband's malice.

With his death, everyone went into mourning which meant wearing black. Cara was expected to do the same. Not only was it a black dress, but for the first month, it was also expected to be thick black stockings and a black scarf tied around her head.

How she hated this, and all her neighbors commented that being Australian, she shouldn't have to do this. Cara knew this herself but also knew she was wise for the sake of peace, to remain quiet and go along with it.

Becoming pregnant again two months following his death was a joy but having to wear a black maternity dress for most of her term was a misery. This mode of clothing for her position in the family as his sister-in-law, was expected to for one year.

The year for this was up one month before the baby's birth. Cara happily sewed herself a black and white maternity dress thinking it was so much better than plain black.

When her mother-in-law saw the dress, she went into a fit of rage lashing Cara apart with her tongue. Cara stood in her in-

law's kitchen stunned and looked at Paul for support and protection He stood with his head lowered and said nothing. In the blasting, Cara was pulled down for not having respect for the dead and being glad to take off the mourning black. "You couldn't wait, could you?" Paul's mother stormed. - One of Cara's neighbors took pity on her and gave her a loan of maternity dresses for her last month. These were only worn at home and in the house in case Paul saw. She removed them before he arrived home from work, being quickly changed to the black and white again.

The third baby was a girl, and the only one Cara got the privilege to name. With her excitement, she couldn't think of what to call her. A friend reminded of a French name she'd liked, so yes, that's what she would call the babe. How was the Greek family with this?? For a long time, they made up different names to jokingly call the baby instead of the one given. Her father-in-law decided to shorten the name, but for once, Cara stuck to her guns, NO! She insisted the baby be as named, and after months of the challenge, she won.

Life became lonely. Her sisters lived a long way off and her mother, although she never seen often, moved away also. So, her main friends became the women who lived on her street.

She remained the odd one out with them because of Paul. They never failed to notice and comment on the late hours he kept. This hurt so much yet Cara knew it was the truth. Finally, one day she cried out to God and asked for help. In the guise of Jehovah's Witness two women came as friends to her doorstep, and she welcomed them.

When Paul found out they visited once a week while he was at work, he wasn't happy. He threatened to throw her out and take the children away from her. So that was the end of them coming which didn't upset Cara because she had begun to question their teachings. She had seen their Bible was worded differently in many meaningful ways to her King James edition. She was becoming proficient in the Bible.

One summer evening, the children were in bed sleeping, and Cara walked onto her front porch looking out towards the homes of her neighbors. She felt desperately alone, and then suddenly she knew -, Jesus was right there beside her. She stood and breathed in the summer air rejoicing in his presence. He probably only remained a few moments, but this acquaintance with his spirit was enough to sustain her and keep her going.

She rarely went out socially. Her outings consisted of going to the in-laws, the dump to drop off rubbish, visiting other Greek families or to the cemetery to place flowers on her late brother-in-law's grave. Then after being married eight years she was taken out for dinner and couldn't believe how superb this was. When you have nothing to look forward to, every little thing you get is appreciated. Her mother even traveled a long-distance volunteering to mind the children. Having her mother come was remarkable, considering their past relationship. Being a parent, herself now helped her to have compassion, understanding, and love for her mother. Their connection was repairing, and her mother seemed much happier within herself. The children enjoyed her time with them, and so did she.

Paul once informed her years before; that his parents had a Greek girl chosen for him to marry. It was not an uncommon occurrence for Greek families to match-make their offspring to someone they approved of -, one of their kind he flaunted at Cara. He had pointed her out once asking if Cara thought her pretty. Yes! She was beautiful and looked like a lovely girl; she also possessed the same dark hair and eyes as he. What was different about Cara were her blue eyes because they

fascinated him. With her blond hair, she was different, but that difference was what fueled her mother and sister-in-law's malice. It also stung his mother that her son defied her and married a foreigner.

Her mother began to visit when she drove to Sydney, and the relationship between them improved. Since life for Cara didn't seem to have many pleasures, she always brought what she called 'specials' with her for Cara and the children. Usually, this was a beautiful block of ice-cream covered in chocolate to share or a cheesecake, and the children looked forward to those treats.

Cara was supervision by constantly Paul, but suddenly a new woman came to live across the street, and Cara had a friend. But for that friend Cara didn't know where she would be. This woman, unlike the others living around them, spoke her mind, and Paul got away with nothing in her company. He was afraid to upset her, and Cara now had a confidant. After all the years they lived on that street in that suburb, Cara finally got some peace from bullying and humiliation. The children thrived yet at times Cara lashed out at them the way Paul had done with her. She was afraid of them doing anything wrong and upsetting him and the relatives. Cara was eternally sorry for

her actions, yet at times it was as if there was a devil within her using her power over something weaker than herself. She was repeating what had happened to her for years.

Her head was a mess. Being told she was knowing nothing, even when it was said in a laughing manner and determined it was only a joke; it hit home hard to her soul. Can I be as stupid as this, she often wondered.

There was a song that she began to sing to herself. "I'm nothing but a nothing, a nothing a nothing, I'm nothing but a nothing, and I'm not a thing at all." It wasn't until years later that she began to understand how powerful our words are. Nothing should be spoken against yourself or anyone for that reason.

The continuity of living in that street finally got to her. It was a picture-perfect street with pretty flowers and tidy shrubs. Everyone took pride in keeping their yards neat and orderly. All the children played games together on the quiet street. Everyone knew her and knew her life was a strange one. Although many of the women gave her the advice to get away from Paul and make a living for herself, Cara had no idea how

to do that. She didn't know where she could go or how she could survive.

At the same time, she was tired of watching the other families going together to church all dressed up or taking off to the beach. Everything done in her own family life with Paul was never done as a couple. Their life together wasn't orientated towards their children's needs or pleasures like she witnessed in the other families.

## Chapter 6

Cara becomes aware of God's love for her.

"Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore, the world does not know us because it did not know Him."

-1 John 3:1

Paul made no bones about the fact that he wasn't interested in them going anywhere just with their children. There were an odd couple of times he did take them somewhere for a treat. One year they went for a week's vacation to Coffs Harbor. At that time, he dampened the happiness by making it quite understandable; he did it because she wanted it, but it took him away from his plans. The children oblivious to this enjoyed their holiday treat beside the ocean. It was king tide season, and the weather was cold.

They loved to stand and watch the monstrous waves roll in covering the beach and coming up past the dunes, right to the

grassed verge. It didn't bother them not to play or build sand-castles; their delight was in seeing what they hardly ever got the chance to see. Huddling in coats against the chill, they watched the pelicans and fed the seagulls. Another highlight of this short vacation was visiting the big banana plantation. Here they rode the sugar cane train through banana plants then enjoyed eating and drinking banana goodies at the plantation cafe.

What were Paul's plans? Doing the things, he liked to do as a married bachelor, and with her informed that what he did was none of her business.

Later, when her children became interested in athletics, Cara finally had an outlet, and it was one that she enjoyed. Paul came a few times, probably to make sure that's what she was doing, but otherwise, their lives mainly went in separate directions. Cara was frequently mother and father to the children. Enjoyable family outings were only when Paul's parents, sister, brothers and their families arranged for everyone to go somewhere for a family picnic. Knowing that the reason he was happy with this was that his family arranged it, made Cara unhappy. Why couldn't he enjoy being with just them sometimes? Why didn't Paul enjoy taking pride in his

wife and children like other men she saw? He acted like she was even weird to ask.

