

The Your Shining Self Podcast Episode 56: A Journey from Darkness To Light With Kathryn May

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Tish: Hey there. I am so excited to have Kathryn May with me today. Welcome Kathryn.

Kathryn: Thanks so much for having me.

Tish: We are going to dive right in. Kathryn, I want to talk about you have recently released your first book called [*Behind Enemy Lies*](#). Jump right in and tell my listener and myself why you wrote that book.

Kathryn: Yeah, absolutely. Yeah. I still, I just released that book in September of this year, 2021 that we're recording this and it has definitely yeah, it was something I didn't want to do. Let me just start there. It was something I didn't want to do only because I. It was difficult. It was probably one of the most difficult things I've ever done.

And I'm not really somebody who I consider, like I don't consider myself a writer, but I was obedient unto the Lord. So he asked me to write this book and I love to write, I just have never thought I was a writer. It took me three years to write the book and it was definitely a labor of love.

But the reason why I say I didn't want to write the book is because it really brought up so much. You know my past and I wrote the book because I wanted to show what God's brought me through and where he's brought me to coming from a life of abuse coming from a life of just believing lies about myself because of the abuse and because of the things that were done to me and all the false labels that were placed on me by the enemy.

And I just believed them as truth. And I really have. This urgency to write it. When I heard the Lord tell me, he just kinda gave me this idea and then it, so many people were confirming it that didn't know what God had said to me already in my quiet time with him about writing the story, because at that time, Six years ago, I had just came out of a very abusive, toxic relationship that I was in for 15 years.

But prior to that 15 year relationship, I grew up being sexually molested. So I was molested by a man that I thought was my dad and I call him the man I called dad. And in the book, that's his name? And. I was molested

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by him from the age of three to the age of 12. And at 12 years old, I was I, my mom, she walked in and finally discovered was happening.

And prior to her discovering it, I was terrified to say anything because of course, he told me all the things, I'll, I'll hurt her and do all that stuff. it was really scary and tough childhood. And I believed a lot of lies about myself, about how I was unworthy of love because this man I thought was my dad only paid attention to me in a negative way and only for his own sake, you know?

And so when my mom discovered that was happening, she kicked him out of the house and then told me, Hey, by the way, he's not your real dad That was no fun, but I do talk a lot about, I talk about all this in the book in a lot more detail, but I just had to hear this.

It was almost like thrown in my lap, literally. Like she threw papers in my lap and said, here's your adoption papers? And I, so of course I'm 12 years old trying to figure out what's wrong with me because now. Why doesn't my real dad want me. So all these things were happening to me that caused me to believe I was completely worthless and had no value whatsoever.

And I battled a lot of suicidal thoughts, even as a child. I battled an eating disorder, sort of, I don't know that it's an eating disorder, but I went to food. To soothe myself emotionally, but I even used food to protect myself. So I ate more than I should, just because I wanted to be what I thought was ugly because I was told, you have to look a certain way or you're ugly.

And, I believed all these things about myself. And then the enemy of my soul of course came in. And used everything that was happening to me to just remind me, or throw up these signs in front of my face, that reminded me that I was unloved or unlovable that I was unworthy of any kind of, true affection.

And, just who I thought I was, that that was my truth. And I equate that to living my life in a proverbial prison camp in my mind. And. It was like, I was born into it. I didn't know any different. And I'm in this prison camp in my mind and I'm locked away in this little dark cell and I don't know anything else, but the, you know, the gray that's outside.

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And then when I'm finally, I, I kind of grow up in this dark cell. And then, as I get older, I kind of ventured out into the yard of the prison camp and, and, uh, I call it, I call it a concentration camp. I know that sounds really crazy, but that's just how it felt looking back and writing about it even.

And, um, I just was stuck in this place and I would wander the yard and I would see the. Dirty ground in the Rocky ground. And I would just look down a lot. I kind of look down all my life, you know, I didn't really pay attention to the beauty around me or, uh, things I kind of was a really depressed little kid, but I hit it really well, especially for the sake of surviving, you know, at school and stuff.

And. I think it wasn't until I became an adult that I finally ventured close enough to the fence, even in the middle of an abusive relationship with this man that, that I was in for 15 years, I started to through the course of those 15 years have started kind of going towards. The, the fence of this camp and noticing there was a gate and that gate, which we thought was locked, I've come to find that the lock is actually like just hanging in there.

It's not even on. And I could just walk right out that fence. If I wanted to the gates, I could open it and walk right out, you know, to the other side. And I didn't for so long because I was afraid of what was on the other side. I was afraid that. If I left the comfort of all I ever knew, which was fear and, you know, sorrow and, and just kind of like, this is all there is.

I just believe that this is all there is. And if I move to the other side, if I leave this place, I don't know how to survive over there because I had learned to function in my dysfunction. So long in my life that I really didn't know how to be free, but I heard this voice whispering to me to come that it's safe.

Come on, you got this. You like come on out. And I eventually, I finally did walk out of the open gate and once I got to the other side, I freaked out and I just, I can't do this. And I turned around, ran back in, you know, and I kind of did that several times where I get brave, I'd leave, uh, you know, the prison camp in my mind to say, I can do this.

I am worthy. I can, you know, Look, and then I would just say, no, I'm not, no, I'm not. You know, because the signs that the enemy would throw back up in my face, fear would slam me in the face and say, Hey,

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keep your head down. You know, stay over there. Be quiet. Get back in your place. You belong here until finally one day, I just think I had.

