

## Assignment 7-1

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I live in the United States and grew up in a suburban neighborhood until the age of 11 when my parents moved out into a rural area on the Chesapeake Bay in Maryland. My father worked for an electrical power company as an electrical engineer but usually worked a second job stripping cars for an auto body shop. My mother was a stay-at-home mom. I had 2 older brothers but one died of cancer when he was 6 years old and I was 5. My mother had another son when I was 7. We were a middle-class family but rarely did things together as a family.

My father had a brother a year younger and a sister 18 years younger. His father passed away when he was 18 years old. He was not close to his brother, and I rarely saw him or his sons and when they moved to another state, I never saw them again. My father was closer to his sister and mother. My grandmother was aloof to my brothers and myself, and my aunt did not have much interest in us at that time. They had never talked about God or attended a church. When I brought up the subject with my father, he would avoid the subject. They were from German descent, but I do not know much more than that. My father had dropped out of high school and enlisted in the Air Force a couple of years later where he obtained his GED which is equivalent to a high school diploma. He grew up in Washington, DC which in his era had a lot of racial upheaval and segregation was still intact. From the little information my father gave, I knew he had his first job at the age of 13 working in a gas station and as a family they struggled to make ends meet. My father and his family did not display acts of love such as hugging even during social events. My father was a functioning alcoholic most of his adult life.

My mother was Catholic and raised my brothers and I in the Catholic religion. Her mother was Catholic as well. My grandmother divorced her husband when my mother was young. He was abusive to his wife and children and had previously been married and had other children and I am not sure what happened to his first wife. My mother grew up in Washington, DC as well and was poor since they relied solely on my grandmother's income working as a secretary at an insurance company. My mother contracted Polio as a child and had atrophy and stunted growth in one leg which also added to the financial burden. My mother had 2 brothers and some half brothers and sisters. My grandmother was warm and welcoming. She was my mentor because she was always loving and kind. She was always hugging and showing us affection. My aunts and a few of my uncles were the same.

As I mentioned previously, my mother was Catholic and we attended church weekly, but my father never attended except during "Christmas" occasionally. My mother never showed affection but would play board games or take us to the movies at times. My mother loved Christmas and Easter and those were the times when we had the most joy during the

celebrations. I felt my parents' relationship was strained and they never showed affection for each other. During my teen years, my older brother and I did not get along as well. He was constantly in trouble in school and just dropped out and left home when he was 16 years old. He came back 9 months later, and the situation got worse at home. He stopped attending church when he was 14 years old and stopped believing in God. My younger brother and I continued to go every week with our mother and attended Sunday school. We had friends that attended the Catholic church, but we never really talked about God. Both my brothers became addicted to drugs and the eldest tried to commit suicide by shooting himself about 15 years ago and when he was released from the hospital, I never heard from him again. My younger brother and myself tried to locate him but with no luck. My younger brother is now sober, and we are much closer.

After I graduated from high school, my parents moved back to where we originally grew up. I got married at the age of 21 in the Catholic church. I had known my husband and his mother and sisters since early childhood. She got divorced when my husband was very young and remarried when my husband was a teenager. His stepfather was also Catholic. His family is friendly and warm, and my mother-in-law is one of the sweetest women I know. My husband and I continued to attend Catholic church and brought my daughter and son in that religion. At the church I attended, there was a nun who ran the religious education program, and I would often talk with and started to become more involved in the church, and I started teaching religious education. She was someone I looked up to and was always ready to help me or just talk with me. Unfortunately, she passed away a few years later and I felt that no one could replace her.

My husband and I struggled for a few years financially and I worked long hours, and every Saturday and he would usually do the same, but we always had what we needed, and I was always grateful that God took care of us. We became financially stable after a few years. We did a lot of things as a family such as going to dinner and watching movies. My sister-in-law would plan vacation cruises every 3 or 4 years in which many family members and friends would go, and our children loved it. We would go to the amusement parks, the ocean, and even travelled to Disney World. We wanted to give our children the experiences we never had.

At the age of 14, my son started to resist going to church and Bible study. Then his grades started to drop at school, so we took him to counseling where they diagnosed him with bipolar disorder. We were then sent to a psychiatrist who put him on all different medications. At this time, I was helping take care of my father who was dying of cancer and my mother who had a stroke and became paralyzed on side. My father starting to be more open about God and watching sermons on the television and I would often just sit with him, but I never quite knew what he was thinking. After a few months he passed away and at the time I still believed that one went to heaven and hell and would pray that he made it to

heaven. My son during this time seemed to still struggle to focus and but said he was better with the medicines.

After about a year on the medication, he started to take more than prescribed and his doctor kept giving him stronger doses. He started getting into trouble in school and started using other drugs which landed him in trouble with the law. He was forced to go to rehabilitation and things got worse over time and was put in a long-term rehabilitation and dropped out of school. When he was 18 years old, he signed himself out since he was of legal age and came home. He finished high school and got a job but then things got worse and he started using harder drugs. Several rehabilitations later my husband and I decided to put him in a rescue mission. We received a call from the pastor there stating he had met a girl and had left the program. We received a call from my son asking to come home and when we picked him up his girlfriend was there and stated she was pregnant. We brought them home and with stipulations but after the girl gave birth they were both back doing drugs. They were given the opportunity to get sober, or they would have to leave (I know that the mother was using drugs while she was pregnant because my granddaughter was diagnosed with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome). I got legal custody of my granddaughter and eventually we adopted her. They ended up having two more children, one was adopted by my daughter and her husband and the last was adopted by the foster care parents.

During the Covid shutdown, my son was hit by a car walking down the road and was sent to shock trauma and was in a coma for 3 days. He sustained a traumatic brain injury and after a month was sent home for us to take care of him. He eventually recovered somewhat but after about 6 months was back on the drugs. During this time, I was looking for answers and was not happy with the Catholic church and I watched a 4-part series called "The Days of Noah" that changed everything I believed. Since I had worked on Saturdays, I began looking for another job where I would have Saturdays off. I started really reading the Bible and started seeing things differently. I changed the shows I watched, what I read, and eventually gave up some of my friends who did not like what I believed. It was hard and my father-in-law still trying to get me to go back to the Catholic church, but I will not. I am happier and more content than I have ever been and I convinced my daughter to keep the Sabbath and read her Bible. There are not many Saturday Sabbath keeping churches near me, so I watch sermons on-line. It is still awkward at "Christmas and Easter" with my in-laws and friends but I do what God and my savior Jesus Christ wants from me.