They had been married thirteen years now with life existing pleasantly as long as he was happy. With the women in her street gossiping about her life, Cara ultimately had enough. Yes, she still had her friend across the road, but this friend now had two children of her own and was back at work, so there wasn't the same companionship.

Then Cara found a small acreage for sale not too far from where she'd grown up. It looked a good buy, and on showing it to Paul, he felt content to shift. The house was run down and not as accommodating as the one they had, but there were prospects of the rural area turning residential which meant selling off the land and building a bigger home.

They moved, and Cara became pregnant again soon after.

She was informed laughingly by her friends; they quoted, a new place to live also meant a new baby.

Paul insisted on another abortion. Four children were too many he said. Another excuse he used was that after the difficult birth of her last baby, it was risky. Cara refused to listen. She would not go through that cruel act, and she

reminded him of his promise never to ask that of her again. Paul wasn't happy, and as usual, when he wasn't pleased, Cara paid. He wouldn't talk to her for weeks, trying to break her down to give in, but she wouldn't budge. His mother and sister-in-law stuck up for her and came to talk with Paul. Cara was amazed that they did this -, as she thought, for her! She didn't hear what was said as they all walked away.

But Paul gave in and accepted the situation from then on, even though he was not pleased with it.

Perhaps he saw it as being tied up more with his little family. Paul and Cara both began working on weekends at a local raceway at his suggestion. She was heavily pregnant and served in a shop while he manned one of the exit gates. Their three children wandered around and took care of themselves along with other Greek workers broods. It was here their older daughter caught him embracing and kissing one of the pay clerks in the office. Cara was always told by Paul to keep away from there - that he would collect her pay. Not knowing why but doing as informed, she now knew it was because of this other woman.

A large extended family gathering was arranged to go away for a long weekend coach to the Gold Coast. Paul, Cara, and the children were to go also. A trip away seemed too good to be true, and then Cara noticed the other woman sitting towards the front of the vehicle. As they pulled into the hotel on arrival, this woman disappeared and so did Paul. Cara was left to sort out their luggage and the three children. She later saw Paul and this woman with their heads together talking intimately at a far wall inside the hotel foyer.

Early Sunday morning Cara awoke to the hotel fire alarm sounding. Racing down the stairs, Paul was nowhere in sight. Sitting in the hotel lobby with all the other guests, Paul finally arrived back in a cab out front with another man at about four o'clock. He didn't care that Cara was alone in this ordeal, in fact, he treated it like a joke. How could you ever feel loved in a marriage like this? Cara certainly never did.

When the fourth baby was born Paul told Cara, she had better do the right thing this time. What was that? She was told the baby would be named after his deceased brother, the one who never liked or accepted Cara. Now she understood how her mother and sister-in-law had gotten around him. So, this was

the reason she was allowed to keep the baby. She realized that he was telling her, it had better be a boy!

She was quite ill following the birth, having developed a dangerous thrombosis in her thigh. Paul insisted she have her tubes cut and tied while still in the hospital. The doctor refused due to the danger of the blood clot traveling either to her heart or brain. She was to remain on bed-rest with only toilet privileges. There was no known treatment for blood clotting in 1979, so the sister-in-charge kept feeding Cara aspirin as she said she had heard that it helped. Mothers usually remained in the hospital for three days; Cara remained for six dues to her health. All the mothers in that long Nightingale ward received unique flower bouquets from their husbands. Cara got nothing from Paul. The feeling of neglect overwhelmed her. Cara's mother-in-law was there when Cara broke down and cried. Paul looked at her with disdain and mother-in-law told her to shut up, that her husband bought her a new washing machine and that was better than flowers. But her father-in-law came in the next day with a big bunch he picked out of his beautiful garden, and she felt his kind thoughtfulness.

Home and still unwell, Cara was told to rest as much as possible. One of her sisters had visited and minded the children while she was in the hospital. Now, this sister went back home to care for her own family. On her first night at home, Cara felt extremely unwell.

Paul looked at her with contempt; he was going out he announced, and she could be watched by the children. Her oldest daughter was now thirteen, so Paul left her responsible and took off to enjoy himself.

Leaning back on two high pillows, almost in a sitting position Cara closed her tired eyes and prayed for Jesus to be with her. In no way could she imagine he would appear in person? Sensing one of the children was standing at her side watching, she opened her eyes. It wasn't her child -, it was Jesus himself! He stood tall, dressed in a long white gown and with a hood pulled over his head shadowing his face. He held an old shepherds crook in his left hand. It was placed in front of his body, ready to stride forward. Cara stared enthralled while a tremendous sense of peace flooded her being. As she watched, he walked towards her open bedroom door and out into the well light hallway. Not knowing how to react and as her heart pounded with emotion, Cara prayed a simple prayer

thanking him for coming. Calling her eldest daughter, she vividly shared with her all that transpired.

Months later, her daughter ran to show her mother a verse in the Bible that read something like this, ‘when you are ill, he will come as a shepherd.’ Cara and her daughter rejoiced. They were not alone.

The doctor requested Paul come with Cara for her six-week postnatal visit. Paul complied, and after seeing Cara, the doctor told her to go and sit in the waiting room leaving Paul with him. When Paul came out, he was livid with anger and strode ahead of her back to their car. On the way home, he told her the doctor booked him in for a vasectomy, thinking she already knew about it. Cara was amazed to hear this! She felt it wise to say nothing. Paul had the operation and never spoke of it again. Cara thanked God for how he and the doctor managed to get that done.

Hurts followed hurts, but there were happy loving times as well. Cara had learned how to appease Paul and life moved on. Then Paul decided he was going into business with his younger brother. There was no talking it over with Cara to hear what her thoughts were. Life was to hurt Cara once more, as it

meant leaving the children at home alone. The seven months old baby was left with an unknown minder on weekdays. At first, she worked a few days, and then gradually this increased. On weekends the baby and other two children remained the responsibility of her thirteen-year-old daughter. Her daughter managed because she was fearful not to, yet her childhood was being stolen from her and replaced by a burden beyond her years. The stress of this was a constant struggle in Cara's spirit, but Paul had no worries about it, so no argument was allowable. Cara and her daughter coped in the best way they could, yet this young girl felt the weight of her accountability. Paul didn't expect to help Cara with the children or housework, "that was her problem," he'd remind her on the way out of the door.

Cara had her hands full with working, the home, and four children. Besides this, her father became very ill and was dying with what she later discovered to be lung cancer. Her stepmother passed away with this same disease a couple of years back, and since then Cara's father became dependent on her. She would have liked to bring him to live with them, but it was impossible in the old farmhouse and with her having to work. She brought him home occasionally when she had a day

off work. Cara did this to give him a change of scenery and feel the family unity. The old house was tiny and built on cut off tree stumps with the floor shaking when someone walked. The tin roof leaked, and when the grass and concrete was wet and slippery outside it was painful not to falling over on trips to the pan toilet. There was no way she could care for her father adequately under those conditions.