Enough. And I just ran out of that gate and, and kick through the gate and just slammed it closed and never, you know, went back and grabbed the hand of Jesus and I just kept running. So, you know, I was able to step out of an unhealthy relationship. That's the surface level. That's the physical stuff that happened.

The, the emotional stuff is like the prison camp and learning who I am in Christ learning as a, you know, as a daughter and then learning, you know, who I am in general, like the gifts and talents and abilities that God's placed in me. And what's false and what's real, you know, deciphering the truth from a lie.

So. The title behind enemy lies. So yeah, that's, that's kinda where it, where it come from and why I've written the book. And there's so much, honestly, there's so much, I even, uh, you know, in the book I write about, um, some of that, but I, I really wanted to write about what I went through in a memoir kind of style, but it's, it's more self.

That's the, we've been there through my personal revelations, what I've learned, um, coming kind of through through the years, like I ended up homeless at the age of 17 and just at my lowest point with God saying, like, where are you in and why, why would you leave me like this? You know why you can't be good if you're good, then.

I'm not good. Somebody's wrong here, you know, so it must be me, you know, and, uh, or you hate me. I don't know. So I had this skewed image of God and I really didn't believe that he was who he said he was. So I really couldn't even begin to fathom that I was who he said I was, because I didn't believe that he was.

So if I couldn't trust him, how was I ever going to learn, you know, and walk out of the things that I needed to walk out of and into my true identity and calling in the splice and be brave and bold and stand up in the face of all of this abuse. If I didn't know who I was. And, and that being homeless in that moment.

Led me into that 15 year relationship of, of really it was a terrible, it was absolutely terrible. And I think too personally, I think it was worse than the childhood abuse and that, that was pretty bad too.

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Tish: So, Kathryn, I want to stop you for a second. And first, I just want to say thank you for sharing all that.

But I'd like to backtrack a little bit. So let's go back to here. You are this little girl and you're being abused. Take me and my listener to when you realize what's going on, like, what are you feeling? Are you, cause I know you said it started at three, at three where you. 'cause I'm trying to think back to when I was three and I would know something was wrong, but I'm not sure that I would comprehend that, you know, what was being done to me was not something that shouldn't be done to me.

So, at what age did you realize what was happening was wrong? Well, our digital from the get-go.

Kathryn: I don't think I knew from the get-go no, I don't think that's possible at three, but I say three because I remember, and he could have been going on earlier, but I remember my earliest childhood memory is being a toddler age of three learning to use the potty.

And I was standing up turning around and seeing what I had just done in the potty. My mom had just left me for the day. I remember her leaving to go to the grocery store and then I blinked out everything else. I don't remember anything else. She left me with this man who I thought was right. And then when she came home, she said, let's go potty.

I went potty and I stood up and I turned around and it was just blood and in the little potty, but I thought it was Kool-Aid. So of course I remember that cause I, I remember mama and I, Pete Kool-Aid is what I told her. Yeah. And I didn't realize at the time, and of course not until even I was an adult before I realized, I think I even blocked a lot of that memory out in general, but I remember.

Going okay. I get it now, but I remember her face when she came into the bathroom and she, and she looked and she just kind of like, uh, she was always scooping things away. Like I think she knew for a long time and I've never really talked about this. If she was. My mom passed away a few years ago, and I really didn't feel a release to talk about this stuff because I didn't want to hurt her.

I knew that she was doing the best that she could, even though she didn't make the best decisions all the time. And, um, I really feel like there was. She knew, like, I, I just, she had to have known there was things that

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would happen, you know, that now looking back hindsight. So I think that I finally realized that I knew it was wrong probably at about the age of seven or eight years old.

When I was asking a friend had went to a sleep over and I was kind of asking her, Hey, does your dad ever touch your privates? You know? And she's like, wow. That's weird. And I just instantly sh you know, just guy felt so much shame. And I said, uh, she said, why does yours? I'm like, no, no, no. Because the way she looked at me, the way that she responded, I remember being mortified.

And in that moment, I kind of had an idea prior to that. But in that moment, it solidified that what was happening to me should not, and is not supposed to be going on.

Tish: Wow. Okay. So that's around age seven. So here you are at seven. We're still really young. And you know, we rely on our parents to protect us.

So here, you know, this man that you've known as your dad is doing this to you, and then you have your mom who is. You know, looking back now, you think that she had to have known, so in this moment, when that is solidified, that what's happening is wrong. What. I'm trying to understand, you know, like in your head, what is going on, and I know you mentioned shame.

So aside from that, like, how are you feeling? Like, do you go to your mom and tell her, Hey, I know what's happening to me is not right. This is what's going on. What? Like, what all is going on?

Kathryn: Yeah, no, I definitely wouldn't go to her no way. Um, I wouldn't go to her. I wouldn't go to anyone. I was just threatened way too many times.

Fear really controlled me from a very young age. Um, I was told a lot that if you say anything, I will kill her and you will be taken away. And, you know, just lots of different things that I was told, you know, in, in these times prior to him doing whatever he wanted to do. And I was told that. You know, if I said anything, those things would happen.

So of course I was just quiet and I stayed as close to her as possible. So like, if she went to the shower, I was in the shower with her, um, you

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know, just to talk about the day or, you know, anything like that. And I think, um, one time I remember telling a friend in the third grade, uh, towards the end of that school year, who I thought she had kind of become a really close friend, the same one I was talking about with the sleepover.