She had no option but to place him in a nursing home. Every couple of days Cara drove about ten miles to visit him taking the baby with her. He always begged to go home with her. In anguish, she told him this couldn't be. In the beginning, she explained why, but no explanation was accepted. He would turn in his bed and face the wall away from her. Driving back home with the baby after every visit, she cried her eyes out.

Cara was at home alone with just the baby in the kitchen of the old house one morning when she believed a sign was given. One lone glass tumbler remaining on the dish rack to dry -, exploded like a bomb, for no apparent reason. Cara instantly knew that her father had departed for Glory.

About a half hour after this the nursing home phoned to tell her what she suspected. Sadly -, in all of their times together,

she was unable to talk to her father about the Lord. He never accepted any discussion of this kind from her. However, Cara and one of her sisters were happy to hear he did receive it from their younger brother. So, God in his goodness did his work in his way, and her father accepted Jesus as his savior before he died. Knowing this was an immense consolation.

Unfortunately, Cara's older brother and sister never forgave their father for leaving them. Cara understood her father's suffering following his return home from World War Two. Sadly, their mother never told her children the real reason why their father left his family. It wasn't until Cara's mother was well into her nineties that she let it slip. Cara was glad her younger daughter who was then a grown woman was a witness to this, but she would never divulge that truth while her mother still lived or perhaps not even after her death. Her mother deserved the respect God asked children to give to their parents. And that regard had no boundaries.

## CHAPTER 7

### Finding a way to escape at last.

“Therefore, if the Son makes you free, you shall  
be free indeed.”

-John 3:36

Not long after her father’s passing a property developer approached Paul and Cara asking if they would sell off their back two acres. Cara agreed with Paul, and a massive new brick house built with the money. Having plenty of room for all. After the completion, it took a few weeks before security doors to the front, side, and backdoors were fitted.

Before this happened, there was another spiritual experience. It happened like this. The children retired to bed at their usual time of eight thirty, and Cara finished up hanging out the washing (yes at night) then took a bath. At ten thirty she placed the empty milk bottles on the front steps and closed the massive front door, before retiring.

Paul returned from playing squash a short time later and entered the house from the side door. He came straight to the

bedroom storming at Cara, saying had she left the front door wide open, and he had shut it. Cara assured him she had closed the door and made sure it was locked by pulling back on the latch.

Paul took a shower and retired to bed still infuriated with her.

A few minutes after he got into bed, a loud roaring wind resounded through the whole house. Nothing shook or moved it was merely this horrendous noise. Paul and Cara jumped from their bed and looked down the long hallway towards the front of the house. That heavy door stood wide open again! Paul ran forwards closing it and double checking it was locked. Cara followed walking past the side door while heading for the kitchen. She needed a cup of hot tea to settle her nerves. As Cara went to make a drink, peace supernaturally flowed. Instinctive understanding settled in her mind with the understanding that whatever caused the commotion was now gone. It was something spiritual and far beyond human understanding.

Paul couldn't be persuaded; he reasoned someone found a house key SHE likely dropped and was set on invading them. For a long time, he sat in the hallway with a shotgun across his

knees watching that door. Eventually, he gave up and retired to bed. This frightening event never occurred again.

Cara always taught her children about Jesus. She was not entirely well after her last birth and to appease her; Paul allowed the children to attend Sunday school when Cara asked. The minister would collect them and deliver them home again, and Cara rejoiced.

By the time the youngest turned five and began school, he was expected to walk home alone after alighting from the bus. It was a long walk past a new housing project with only workers in sight. Fear gripped Cara's heart for her little boy, and the home phone was programmed for him to touch a button that rang his mother, so she knew he was safe.

On his first summer holidays of six weeks, he was not allowed to enjoy the first three weeks like other children, and as his older sister now worked there was no one to mind him. He was to go to the business every day with his parents. What does a little boy do all day in a Hardware Store to keep himself amused? He was in constant trouble with his father and often punished.

He became an isolative quiet child. Then finally he got his three weeks holiday when the business partners took over their time share. The partner's son was one year older and had grandparents to mind him, so he was not restrained as Cara's son had been.

Cara's eldest daughter turned nineteen and got married. She was not permitted to date or see this young man away from her parents' home.

Returning from the reception, Cara was stunned to hear Paul say, "Well that's one off my hands." She wondered how he could say that. Cara missed her daughter very much and cried on and off for six months. She saw her daughter but not as often as desired. The good part was that her daughter could now go to church and have more life than previously. It took many years before her mother learned her daughter's husband was not a typical loving sexual man. Indeed, it was wondered whether he was perhaps, a closet Gay.

The youngest son was close to Gods heart. Since their elder daughter now attended Christian gatherings, her parents invited to a tent revival.

Paul was not keen, but he gave in as it meant hearing his son-in-law play guitar in the band. It was at this revival that their five-year-old son disappeared. Searching everywhere, his father discovered him in another tent with a church elder. Of his own accord, he had gone forward at the Altar call and given his heart to the Lord. Cara was astonished by his response.

Months later this small boy was to become very ill with glandular fever. Cara stayed at home to care for him. One day he cried for her to pray for Jesus to heal him. At that time Cara didn't understand about laying on of her hands and praying, but she did it, and the boy became well.

A couple of years later, her same son asked for baptism. He had heard his older brother and sister, together with the married sister, decide to serve Jesus. They had a monumental service at their church, with water immersion baptism, so he wanted the same.

What to do? Cara wasn't sure as Paul would never agree. She wrote to one of her sisters. This sister and her husband were church elders and believed in this commitment as a faith sign. They suggested visiting so they might baptize the boy, it sounded the perfect solution, and she awaited their visit with

anticipation. Her sister spoke in depth to her son to make sure he comprehended the meaning of what he was going to do. He took this all in and seemed to understand. To make sure, she read scriptures about it and especially the one where Jesus visited Nicodemus and told him, "You must be born again." The boy was happy about this, so Cara's sister baptized him in the bath while her husband kept Paul busy outside. Since her sister and husband lived over a hundred miles away, Paul agreed they would remain overnight. After dinner, Paul went out as usual. Cara felt this was her chance to be also baptized. It felt right and unique, so it was done, and they all rejoiced.

The oldest son had mouth development problems with his teeth needing braces. Cara trusted what the dentist told her as he was the expert and the braces were fitted. These stayed in place for three years. Cara's son believed his mouth was ruined by that orthodontist, and that Cara was the blame. What did Cara know about teeth? And why was she blamed? It was beginning to sound like the son was becoming like his father, dumping everything not liked onto her as the scapegoat. It was perplexing to Cara, as to why he would think this of her?

Cara's second daughter was rebelling against Paul's strict regime for girls. She was now seventeen and wanted to go out with her friends. She wanted to have fun. One day instead of going to work, she took the day off and went out to Sydney. Paul found out before she was due to return home that night. He was waiting and gave her a terrible thrashing with a buckled belt. Cara tried to intervene, but Paul shook the belt at her and threatened she would be next. He shouted it was all her fault—, she had encouraged the girl to be disobedient, and this was the result.

After he walked away, Cara quickly told her daughter to have a shower and go to bed. She had no idea the extent of that beating. In the morning her daughter was gone, and Cara found a note from her saying she was never coming back. Would this darkness never leave? To Cara, this felt like another stab of pain. Where would her girl go? Mother felt her child's emotional and physical trauma yet had no idea how to help.

That morning the police arrived and took Paul away. Her daughter had been and complained. Photos of her lacerated back were snapped as evidence against him with Paul arrested.

Cara didn't know what to do. The way he looked at her on his way to the police car told it all. He hated and blamed her once more. What should she do?? She felt she had to do something, so she phoned Paul's sister's husband and told him. Next, she contacted a friend of her daughter's and asked her to tell her daughter to drop the charges; Paul was later set free. If Cara thought he would thank her for this, she was wrong. In fact, that next year was even worse than many before.

Cara found it hard to enter her daughter's bedroom. She couldn't stand it as the memories of that night kept flooding back. Finally, a couple of months later, Cara finally entered that room. Opening the wardrobe door, she was shocked to see brown splattering on the inside. Looking closer she realized this was blood. With the belt still on the floor, Cara realized this blood occurred came as a result of a belt buckle on her daughters back.

She was devastated! Her undeserving child, this was worse than she had suspected, and she felt like she could scarcely breathe how she longed for the courage to defend her daughter and have Paul sentenced. What kind of a mother was she?

The eldest daughter, with her husband and one child, came back to live in the family house while their new home was being built. Mother and daughter both prayed for the youngest daughter. Cara was now only working four days in two weeks at the business, so it was a good time for her and her daughter to share prayer time.

Cara taught scripture lessons at the local school and was involved in the Orthodox Church. Paul was still the same—he went out often, and from the signs, it looked like he was still pursuing other women. He didn't care that Cara was involved in her religious things as long as it didn't interfere with him.

Cara was fed up with Paul and his attitude. When her daughter with her husband and child moved out to live in their new home, the house felt lonely. Her oldest son was working and going out to church functions. Cara was often home alone with the younger son, and he was rebelling. Cara felt she would like to prove what Paul got up to when he took off at night.

She went to see a lawyer, who convinced her it would cause her more pain than gain to find out. One friend of her older son disclosed to Cara, how on an outing to Sydney Paul and another man were seen approaching a strip club. When Cara

confronted Paul, he told her as always, it was none of her business. Devastated, disillusioned with life and knowing what the Bible said about marriage she knew her husband was an evil man.

Cara's health and weight declined rapidly and test after test couldn't find anything physically wrong. A gastroenterologist talked to her in earnest. He made her see that her illness was to do with the stress in her marriage. But what could she do, Cara was not a worldly woman and had no idea?

At home alone one day she broke down and couldn't stop crying. Picking up the phone book she opened it to a page that advertised, The Women's Health Centre. Reading the ad Cara saw it said it was to help women with ALL their issues from marriage to family and health. Dialing the number, she cried telling the woman on the other end of the line, some of her story.

This lady was a counselor and requested Cara come to see her immediately. Cara drove the half hour to get there, arriving and needing to wait. A pamphlet on the Cycle of Abuse caught her eye. Stunning, she read the recurrent theme of her existence. So this didn't only happen to her, it occurred to

other women as well! With counseling it was now understood this wasn't something new, it was an old story regarding men such as Paul.

The counselor was amazed that Cara had lasted so long; being married for twenty-eight years and with him, all told for thirty-five.

Returning every week for counseling Cara gained strength. Besides this, she needed to know that God would approve of her decision to leave Paul. What should she do? An appointment to see a woman pastor, at another denomination, was made. The advice received was the same; to cut off and walk away. Her youngest son needed considering. Could she take him with her, or would he refuse to go? He was now thirteen and becoming a handful. She needed to think this out carefully as this was vital to the wellbeing of both her child and herself. She considered the pros and cons of taking or leaving him at home.

She needed to find a job and somewhere to live.

A friend showed her an advertisement for home care nurses. Cara was unsure, could she do it? She needed to try so went for the interview. By mistake or by an act of God, she arrived

half an hour too early. The registered nurse, who owned the new agency, took her in and gave the time to listen to a brief of Cara's story. This woman had suffered similar circumstances and felt she could help. She assured Cara the work wasn't hard and Cara's knowledge of another language together with her nursing book from years before, she was given employment.

Next, the women's health counselor arranged for her to live in a group home, somewhere close to her new job but safe, where Paul couldn't find her.

Cara asked a young male friend for help in buying a vehicle. His mother and older sister, both now deceased had been friends of Cara's whom she helped in the past. This young man went with her to purchase a cheap little car needed for the work. Everything was working out except for what to do for her younger son.

They walked together around the block one night, and she asked him if he would like to move away from his home and live somewhere else. He was adamant, NO! He didn't want to

leave. On hearing this answer, she couldn't tell him the reason for her question.

Not wanting to leave him yet not able to live in that house any longer she pondered. Her son loved his soccer; he had friends, school, and a home that were all familiar. Could she take him away from that? She felt it was kinder to leave him; he was a boy so she thought he wouldn't suffer from his father's displeasure like her girls.

One day while standing in her kitchen and reminiscing about her children and her life, she finally saw Paul for what he was. Her rose-colored glasses were off at long last! It was a revelation of dawning. He would never change -, he was a selfish man who only ever cared about himself.

She was through! Packing a few possessions and with her new cell phone, she walked out.

Living in the half-way house with two other women and a child plus the home managers, she cooked and cared only for herself, and it felt strange but peaceful. She worked daily and returned at night. Cara worked minimal hours until she could

cope and cope well. Her children had her phone number and occasionally called, and then Paul learned her number.

In the next four weeks, Paul kept calling and saying he would change -, things would be different.

A doctor who was also a friend told her he never would and not to return. Maybe he had changed Cara thought, plus she missed her son. So, home she went. For a short time, Paul was better. Then as she still worked with the Home Nursing and he didn't like her doing it he insisted she quit. Her answer to him was NO! Not this time -, this job wasn't going to be taken from her—, she was staying, it was her independence.

"You're trying to be smart with me," Paul, threatened her one day. "Be careful, or I'll burn the house down with you in it!"

But Cara was past caring about his threats.

Another day when they were home alone, he placed a gun to her head and claimed he'd shoot it off. She felt numb so there was no fear—, she didn't care if he did! He couldn't hurt her anymore. She was sick of all the intimidation, and cruel words.

Another day he came home from the business and told her his brother said he hated her.

"So, what did you say to him?" Cara asked.

He acknowledged that he had spoken nothing in return, which to Cara, meant he agreed.

He laughed and thought it all extremely funny.

One more time, now he informed her that she ruined his whole life. She was the reason they had hardly any friends. No one liked her. This barb hurt but now she wouldn't allow it to sink in deeply. Calmly she worked out her final departure. Her son's fourteenth birthday was nearing, so she'd go after that.

The day before his birthday she purchased a lovely cake.

She would give him money and take him to buy a gift of choice after school.