And I told her. A little something. I don't remember exactly how I told her, but I said something like, Hey, this is happening to me, but you can't tell anyone like you can't tell anyone. And I think it was her poking at me because of what I asked her. And. Later in the week. I remember vaguely. I just remember these D these details very big, but a teacher, a TA contacted my mother and said that I had said something to a girl at school.

And then my mom, like, I remember her telling me you can't. Say things like that. And I just said, oh, I'm so sorry. Like I never even said, but it's happening. Like this is going on. Cause I, I couldn't, I couldn't even bear the idea that he would hurt her. And so at 12 years old, when. She found out that it was happening.

Like, I knew that she knew because she walked in on, in the middle of it happening. Um, she like shut the door. She just walked in and seen it and then backed right back up and shut the door and then went to, you know, yelling that he ran out of the room and there was yelling and screaming, very dysfunctional family.

Very. And then, um, Uh, the next day after he left that evening. And then the next day she told me after she gave me the adoption papers said, he's not your dad because that evening she didn't even talk to me. I thought, what did, I don't even know? I didn't even know. I was. So confused. And I wrote about that.

I wrote a lot about the emotion. I wrote her a lot about, you know, just that night I cried until I, I couldn't even cry anymore, you know? And, um, just feeling like I did something wrong and it was just because of the way she responded to. And then the next day she said, if you ever have to, um, if, if this ever goes to the police and I ever have to stand up for you in a court of law or in something like that, she said in a courtroom, I think, uh, I will not.

Say that I saw what I saw. So you better not tell anyone because if you tell anyone I'm going to have to tell them that didn't happen and you're going to look like a liar, because if I tell them, if you tell them they're

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going to take you away from me. Well, that's the first time I had ever heard her tell me that.

So I, of course I trusted her up to that point. She, you know, up to that point in my life, she was my best friend. She was like June Cleaver. She and I had seven brothers and sisters growing up. I mean, we had a lot going on in our little home, you know, and I just, that day, everything in my whole life shifted greatly because now the only one that, that I trusted in in my world just said she would not stand up for me.

And so of course, that just solidified the feeling of worthlessness.

Tish: Oh my gosh, that like just breaks my heart. And the reason that I was asking you, the questions that I was asking you, Kathryn, is because I also have went through sexual abuse. And, um, you know, how you mentioned being told that if you told they would, you know, hurt your mom, that's so common.

And one of the things that when I, you know, had started talking and I. Openly talk a lot about this. It's very briefly mentioned in a book that I'm a co-author of, but, um, like people would ask me, why didn't you just tell? Well, because when I finally did tell the one person that I absolutely, you know, trusted that she would be.

Anything that I ever came to her with, I was told that I was lying and that that person would not do that. So it's so common for victims like us to not tell because of things that we are told, if somebody does know what's going on. So that's why I was asking those questions. And so now here we are at this point where your mom walks.

She sees what's going on. She literally turns around, walks out and closes the door. How does that make you feel?

Kathryn: I just remember, I can't tell you that. I remember a feeling. I just, I froze my, my fighter flight reflex as a child was to freeze. So it's fight flight or freeze. And I was a freezer and I froze.

I stayed frozen. My brain would stay frozen, but I remember that. That particular day, because normally he would not have done that in the home. He would either wake me up at four in the morning and go outside to the shed. Or he would take me in the middle afternoon, in a truck, down to a Creek, half a mile from our house.

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It didn't happen at home. And so that day there was something different. It was like he was possessed. It was crazy. And when my mother went to take a shower that day, he said, go clean your room. And I, I kept a clean room because I was a people pleaser and I wanted to be sure that everybody's. There was, there was peace in the home because my mother was physically abused by this man.

So he, he beat her a lot. So he was a scary guy, I mean, in general. So I mean, I believe that he said he would, when he said he was going to kill her, you know, I mean, I believed it because I seen the things that he would do to her in general. And you know, that night I knew when he said go clean your room.

And I'm 12 years old. I knew, I was like, oh no, he's what is he doing? So doing it in the home, in the middle of everyone being up almost like right after dinner time, it was. It was weird, even more so than it's weird to be molested in the first place. Right. But, uh, you know, to, to have it done at that time, for me, it was very scary because I thought, shoot, he's going to come in here.

I was terrified because I thought. Room he's going to kill her. And so I just was panicked and froze. And when she opened the door, I looked at her, I only remember looking at her with the same fear that I already had felt before she opened the door, but it just accentuated because I thought, oh, great.

Like that's it. She's done. She's. And he responded in a way that was completely different than what he said. He would eat his face. Like just, he just looked like, oh no. Oh no. And, uh, I remember him just jumping off of me and trying to pull his pants up as he's running, after her out the door. So he didn't, um, stay where he was, but I was left there alone.

Handle, whatever just happened. Wow. Has the screaming yeah. Ensued outside the door.

Tish: So he leaves all that happened with your mom. She says, you know, if it goes to the police, she won't verify anything. She would make you look like a liar. So now what happens after this he's gone, this happened? Did you just go on day to day?

Like nothing happened. I mean, I know that you don't go on like nothing happens.

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Kathryn: No. Uh, as far as, as talking about that, honestly, He was only gone for about a month or so. And then she let him come back home. And when she let him come back to home, I wrote, I wrote about those two in detail, but when she let him come back home, he, she, you know, she promised he would never, and this and that.

And I'm like, okay, sure. And I was so upset, you know, but between those two months time, I didn't, we didn't talk about it at all. And. She would take the children, my younger siblings over to see him at wherever he was staying. And I would just sit in the car. I would never even get out of the car. And, uh, so it was like, she, I don't even know what she was thinking.

I just remember a little bits and pieces of this and looking back, I'm like what the world, but in the middle of it, I just, I just felt alone. Like I had no choice and this is the way it is. And I. When I, when I came home from school and he, his truck was in the driveway that day that she let him come back home while I was at school, it was horrible, horrible feeling.

Of course I felt betrayed and terrified. And, uh, then he, of course did try to molest me again, like within a couple of weeks of him being home and. This time though, I was able to scream. And, uh, prior to this, I was not able to scream, even if I wanted to, I would practice screaming at night before I went to bed to try and just be sure that I had a working vocal cord because I really was afraid it wouldn't work.

And it never did work because I never could try to scream. But this night I, I told myself I wouldn't even sleep in my bed anymore. I would sleep in the living room, close to the. There room so that if he came out and did try anything, it would be as close as possible to her room. And I would scream and I just knew it.

So I would stay awake so many nights just waiting. And I, you know, I would have the blanket wrapped around me as tight as I could have it. And, and he did though. He finally came to me this one night. And as soon as I felt his body weight, I tried to stay, pretend I was a. And as soon as I felt his body weight on me, I just panicked and I screamed so loud and she came running out of the bedroom pretty quickly.

And he, the, it was, there was craziness everywhere. And then that was the day when he finally was gone and gone for good. And she didn't let him come back this time, you know, next time. So I never seen him again

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after that day. And, um, After that we did not really, no, we didn't talk about it at all, but she, she said she was sorry, that evening she hugged me and uh, said he's gone and gone for good.

And that was the end of it. And then pretty soon after that, it was not even a, you know, half a year or so after that she became a severe alcoholic. And prior to that, she never did. That I was aware of. Uh, she became a big alcoholic and I was left to raise my siblings because she just kind of checked out and we had no way to really support ourselves.

Cause she didn't have a job. So we were very poor and it was just crazy. It was really crazy. So people that know me now, if, when they, after they've even read my book, they're like what the world? I know, I know, believe me. I know God has done a great work in my life because there's no remnant of that in my life.

Now. Thank God even talking about. I can't even believe I lived through that. It's so crazy. So I stayed home and raised my siblings while she drank herself crazy. And we lived off of the government and, you know, commodities and things like that. And I did that until I was 15. And at the age of 15, I left home because she found another guy at a bar somewhere, brought him home and married him while we were at school.

And, um, yeah, he ended up being verbally abusive and very verbally abusive to me. So I, I just said I can't do this anymore. And I left home at 15 and. Getting married so that I could become a man separated, which is a whole long story in and of itself. Gosh, I know, I know. And I did that, but I did it with her permission.

I just said, Hey, you know, I wanna, I'm gonna marry this guy. He's only a year and a half older than me. And, uh, um, I don't know him, but I'm going to marry him so that I can become a man supported, live on my own and finished high school and do life and leave. And I didn't think she'd say yes, because I knew that if she said yes, I wish she was going to be losing her babysitter.

And I didn't think she was willing to do that. And, uh, she did say yes, so surprisingly and I did, uh, marry that man. And I was a boy, I should say. And, uh, we were married and living together for nine months and he started throwing things at me and found out he was doing some pretty hard drugs. So I. It was just like abuse.

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Just kind of followed me around. I just made poor decision after poor decision because I didn't have any self worth or value. I didn't know who I was in Christ at all. And I just kind of let things happen to me. But, um, uh, nine months though, after that, I said, okay, I'm done. I can't do this anymore. And I went through.

I have some things stayed with some people. And I ended up in a dugout when night, cause I couldn't stay there anymore either. So I was sleeping in a dugout and my boss, who I had to call the next day and say, Hey, I can't work for you anymore because I can't get to work. I finished high school. I did all the things on my own and I did that and I had a full-time job and went.

And when I told the manager that I worked for, that I couldn't come to work and why he said, well, I have a room if you want to stay with me. And this is the man. I ended up getting into a relationship with and staying with and having two children with marrying for 15 years, because he was, he was 11 years older than me.

And he was very controlling. And at that time I needed a dad. I thought I did. I mean, I didn't realize that's what I was doing, of course, in the, in the moment, but I just was looking for some way to not be living on the street and. And then I was reminded constantly after, you know, kind of after I got caught in the web, so to speak of this relationship, which it didn't, it didn't ever start out as a relationship.

It was just, I needed a room, but then he started having these expectations that I felt like I had no choice, but to fulfill. And then it'd be. Oh relationship that was still wasn't good at all. And I just kind of stayed in that because as I thought, I didn't have a choice and he reminded me so often of where I came from and how he could just put me right back on the street.

And I'm nothing with him without him. And, you know, I'll go back to living the life that I had, you know, had. Without him. And he just would call me these terrible names that were never true of me and things like that. So I just kind of believed them. And I just stayed for a long time and it wasn't until my mid twenties.

And I started to be introduced to women who started speaking truth and identity. And self-development, I've started taking a lot of leadership, self development classes and reading books and stuff. And I, I realized that I had. Like more potential than I ever imagined. And I started to

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believe those things and then I stopped putting up with so much junk and that caused a lot of problems, even more for me for awhile.