## CHAPTER 8

### A New Life Career, and Home.

*“If God is for us, who can be against us?”*

-Romans 8:31

Cara's bag was packed to leave and placed in the spare room cupboard where Paul never entered. Then for some reason, he did that night and confronted her about it. Having threatened many times, he'd kill her if she left, Cara lied and said she wanted to spend the next weekend with her mother who now lived closer. She felt he didn't believe her but neither did he think she'd leave before her son's birthday. However, she did go -, she'd had enough.

She believed Paul would still acknowledge their son's special day—, the cake was there, and the relatives would come to celebrate a usual. Later she learned Paul held no party for the boy. After all, life was about him so why should their son be happy.

Instead, her boy was made to feel his mother deserted him! What an unbelievably cruel act, and yes, it did make Cara feel responsible when she learned years later what happened.

Always close to her children, there was no way she ever wanted to hurt him like that? How could she make amends? It took this son many years to understand the reason for his mother's apparent abandonment.

She moved into a cheap apartment in a factory area, not the sort of place she could have taken a teenage boy. It suited her because it was inexpensive and close to work. She met the young woman upstairs and found a friend. Occasionally she saw her son and a girlfriend of his from his high school, usually at the girl's single mother's home.

Money was short, and she couldn't afford to go out or spend money on petrol to go often. Her sons' friends' mother did not understand that, so Cara stopped going. She just didn't have enough money.

She applied to enter and train for the Advanced Certificate in Nursing at a large hospital and happily was accepted.

The study was hard, and it was a long time since she worked in this capacity. Everything in nursing had changed; nothing was the same as twenty-eight years earlier.

She needed to do this; she needed to get her mind off everything and concentrate, and that was difficult because she

felt emotionally dead inside. Somehow, she got through the days; she studied and passed exams without fully knowing how. Only by the grace of God!

Life was like existing in a dream; nothing appeared real. Where once she experienced fear of heights, she no longer felt this. She drove her car dangerously, and much too fast without concern for herself or others while on the highway going to and from her mother's home. She didn't care if she crashed and got killed!

Cara and her mother drew closer, with her mother displayed understanding and kindness. She even understood about Cara's leaving Paul, and there were no, 'I told you so!' as Cara would have expected.

Her mother would encouragingly say, "Have a soak in the bath, it will do you good." So, Cara would do that while her mother played hymns on her piano. Her mother now played the organ at her church and with new friends made became a changed person.

Mother and daughter spoke of many things except Cara's past, and they developed an understanding and friendship.

Cara did all she could on her days off to help her mother and make her feel loved.

Then, her nursing friends persuaded her to go out with a man for an evening dinner date. He seemed all right, and the outing was pleasant with him being very attentive.

The strange thing was that at seven o'clock he left her to phone his home saying he always did that to say goodnight to his son.

Arriving back at her apartment she didn't invite him to come inside saying she had an early morning shift at work.

He asked if she could make him a cup of coffee as he didn't want to fall asleep on his long drive back home.

Naively she fell for this line. Once inside, this man threw her on the lounge and raped her. In all of her life, this act was something that left her feeling cheap and dirty. After yelling at him to get out, she got into the shower and washed and washed herself while crying. Now another lesson was learned, and that was -, not to be too trusting.

What to do? Currently, she had the added apprehension of maybe having contracted H.I.V.

Who could she tell? Finally, she confided in a work colleague who talked her into seeing the hospital staff counselor. It was difficult talking to a male about what had transpired, but he was sensitive and nonjudgmental. From there she was referred to the Hospital Sexual Health Clinic. The male nurse was also kind and took blood for testing. He informed her she was to return for more blood tests in six weeks. After that, it would be a six-month wait to see if she had contracted any disease. What else could happen?

She lived in the terror of her family learning about this.

She like working in the hospital, earning a wage and making decisions. She didn't make any close friends; instead, she concentrated on work and just existing.

The one thing Cara couldn't do was go to a church because on the few times she went; she cried uncontrollably. She was a failure, the hymns convicted her of love, and often she felt unloved and angry. Praying was awkward and her life a miserable mess.

One day on opening her Bible at random in the New Testament, Cara was surprised to read, that when we are no longer able to function and be the Christian we are called to be, then Jesus carries us.

She had probably read this before, but now it had a different meaning and was relevant to her situation. Cara decided to return to her very own church, the Salvation Army because she felt accepted without any condemnation there and this was needed.

They had a singles group, so Cara joined. Through taking the step to reach out for help, Cara discovered many ways help was there to such as her. She was persuaded to signed up and attended a weekend seminar on grief and loss. Grief and loss, how could that help her? It was a surprise as she learned about her weird feelings.

The grief of losing the only life known for many years. Grief for feeling a failure due to a broken marriage. Grief from the changes in her life, no more a mother in the company of her children. Grief from the many Christian friends who can't believe you walked away from your marriage. Yes! There is a

terrible emptiness that creates a hollow loss inside yourself.  
Unless its experienced it can't be understood.

You are mourning, and that is an act of deep sorrow. It is not always voluntary. It can be an involuntary response that is uncontrollable. It is a healthy way for your body to come to terms with what has happened.

How?

1. Talking about it.
2. Honestly expressing your feelings of sadness.
3. Attend a group with people in similar circumstances to yourself.
4. Hearing others share their experiences. It helps in knowing you are not alone.
5. Understanding it takes time to heal

Bible verses that help: JESUS SAID, “Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.” Matthew 5:4 (Reading God's word, the bible and thinking carefully about what is read, is a soothing balm to the mind.)

King David wrote, “Thou (God) hast turned for me my **mourning into dancing**: thou hast put off my sackcloth and **girded me with gladness.**”

When we hurt in a fashion such as this, we never feel it will end or get better. Yes, one can laugh and joke and seem happy. On the outside people see you in command and confident. On the inside only you know how you feel.

It took Cara ten years to recover. She looks back in reflection now and thanks God for every moment of that time. Without it, she would not have compassion to reach out and help others.

Back to Cara's story.

Her final rotation at the hospital that year was in the mental health unit. She had no desire to go to a place like that; just the thought made her feel horrified. She was told to dress in civvies rather than uniform since it was better for assimilating with the patients. From the first day, it was nothing like she expected. Here she learned that mental health associated with a place to get well from mental and psychological sickness.

It was not full of crazy freaks, but a location where ill people healed and were hopefully sent home well again, just like any other part of the hospital.

On her first day, she commenced on the afternoon shift. The handover that day was in the boardroom, a place with a long

table and many chairs, that medical and legal staff convened to discuss patient care.

Seated at the board table that day Cara was aware she looked good. With her haircut in a wavy 1920's Bob. She had taken to wearing a little make-up with dark blue eye-liner, it wasn't overdone, and suited her. As the morning staff entered to give hand-over regarding the day's events, Cara was introduced.

One of the men present was tall dark and handsome. Cara took him for a security guard as he was tall and powerful looking. She realized her mistake when introduces to discover he was a male nurse.

He kept staring at her and acting uneasy, and she couldn't perceive why? Cara found it tough to interact with men after her difficult marriage and the rape. Plus she had no desire to be associated with one so she ignored him.

Ric's patients liked him a lot; he was outstanding and understanding in his work.

But there was a problem—, he was a married man wanting a woman.