Tish: yeah. So Kathryn. I want to move the conversation now into, so you are, um, you've learned to trust God, you've learned to not believe, you know, the lies that were holding you back. How does that all come about? Because I'm assuming so, correct me if I'm wrong, I'm assuming that you weren't raised in a Christian household or going to church.

Kathryn: Well, that's actually contrary. I did go to church. I went to church occasionally and I met Jesus at the age of 11. And I didn't know him though. It's like having a relationship with him was like knowing Taylor swift, like I know who she is, but if I were to call her and say, Hey girl, you want to go out to coffee?

She'd be like, security. Like, like, I don't know. That's, that's how it was with me and God. And I knew that Jesus. Like I knew the Jesus that died on the cross for my sentence. I knew that Jesus, but I didn't know anything else about Jesus or what he could do still today in my heart and transform my life. I had no clue.

And so I had a friend who, well, I met, I met a lady. She was a complete stranger that we became quick friends. And within a very short amount of time, she just reached out to me and she said, Hey, I want, you know, I want to invite you to. And I was like, okay. Cause I wasn't in church. I thought church would probably be a good idea, but because I was in and out of church a little bit as a kid and I always kind of felt safe there.

Yeah. It was boring growing up in otherwise, you know, I just, it got me out of the house. So whatever got me out of the house I was happy to do. And she invited me to church. And so me and my two little kids at the time, very little kids, we went to church and it was just me and them. Like my husband at the time would not go to church with us.

He just refused. And I started to, you know, just really fall in love with God and. We'll be curious about how he could help me in my life and how he, he really does love me no matter what, and it wasn't him that caused all those things to happen. So I started to learn, and this friend that. Invited me to church.

Uh, she calls me one day in the middle of the afternoon and she says, Hey, I know this is going to sound really weird. And I'm sorry if this is

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awkward and you don't want to do it, just say no, she said, but I really felt like the Lord asked me to call you and see if you want. To be discipled. And I remember thinking like, what is this woman talking about?

Cause I don't know what in the world just talking about. I said, ah, what is discipled mean? And she told me, uh, well, it just means that we'll go through this 12 week course about Jesus and I can just kind of answer any questions you have. And I was like, okay, sure. And that was the best. Yes. I ever made in my life that right there set me on a course for change in my entire life for the rest of my life, to this.

And I'm almost 40 now. And, um, you know, I, I remember taking the time she's, she's somebody that I referred to in my book as a checkpoint person, she was checkpointing person number one. And she took all her time where she put, she put her kids down for a nap. I'd put my kids down for a nap and. We would call each other on the phone.

And I would ask her question after question about the homework that I did for the week, and then all the things I discovered in the Bible and why is this? And how's that, and this doesn't make sense. And she would explain things to me, as long as it took, she didn't care if. I ended up waking up. She'd take care of them in the middle of, and she'd just keep going.

So she really gave of herself in such a beautiful way. And this checkpoint person taught me of Jesus, the son that's, you know, God, the son Jesus, right. Then a few, not even, I might not even a couple, I should say, like a year and a half later, I meet this other woman who was a complete stranger, but God does this amazing thing where he sets up divine appointments with people, just like, you know, I think they're divine appointments and.

This appointment up where my son made a friend at a vacation Bible school that I was attending and serving. And again, I signed, it kind of found myself after a while going to church regularly just to get out of my house because I was in a very volatile environment at home all the time. So I would just live at the church if they had the doors open, I'm like, what can I do to help?

And we would just go there all the time. And, uh, I would never really tell anybody though how it was, what I was dealing with in life. I tried to hold all that in, and I think that that came from. You know, childhood

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having to be quiet about what I was dealing with. I was embarrassed and I was certain that everyone would judge me and nobody would help me anyway.

So I just needed to be quiet and move on with life, the way that it was. And so I just hit all that part of what I was going through and the abuse that I was going through was physical. It was emotional and it was, it was control and it was terrible. But, um, The second woman that God brought into my life.

This checkpoint person taught me of God, this spirit in a way where she invited me to her home and she'd say, Hey, you want to come sit and have coffee with me? Let's get to know each other because our kids became friends at this vacation Bible school. And I said, sure. And so it was very quick. She was, she just had a way of pulling stuff out of me that I was like, why am I telling you this?

So no, and she'd go, okay. Like we need. Do some inner healing. She didn't say those words. I don't remember how she brought it to me. I don't. I think if she would have said we need to do inner healing, it would have freaked me out and I would have ran, but she started working with me to share about the holy spirit, which I had not heard of growing up other than.

We don't talk about, we don't talk about like here, nobody hears from God. And you know, like I believe that talking in tongues was of the devil. So, you know, that's how I grew up. And so she started talking about those things and I'm like, oh no. So she had to like, help me work through discovering the truth of what the word says, because of course I'd never read my Bible.

I just listened to what people said. And she showed me in the word where it was. And. You know, oh, okay. It's solidified. Here it is. And then we started to learn. Who I was, she started to walk me through figuring out my identity and then started walking me through healing in a way that was so beautiful where I had an encounter with Jesus.

And he, he removed the old rags from my body and replaced them with this beautiful garment. Yeah. I wrote exactly what happened in that book, in my book, because it was so significant. And I started to journal. I I've always been a writer like that, where I journaled things to get them out of me, but I remember writing things down like that when they would happen.