He told her his marriage was over, but he still living in the same house as his wife. This was because of two teenage sons. He told Cara he wanted to see them through University before moving away. He seemed a genuine person, and she believed him.

He ran after her, but she didn't entirely trust him, so wasn't always available. He would phone her at home after finding her phone number in the staff information on the unit. Occasionally she didn't answer the phone knowing it was him, but gradually by doing nice things for her, he gained her trust.

Was he honest? Only half! They say men fall in love and out again quickly, while women take longer to love and remain loyal. Unfortunately, it proved to be true for her and this man. Ric chased until he got her and then soon began to lose interest. Yes, he came to see her occasionally when it suited him, it all revolved around him.

Cara felt close to him but couldn't handle more than that as she was still frozen. Unfortunately, in time she became co-dependent on him; he was a crutch for her to lean on and she thought that she was the same for him.

Many years later looking back in retrospection, and after her extensive education, she was able to consider human nature and the reason for different behaviors.

She had gained the wisdom to understand she didn't mean as much to this man as he led her to believe. Cara felt angry. She had let her guard down again and received the harsh awareness that once more she meant nothing.

She was becoming hard and heartless with no real feelings; it was a cruel world, and now she was prepared. The next time someone tried to trick and wounded her she'd be ready.

What was happening to her she wondered? All of her life she'd been this passive person giving in to everyone else.

Now she had swung to the other extreme ready to pounce on everyone.

Her emotions were especially hard to control when near men.

She experienced a violent antagonism; it boiled inside her to the point of her wanting to hurt them physically.

Next, she began to act blasé` like a teenager. Here she was in her late forties, and she couldn't seem to control her mindlessness in front of others. She knew this was unprofessional at work, and she was disciplined a few times, to which she just laughed. Was she going crazy?

Cara hated herself and disliked her attitude but was unsure how to deal with things! She found a free-of-charge counselor, one belonging to a religious organization that didn't charge a fee for services. Cara couldn't afford to pay for professional services as she was barely making ends meet.

She saw this counselor weekly, and he explained where she had come from in life and why some of her choices and actions were bizarre. He used a blackboard and drawings to teach and help her understand herself. Much of this was a cultural mix-up in her mind he informed her. Cara couldn't work out the right from the wrong because of being under control for so long.

Gradually as she took everything slower like thinking before speaking and waiting before acting, she was able to cope. But the people who came from natural backgrounds and had seen some of her irrational behaviors kept their distance. She was

strange in their estimate, and they wanted nothing to do with her.

Cara could see that she needed to get away to a different location. One where she wasn't known, and she also needed to remove herself from Paul's stalking.

Yes, he was still after her, and she didn't know where he would suddenly appear. Cara took a Domestic Violence Order out against him, yet she'd walk into the hospital elevator one day, and he'd be there. Or walking down the street from her work to her apartment, and he'd be sitting in the car watching. It was constant and to the point where she got the hospital security to drive her the short distance home and watch her entering her secure building.

One afternoon she arrived home from work after an early morning shift. The lady in another apartment informed her detectives had requested to look through her bathroom window to Cara's apartment balcony. She said she heard them telling each other Cara's sliding door looked locked. Understanding they meant to enter her home, Cara was terrified!

She called her local Police Station and asked them who these detectives were and why they came checking out where she lived? She learned these men were nothing to do with the police as they didn't operate in that way!

Who were they? She never discovered, and it remained a mystery.

The winters were freezing in New South Wales! Her last winter living there was exceptionally so, with recurrent bouts of coughs and colds. Cara decided to move far away.

Knowing the state of Queensland experienced warmer weather; it was her next choice. She had forever dreamt of living in the sub-tropics and unless she did it now, she probably never would. Her children were the ones she didn't want to leave. Cara didn't get to see her youngest son that often as money was a predicament. She liked to take him out to eat when she saw him yet even to a cheap eating place still cost more than she could afford.

Before she left Sydney, her eldest son phoned her one evening, saying that her youngest son was ill. His father had gone out and left him alone. Cara was off duty so rushed back to the family home. Her young son was delirious with a high

temperature and experiencing heart pains. She got him into her car and rushed him back to the hospital where she worked, her elder son following behind in his car. Taken into an Emergency cubicle her son by now was having rigors. His temperature rocketed sky-high, although his teeth chattered as if feeling cold. He was extremely ill. Cara kept taking the blankets off him, and he kept pulling them back on. When the doctor saw him, he applied a cannula and withdrew blood for testing. An intravenous infusion of antibiotics commenced followed by paracetamol to reduce the fever.

Her son was admitted to one of Cara's previous working wards, remaining there on observation and supervision. Cara visited him some mornings after working night duty, to help with making his bed and getting him into the shower. He recovered and returned home a week later.

Regrettably due to his delirium at the height of his trauma he didn't identify it was his mother who ran to his rescue and got him his urgent care. He thought it was his brother.

His father, on the other hand, was off seeking his pleasure past-times.

Cara moved to live closer to her eldest daughter and was able to keep having a close relationship with her. She was a special girl with a gentle, loving spirit.

Moving to another state and saying goodbye to her and her children, was difficult. Her granddaughter cried so much at her going it was distressing to leave. Sentiment could not be allowed to control Cara had to get away and secure a decent life and now was the time. This same granddaughter, the eldest one, was quick to write Cara a letter and tell her how much she missed -, Nana's smile. Cara kept that letter.

## CHAPTER 9

### Life improves, and a new man enters

“We *are* the clay, and You our potter;  
And we *are* the work of Your hand.”

-Isaiah 64:8

Cara’s youngest daughter, now married to a man like her father, resided in Queensland. She wasn’t living far from where Cara established herself in a rented granny flat south of Brisbane. Not long after Cara arrived that her daughter and family moved back to New South Wales and Cara was on her own.

She was depressed and decided to take life easy for a while until she got her bearings in the new surroundings. She walked every day and attended Pilates classes three times a week, thus beginning to feel healthier. Work close to her new home was hard to find.

She eventually got work in a private hospital in Brisbane, yet something felt missing. Deciding this was the time to perhaps pursue another dream Cara looked into what it took to register for university. Maybe she could study and attain a Bachelor of Nursing degree?

Anything was possible if you believed and although Cara didn't have a lot of confidence in herself, she did in her God. If this were to be her vocation, then he would open the door.

Deciding there was nothing to lose she filled out all of the necessary forms. Not able to nominate which university she wished to attend she named the three closest to her new home.

She prayed for the selection to the Australian Catholic University. This university had the name for graduating nurses who gave the best care.

The lecturers were known for having personal contact with their students, and this was what Cara wanted. She prayed with her sister to be chosen by this university for her course. With her prayer answered she entered to study as one of the oldest students in her year.

Note: Never say can't, instead say I can, and I will because nothing is impossible if you put your mind and heart into it.

She loved to learn and, in the beginning, attended six weeks of computer programing.

It was a long drive there and back four days a week, through heavy traffic conditions.

As soon as Cara's divorce settlement came through, she had enough money to buy a reasonably priced house. Instantly this being done carefully and with much research. It needed to be closer to her place of study, a respectable suburb, and near the ocean.

She couldn't believe it when she finally found the perfect house for her in a quiet cul-de-sac. The house was a large Queenslander which meant it was timber and built up on piers, keeping it fresh with plenty of air circulating.

South-east Queensland is subtropical and sweltering in the summer months. Cara enjoyed relaxing and swimming in the backyard every spare moment. She also enjoyed walking and did so daily.

Hippy clothes became her fashion which was something she could never have worn in that marriage. Gaining part-time employment at the nearby government hospital, she worked three shifts a fortnight in different departments. Between her

course, study, and part-time work, life was full. Living in the cul-de-sac where only the residences entered, she felt safe and settled.

Now she returned to Salvation Army uniform becoming a soldier under oath at the closest corps. Her greatest joy was church every Sunday. This church had an impressive brass band and a timbral brigade of women who gladdened the heart of all who heard and watched them. Cara could still remember as a little girl, watching her eldest sister play the timbral and now she wished she'd paid more attention and learned it herself.

Cara also loved to study, and she thrived with the many subjects attached to her course. Credits received for her prior experience helped cut back her workload. With the government subsidy for tertiary studies and with working shifts, Cara coped for money and managed. Her favorite minor subject was psychology in which she excelled. Sociology and the education of different cultures opened her eyes of understanding.

And Paul? She heard via the grapevine he had picked fights with various family members blaming them for her leaving.

In the beginning, he admitted he did wrong, then in time, he changed this to say Cara was going through menopause and a little crazy. Cara didn't care and just thanked God she was out!

By now she knew abusers like him always blamed someone else never taking responsibility for their selfish actions. Her elder son said Paul cried often, and this son knew she was the cause. If Paul hadn't learned after thirty-five years of knowing her, how to treat a woman decently, then he would never learn. Gradually her children began to move from New South Wales to live in close proximity to her. So she slowly got her children and grandchildren back. Cara was aware, it all came in God's timing, and she praised him for his goodness.

Graduating from University, she began working full time at the Royal Brisbane Hospital. Here she completed a postgraduate degree in mental health in conjunction with the Queensland University of Technology. This course was a once only, free government incentive for nurses; being too good to pass up.

After working at The Royal for a couple of years, she decided left and returned to work at a hospital closer to home.

Being placed in the Emergency Department, Cara completed a few minor courses relevant to emergency medicine. Working full time proved fast, challenging and adrenalin pushing. Proudly she never made a patient mistake. Whenever she had a spare moment, Cara gave comfort to patients, with her being acutely aware of the hurting and those who suffered mentally.

Abused children quickly got referred to a social worker; with their carer reported to child welfare. She no longer stood for narcissistic people.

One of the doctors in Emergency spoke to her one day about getting a personal life of her own. He said she was too young (fifty-eight by now) to be alone. Cara didn't take much notice of him until a few days later when he spoke to her about it again. This time, she went and informed the triage secretary what he said - the Secretary confirmed she should. Cara considered all she was told and decided God wanted her attention.

Accepting an invitation from an American friend to attend a conference in Chicago, Cara met Isaac! He was a gentle Christian man, who hailed from Tennessee. Their natures were

similar and compatible except that Cara laughed a lot more than Isaac did.

Therefore, this was of concern to her until she realized he suffered from depression. Not the general kind but Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, combat related. He was an ex-marine who'd served his country in the Vietnam War. She felt sorry to see his pain because he was a quiet country boy and had never received the appropriate professional care he required or deserved.

The only time she saw him rise to the occasion was when making the mistake of calling him a Yank, this being the Australian nickname for all Americans. However, Isaac soon put her straight on that one. "I ain't no Yankee," he told her emphatically, "I'm a Reb!"

With this statement, Cara understood the North and South were still (peaceably) at war. She assumed that this was somewhat similar to the Queenslander and the New South Welshman, south of the border back home in Australia. Both displayed a slight dislike towards the other.

There was much not gleaned from her Sociology studies, which she often discovered, as an eye-opener, and it instilled an appreciation for the vast differences between people. Everyone was parochial concerning their birth origins, and rightly so.

Praying to God before meeting Isaac, Cara listed ten essential values a man must have, should she decide to remarry. Isaac met nine of these. One of the funny requests was, for him to be five feet ten inches tall. She felt this was the perfect height for her. God had a sense of humor because Isaac was precisely that height. After meeting and liking him so much especially the peace between them, she silently prayed to God inquiring?

Were her feelings correct? She needed a sign. If he called her Sweetheart, she'd know he was right for her. Cara picked that endearing term because it was not as familiar as many others.

Much to her shock, and surprise, when the word came out of his mouth, she went weak at the knees, and happiness overflowed.

They were married in the Great Smoky Mountains of East Tennessee in 2004, ten years after she walked away from Paul.

Cara couldn't believe how beautiful the people were who lived in Isaacs's community. Was she in heaven? She almost imagined so.

Learning to drive on the opposite side of the road was difficult, but her new husband was a patient tutor. In fact, he had been a college teacher, and Cara knew his students must have loved him.

During the times she drove alone and (occasionally) on the wrong side of the road, no-one ever sounded a horn or yell abuse. They would pull over to the side, allowing her right of way with a smile and a wave.

Employed by a Home Health organization, in that lovely country town, Cara found contentment and friendly workmates. A few hiccups occasionally experienced due to the difference in language pronunciations, and it became entertainment for the other nurses. A good sense of humor all around soon worked out any differences.

As an Australian nursing sister working in the Emergency department back home, Cara experienced more autonomy than she did in the United States.

Occasionally the differences caused her to feel bamboozled! She still sporadically lacked confidence in her abilities, due to those years of trauma. She worked hard not to give in to panic and anxiety. God's love never let her down, as a specific relevant scripture always came to mind when needed, providing peace and calm.

To some, her hesitations may have been interpreted as incompetence. She'd come a long walk in her life journey, and nothing was a deterrent, even the opinions of others. It had taken many years to find her true self, and because of the damage experienced along the way, she held lifelong scars.

After living in the United States for three years and having taken Isaac back to her homeland a few times, he was ready to retire early and settle back there with her. His house sold quickly and packing up what they wanted to take back; they left America in August of 2007.

Cara's could never have imagined during all those years of torment, the incredible adventures in store for her. Yes, life turned out much better than she ever could have dreamed. She was free to follow her God, and her dream - alive, safe and happy.

**Nevertheless, that only happened because she chose to walk away from a nightmare and look for a rainbow.** YES, she was no longer the victim of abuse, now, she experienced the exhilaration - of being a victor.



## Conclusion

Some will wonder why Cara didn't leave Paul before she did. The reason for this is simple. She believed marriage was the only way a man and woman should join as one. So after having joined that way with Paul, she thought, 'until death we do part.'

Next, **she prayed** and believed Paul would change, yet she failed to realize that God gives everyone a free choice. **Paul chose to be the way he was.**

Why did she **forgive him** over and over? Because, she loved him - unconditionally.

Many scriptures talk about divorce and remarriage. God does not wish for anyone to take the marriage vows lightly. And so, it is believed that this is the reason for these verses.