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So I was able to go back and, and pull it, but I remembered it because it was so vivid. It was just beautiful. So a lot of healing happened with this woman who would lead me, you know, through. Kind of coming out of this, this garbage pile, like she was just kind of pulling the garbage off me, you know, and leading.

To God, even, even greater. And then a lot of things happen in this next woman that God brings into my life starts teaching me about God, the father and the grace and mercy that he's extended because as someone who's been abused and had been told to keep your mouth shut and to just keep your head down and keep, you know, keep yourself.

The certain way, you just kind of learn to be quiet and, you know, do stuff a certain way and you expect other people to as well, because you have no grace for yourself. So if you have no grace for you, you definitely have a grace for other people. And I was just kind of an angry person all the time. You know all the time, if somebody did something wrong, I was ready to point it out in this second.

And so this, this beautiful check point person, number three, she told me, you know, taught me and showed me, not just told me, but she walked it out and lived it in front of me. She was a spiritual mother. Um, she healed a lot of things that had to do with like my mommy issues as well by being this beautiful mother in my life.

That wasn't perfect. We had to walk through some things as well, but she was amazing. And so she spoke truth and, and showed me what grace looked like when I made mistakes. And when I dropped the ball and you know, when I didn't do the right thing, she didn't like, tear me a new one. Like she was so nice.

And she was like, this is the way the father. CZ you, and this is the way he wants to treat you. And it was just really incredible. And it was a 10 year, um, relationship with this woman that it took a long time. It, none of this happened overnight and I'm being very, very brief, even though it sounds like I'm saying a lot that I'm being so brief.

Cause I was so much happened, you know, and that's why I thought. Book, because it's incredible. When I look back and I see God's hand in all these areas, even in the victim, you know, life that I lived before, I'm no longer a victim now, but coming through all the things he did, like, I, I, I could have taken a left, but I took a right.

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He put, and then he would put a detour sign in front of me and say, okay, here, actually, you're going to step off the cliff. If you keep going this way, honey, I'm putting signups. You have to go this way now, but I didn't realize that's what he was doing. And all this time, I know. Uh, their guy out there in the world.

Who's my actual dad. And, um, you know, trying to learn to trust God, the father, through this checkpoint person, number three, and while I'm in the severely abusive relationship still. And I remember getting to a point where my ex husband turned to me and he said, You're just like a monster now. Like, I can't even know who you are anymore.

And it was because I was no longer allowing him to control me because I was standing in my identity to some degree, at least not, not fully, um, as a daughter where I was like, no, you're not going to talk to me like that. I know you're not going to treat our children that way. And no, you're not going to watch those types of things in this house anymore.

It's not okay. You know, that started happening where I would never have stood up to him about anything. So he's called me a monster and I was like, well, I got. And that's good. I'm changing. So I just learned to trust God and this woman. You know, that that helped me to continue to lead me to the throne of God, to the throne room so that I could just be in his presence.

Cause I really didn't know how to do it by myself. And I really didn't know how to discover my identity on my own. He, God sent me these people because he knew that I wouldn't trust him enough to do it. He sent me people and that sometimes we think God's angry. Because we're angry at him or because we don't trust him, but he's not, he already knows.

And he knows why, and he's not mad at us for it. He's not, he's not far away. He's not waiting on us to get our act together so that we'll come running. Like he's all right. He's right there. He's closer than our breath. So like this whole time, I didn't realize this and my, my real dad's out there in the world.

I'm thinking I need to know who he is. And. It was terrified to try and find him because when my mom gave me the paperwork at 12, she gave me paperwork and one picture of him at, I think he was at 17 years old at the time. And we looked identical. So I knew that if I found him, I would know that it was him because of his face.

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And so I never wanted to find him because I was afraid that if I tried to look for him, I was afraid that if I'd found him. He would reject me also. He wouldn't want to know me and I just couldn't bear the idea of that because the story my mom had given me was one that said it wasn't my fault, but I still believed somehow that it was as a six month old baby that I did something wrong.

And that's just the way we do that. Isn't it. We like, we think everything's our fault. Yes. Yeah, so, oh, sorry, go ahead. No, you go ahead, Kathryn. So I was just going to say, I ended up, um, getting brave enough though and looking him up on Facebook after a long time. And, uh, I looked on Google before I looked on Facebook.

I looked whenever we had my space a long time ago too, and I couldn't find him. And then finally I got brave enough to look again. I found him. Wow. Yeah. I found him. I knew, I knew that it was him. The minute I saw his face, he was much older and gray, but I knew it was him. And I just reached out to him and I said, Hey, here's who I am.

Here's who my mother was. I don't want anything from you. I just wanted to know if you want to know me. I would love to know. That's it. And then, uh, the next day he sent a message back saying, absolutely, please call me here's my number. And so I just started a relationship with my dad and throughout the course of this relationship with him, it was phenomenal, beautiful, and so many amazing things happen more than I can then we have time for right now, but I just spoke when we spoke, he spoke identity into me without realizing it.

So prior to finding my dad for 10 years, Was saying these things about me as I would journal and I'd go, okay. Yeah. It's kind of like a friend that comes up to you and it's like, girl, you look so cute today. And you're like, whatever, then this old thing I'm wearing, you know, you don't take the compliment.

Right. So it's kind of like what God was doing. He was complimenting his daughter. And I was like, yeah. Okay, sure, God, whatever you say, you know? And then my dad got. And start saying the very same things that God was saying about me. And it was like, wait a minute, hold up. I'm pretty sure you said that. God.

And I go back to my journals from, you know, two years ago or whatever, and he showed up I'm like you said that and bent that my dad just said that. So God used my dad to, to just drive the nail into the trust between

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him and I by saying, okay, now I'm going to use this earthly imperfect father to show you.

To tell you what I've been trying to say, and to show you that I am here for you and now will never leave you. And I am your protector and your provider, and you can walk out of this relationship. And that's what I finally did because of all of those things. So. Uh, that was a long answer. There you go.

Tish: And you actually, one of the other questions.

Well, two of the other questions that I had was I wanted to know if you had reached out to your dad. So you answered that. And then the other question I wanted to know was, you know, when you. The relationship. Um, so Katherine, to kind of wrap things up, this has been just phenomenal conversation. And I so appreciate that you have been so open and vulnerable to share everything that you have shared, because I just feel like.

You know, somebody needs to hear this today. And, um, I want to, you know, like to wrap things up, so you've left the abusive relationship. Um, and now bring us kind of like to this moment in your life, what's going on today.

Kathryn: Well, okay. That's a lot though. So I'll try and be very brief. And you're welcome though, about sharing.

And I honestly think that if I had not been healed, I couldn't share any of this. So when I wrote the book, I wrote the book from a place of being healed already, or it would have been very ugly. So I wrote it from already a place of forgiveness and already a place of. Through all of that junk and really doing a lot of inner healing, a lot of self-development and self-evaluation, and it doesn't mean that I don't have to continue it.

There are times I still do most days, actually, I still do. I think it's healthy, but we have to talk about the things like this that are hard because there are women that are in chains and bound to the pain of their past because of. Great to talk about it or it's taboo or nobody wants to hear it and it's not okay.

Like, yeah. So I'm not afraid to talk about it because it doesn't even feel like my life anymore. So it's not like, you know, it brings up all this stuff.

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I've really been healed. There are parts that are hard, of course, but I can do it. And I do it because that's why I wrote the book because if one woman gets her hands on this book and they see, okay, you went through this and God did that for you.

He can do it for me too. And maybe there'll be brave enough to stop the cycle of abuse in their bloodline. And maybe they'll get brave enough to ruin. They have more value and worth than they ever imagined. And maybe they'll step into their identity in Christ in their purpose so that they can make a difference in the world that God's had God has for them in their sphere of influence.

And that's the point. It's not about me. That's why I said, I didn't even want to write it. This is about God and it's about what he can do in your life. And so what happened when I walked out of that relationship? I did. Of course I had walked out of it two or three times and went back. I went, I finally decided enough was enough.

There was some terrible. Things that happened. And I got very sick. Uh, he was unfaithful continuously and all of a sudden I caught something and I was like, well, I haven't been, so I know where that came from. And I went to two different doctors to get it completely like, yes, this is what, you know, yes.

This is what you have. And, uh, I think when, when I brought it to him and I said, here's what I have. And he called me the name. He called me and said, what I, oh, you did this. Or you did that. I'm like, okay, Hey, that's enough now we're done. I can't handle this anymore. So there was a lot I should have been done about, you know, he had hurt me tremendously several times.

Physically and emotionally, but this was it. I think I had just been filled. It was, I was full for a long time. Anyway. I was like, okay, I'm done. I'm fed up. So I ended up, um, just spending some time with God and saying, God, what do you want me to do? How do I do this? And I had gotten to the point where I trusted him.

Now. I knew that I had my dad, you know, bright behind me. And, um, I wasn't going to be left to fend for myself in the ditch and the streets, my kids, and. I found a little apartment and I moved out and I, I just took nothing with me. He took everything, he took it all. He took everything except for the children's, uh, furniture and clothing.

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And I had my clothing and I had a suitcase and an air mattress. That's what I left home with. Wow. Very thankful for all of it. I was so thankful. I was like, you could have it all. I don't want anything from you. I just want freedom. I was really at that point where it didn't matter and. Uh, for the sake of time, I won't go into it, but really in the book I share a lot more details about the goodness of God and the faithfulness of God and the favor in my life, uh, how he set up me acquiring that apartment and then the finances for that, because I worked for a church I've been in ministry for a long time, and I worked for a church going through all of this.

And, uh, I worked at a high level in the church right underneath our senior pastors. I was there. And it was really tough to have to come out into the open and say, Hey, this is what's going on in my life and I need your help. And, uh, it was, it was interesting cause they thought everybody was going to leave me, you know, and say, get out, you hear you're tainted, you know, but that's not what happened at all.

And that lie that kept me isolated and alone. Finally, it was broken off of me when I was able to talk about it and just share with those that, that were in community with me. And that's why it's so important for us to have community with others, especially other women, because we need to be able to link arms and lift each other up.

Instead of constantly trying to step on each other's heads, we need to be reaching down and pulling each other up when we're down and saying like, you got this, you can do this. That's why I'm, I'm now a self-development life coach. And I have a certification in mental health because I think it's so important.

To help other women out of the mud pits that they're in as well from because of the pain of the past. So I'm accredited through the association of Christian counselors and I just, I love it. I think it's so important. But so many times we walk around in our victim mentality in our wounds and wounded people, wound people.

And he healed people, heal people. So if we can get past all that junk and start helping it really, you know, we can see a great difference in this world where it seems so bleak sometimes. And, and really, like, I think Michael Jackson has a song like starts with the man and in the mirror, like it starts with a woman in the mirror.