**Is divorce and remarriage an unforgivable sin? What does Jesus say?**

**He said that ALL sin would be forgiven, except - blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, this is NOT overlooked — Mark 3:28-30.**

So, we see divorce/remarriage (adultery) is not an unforgivable sin, but instead it is an undesirable sin. Sin is sin, and no sin is bigger or smaller than another, EXCEPT the Sin against the Holy Spirit, and that is to deny and refuse to believe in His truth and His salvation.

Lastly, none can point the finger and judge another, because - we have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God -  
Romans 3:23

No life is perfect, and within marriage both must work together as a unity with respect and love for each other. Communication is essential as is having similar interests. God's Word tells us to be evenly yoked. 2 Corinthians 6:14

This story is not about pulling down the Greek culture, their faith or way of life. There are many beautiful people of Greek origin.

## **Why People Suffering from Abuse and or Physical Violence, don't Speak Out.**

The reason a victim won't talk out against a perpetrator is for one of the following grounds.

**Shame** yes! For anyone to know the extent of the abuse. They don't want others to see them looking ugly, with a black eye, swollen or cut lips, marks on the throat, a broken nose, lost tooth, and bruises on their body. They don't wish to be questioned or given advice.

**Pride** comes before a fall as the old saying goes, and this is so true when it comes to shielding the extent of partner abuse. It is desired that people on the outside of the home believe the inside life to be perfect. To see it as an ideal family, dressed nicely, and behaving politely. To see the partner as an ideal model, and the children viewed as well-mannered and obedient.

**Retribution from the Abuser** is feared with worse to come should they speak up or leave.

**Don't know where to go** who will want them? Where will they go?

**The under-aged children** may not be treated appropriately if allowed into the abusive partner's company after partner separation.

**Christian Reasons** can and often do, tie a person to a tyrant. This Tormenter, who may also claim to be a Christian, does not adhere to the Covenant of Marriage. Christians believe, UNTIL DEATH US DO PART, and in

so believing, will not leave, but continually pray for a solution. Going to visit a Christian clergy or Christian counselor can/may place pressure on a victim to remain in the marriage. (So saying, this is not always the case).

**Seen to be a Liar** can keep a victim in that impossible relationship - when the partner appears as an Angel to all those outside the family home OR to the children they don't abuse.

**Examples of this** where the abuser is prominent in business gets on well with work colleagues, is active as a church member, abuses only his partner yet encourages his children to run wild, and or never shows his real self to extended family.

**Repercussions on Victims who do walk away.** And this is EXTENDED abuse. Their ABUSIVE partner, who wishes to look like a saint to all and sundry, will contact friends and relatives they have had little contact with in the past. They will then act like the indigent humiliated injured party and belittle the actual victim. This is done to alienate the right wounded, making them the target to be shunned and gossiped about.

Sadly, even those who pertain to be Christian or even Pastors will ignore the victim by believing the lies spread.

**Forgotten are the scriptures that say!, “He who is without sin, cast the first stone,” John 8:7. or “There are six things that the LORD hates, seven that are an abomination to him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises**

wicked plans, feet that make haste to run to evil, a false witness who breathes out lies, and one who sows discord among brothers.” Proverbs 6:16-19.

**Judging and Bullying** is often prolonged to the victim - using social media's such as Facebook by the perpetrator and those siding with them, (their friends and family), who further wish to bring harm to the victim for leaving. These doxies hack into emails, the personal social media pages of the victim causing further havoc and heartache.

<http://www.makeuseof.com/tag/5-life-ruining-ways-can-victimized-online/>

**Children of an Abuser** may grow into adulthood being an abuser themselves. They may, in turn, abuse the same abused parent to feel the power of their abuse. Or, they may become an introvert. **This is a reason for getting them out of that home of bondage at a young age before irreversible damage is done.**

**READ ON**

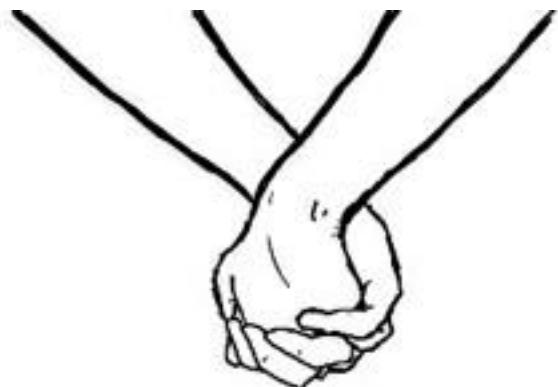
## **There are Four Compatibilities a Couple need for Success in a Marriage.**

- 1.To have the same spiritual beliefs. As for Cara and her second husband, they are happy members of a Bible-believing church that cares for its members and all of the community.
- 2.To have the same sense of humor. It's no good one person thinking something is funny and the partner assuming they are crazy.
- 3.To be on the same intellectual level. So that they converse about similar subjects, without feeling neglected by the other. The schooling level doesn't matter as some people don't get the chance to pursue a higher education.
- 4.To be physically and sexually attracted to each other. The physical act of making love is the joining of two spirits together. For this reason, it should not be taken lightly, and neither should it be used and abuse.

Men and women were designed by God to complement one another. Like an old-fashioned set of scales, they balance. Men are predominantly more logical and women

predominantly more emotional. Not saying a man can't be sensitive or a woman consistent. But God's design is never wrong. He knows man and woman need each other, so it's up to every couple, to work together in harmony.

God's Word says: "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her Ephesians 5:25 (Read all of Ephesians, Chapter 5) The instructions there, if followed - bring happiness.



## Your Thoughts

1. Reading this, how did it make you feel? Get a piece of paper and write down your thoughts. GLAD, SAD, READY, Stronger, Making plans, ??
2. Are you being abused? The first step to understanding this, is to realize it.
3. Who can you confide in that won't tell the abuser or show that they know? Be careful who gets taken into confidence. They may repeat it to the abuser who could cause you harm.
4. Do you have a doctor who you can report physical abuse? Photos and description is needed.  
Future documentation may be of use for evidence. You can also tell about mental abuse. Professionals have a duty of care towards your well-being.
5. Plan to keep any children safe!

Keep children safe from sexual abuse, also talk to them. You may say something like, “keep your underwear on because it covers your private place. No-one is to go near that private place.” A child may then open-up and tell you if someone has! If you ask them the direct question, they may think they can’t tell you. INSTRUCT them, “No one is to say to you, that they can touch you there, and it is to be kept a secret.

You do not keep a secret like that; because what they are saying is wrong.”

6. Do you ever feel like you’re not good enough? God loves you, so that means you are exclusive.

7. Does your spouse call you names? Your Christian name is unique and should be used with respect. Any other name that is not nice is wrong.

8. Are you afraid your spouse will leave you? If they do, then they are not worth you stressing over them -, let them go.

9. Do you feel like you are losing your mind? Read 2 Timothy 1:7

This verse tells you that God does NOT give you a SPIRIT of fear

The Spirits He does provide you with are: **Power, Love and a Sound Mind.**

## **Many thanks to:**

My daughter's for giving me the courage to write my story. It has been difficult yet to do so may awaken an understanding of what and how this happens to another innocent life.

### **From the author**

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## **Crystal Mary Lindsey:**