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Like we have to change ourselves and work on ourselves. So that's what I help other women do now. But, um, But anyway, so, so I just ended up moving out and staying, you know, staying on that time. I went ahead and filed for divorce and got. Kara me. He gave me all the finances I needed, um, at exactly the right time, because working for a church is not lucrative.

I did not make a lot of money and I'm a single mom now. And I'm like, oh, how am I going to do this growing up poor. I didn't want to be poor. So I was very afraid of that, you know? And, uh, but I didn't care at that point anymore. I was like, I really I'm done. And so I lived in this little apartment. So many amazing blessings from the Lord in that time and so much healing.

And it was hard at the same time. It wasn't just like, you know, rainbows and butterflies. It was tough, but I, he, he sent me more people. He sent me these amazing two women that were counselors. One was an abuse advocate and one was just a counselor at my church and unbeknownst to each other. They didn't know each other.

They both were breast cancer, breast cancer survivors. And one was my age who was in chemo. So when I met her, she was. And she's got the beautiful, most beautiful smile and she's like welcoming come on in. Let's talk. And I'm like, wow, I can't complain about anything. This woman's sitting here going through chemotherapy with a six year old at home, a single mom with a six-year-old at home.

I have no room to complain, but God was like starting to break some of that victim mentality off of me in those moments. But I had to be willing to get where I am today. I had to be willing to say, okay, the great physician. Is the only one that can heal me, just like those women with breast cancer, who thank God.

Both of them beat it. Both of them are fine. Both of them are, are thriving, surviving today. But those years ago, they were both in the moments where they didn't know yet. And they had to be willing to go under the, the hand of a skilled surgeon and allow the surgeon to cut what needed to be cut and to get, remove what needed to be removed.

And if they were not willing to get on the operating team. They would not have been and no one's going to force them. And then this it's the same with God. If we will submit and allow him to be the great position to

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operate in the areas where we need to be healed to, to pull the deep roots of pain and lies out of our, the garden of our heart.

It takes a skilled, skilled hand of a surgeon and one that can't be done physically and in an operating room. So I had to allow myself to. Those women dead to get up on the operating table, you know, before the Lord and say, okay, I need you to clean it out. Like clean it out. And of course there was so much, he couldn't do it all at once.

So it took multiple times of coming into the operating room with God and saying, what else? What else? Okay, here we go. Take care of that. And then he didn't just empty me out and leave me empty. He replanted beautiful things. Beautiful new memories. Beautiful. Ideas beautiful. Um, truth about who I was, you know, beautiful relationships with other women and friends.

He just brought all these amazing people into my life. One after another, once I started opening up and allowing people in and, and creating these boundaries that I didn't, I never even knew existed in life and, and learned all of these things, healing began to happen happen rapidly, and it wasn't long after.

I, I went through all lots of healing that I met this beautiful man. And I was in no position in my mind. I thought I'm done with men for the rest of my life. I'm completely content to, um, be a hundred percent on my own. God was my husband and I Zayed talks about God being the husband to the widow. And I, although mine didn't die, it was as though that's what happened.

And. He was so, uh, you know, so unsafe that, you know, in court, he wasn't even allowed to be around the children. It was just crazy, crazy things. And, um, it, and it was hard. It was hard on my kid. So as a mom, I had to walk through helping them, not just walking around a festering wound, because if I was just walking around wounded, who was going to help.

So I had to get healed so that I could heal my child so I could help them so I could lead them to God so I can hold them on the days when it was hard, so I could help them through and, and not, you know, be the mean mom that's bitter and just talks about, about the dad, even though I had every right. I think they did it.

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Be that person, you know, so I just had to, I had to make decisions and I think that just to wrap this up the most important thing and the reason for the book, other than to show and really shine, light on what God can do, if you'll let him, is that we all have these choices that we get to make on a daily basis.

Minute by minute. And our life is shaped by these choices. And if we continue to make the same choices, we've always made, we'll have the same results we've always had. And so until you change and decide, okay, Different in your life, whether that's your, we want to lose weight or you know, uh, have a better relationship with your children or you want to, whatever, forgive somebody, you have to make a choice that's different than the choices you've been making to make a change.

So, I just want to encourage you today. If you're listening to this and you know that you need to make a change in your life in some area, then I would just encourage you to sit before the Lord and ask him what type of changes does that mean? Nobody really likes change, but I'll go ahead and tell y'all right now so that you're not surprised later - the only thing that is constant in this world that never changes is that change will always come. Yes. Yeah, so just don't be afraid of it. Just go with it. Yeah. So that's, that's how I got to where I am today. I think.

Tish: Thank you so much, Kathryn. Am I think that whole, you know, the only thing that is constant is like the change thing.

I think that's like the perfect way to wrap it up. And I just, I so appreciate again, you being here and being willing to be so open and share. You know everything. Um, I like to say that God has turned my masses into messages and that kind of relates to, you know, what you were saying about, um, healing, people heal others.

I didn't jot it down. I don't know, you know, word for word, how you said that because, um, once I have been through my own healing with God and everything, that's when I was able to forgive and then to start sharing my story. Um, and it's through sharing my story that. It is an invitation to those around us.

Just like you sharing your story and doing your counseling and everything. Once we are willing to share that, it's just an invitation for those around us to be like, wow, I'm not alone. And if God can do that for her, he can do it for me too.

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Kathryn: Yes, absolutely.

Tish: All right. Thank you so much,

Kathryn: Thanks for having me on I'm so glad I got to chat with you today.