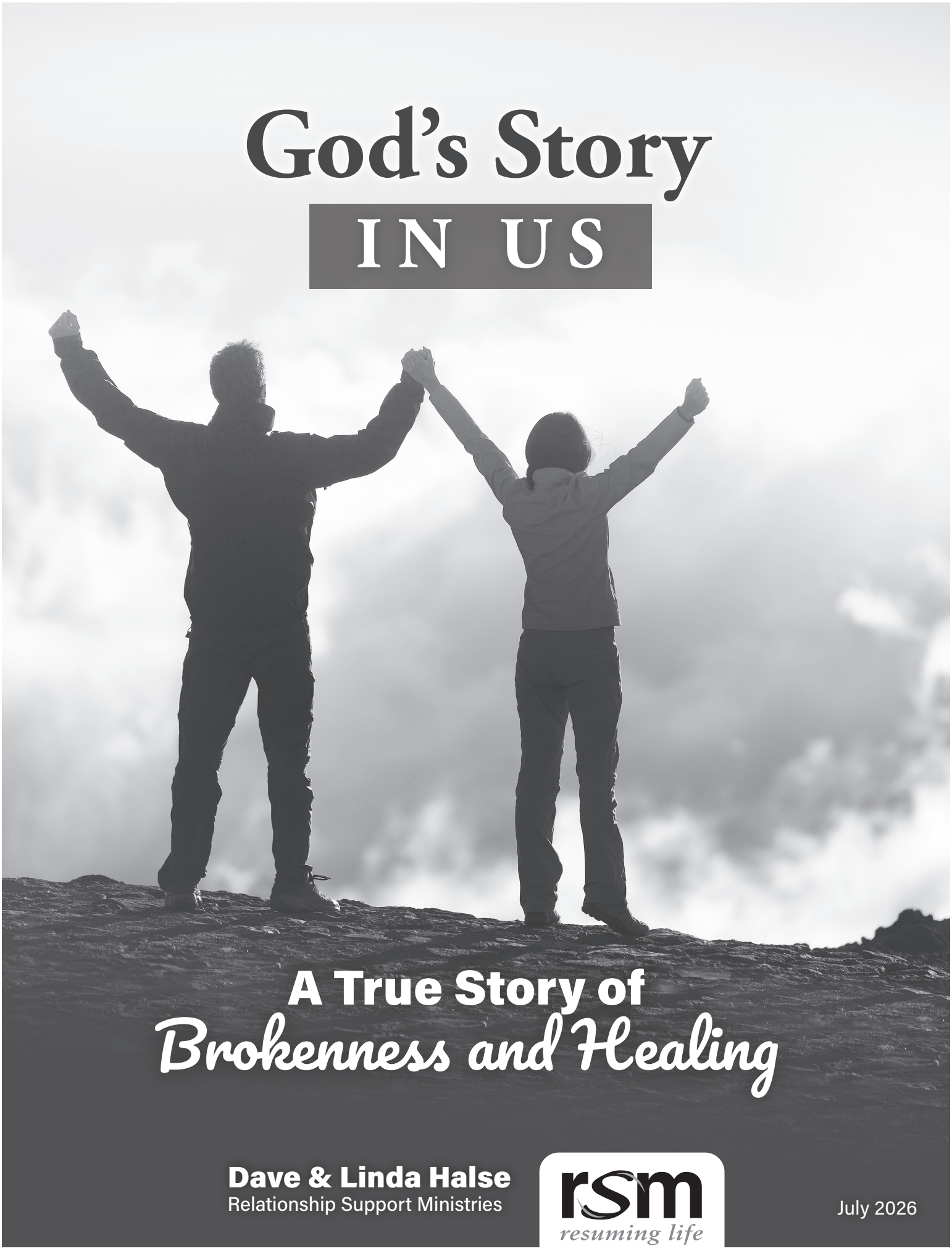
God's Story
IN US



A True Story of
Brokenness and Healing

Dave & Linda Halse
Relationship Support Ministries

rsm
resuming life

July 2026

The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is upon me,
for the LORD has anointed me
to bring good news to the poor.
He has sent me to comfort the broken-hearted
and to proclaim that captives will be released
and prisoners will be freed.
He has sent me to tell those who mourn
that the time of the LORD's favor has come,
and with it, the day of God's anger against their enemies.
To all who mourn in Israel,
he will give a crown of beauty for ashes,
a joyous blessing instead of mourning,
festive praise instead of despair.
In their righteousness, they will be like great oaks
that the LORD has planted for his own glory.
They will rebuild the ancient ruins,
repairing cities destroyed long ago.
They will revive them,
though they have been deserted for many generations.
ISAIAH 61:1-4 NEW LIVING TRANSLATION

This passage from Isaiah 61 is the best way we can identify and communicate the work of the "Spirit of the Sovereign Lord" in our lives and ministry. Our personal story truly is this,

a crown of beauty for ashes,
a joyous blessing instead of mourning,
festive praise instead of despair.

A pastor spelled it out for us. "You need to tell your story. You have a testimony that can help many people." A similar prompting came from the Chairman of our RSM board who urged us to write the story of the ministry God has given us, Relationship Support Ministries (RSM). So now, in August 2026, we share this true story to praise the Lord and to encourage your faith in Him. This is God's story in our personal lives and in RSM, the ministry He has entrusted to us "for his own glory."

There are others over the years who have encouraged us to write this testimony but for years we resisted the idea. Why do we find it difficult to write this story? I (Dave) first tried writing our story of healing in 2013, and then again in 2016. Each time we were stopped. For one thing, it has been drilled into me from childhood that it's wrong to talk about yourself; don't be boastful, don't be conceited, don't be prideful, don't draw attention to yourself, etc.

However, another reason is about maturity. From God's perspective it may be that He knew we needed to be mature spiritually and emotionally to share it humbly and to handle any possible

consequences, whether positive or negative, of sharing it publicly. Now, we are convinced that this testimony is one hundred percent God's story. We know this for sure, deep in our hearts. What Jesus says is true, *"apart from Me you can do nothing."* (John 15:5) This is God's story in us. Not to us, but all praise and glory belong to our Sovereign Lord, and our Abba, Father.

Relationship Support Ministries

If a ministry takes on the personality and character of its founder or leader, RSM is proof of that. This ministry is first from God's heart, then into our hearts, then into others' hearts.

Our testimony of inner healing is the driving force and the roadmap of the RSM story. We refer to it as "our testimony" because although the healing was in Dave's life, we lived it together through years of torment and ultimate victory. We say, "driving force" and "roadmap" because RSM is the everyday ministry expression of God's 'healing of the heart' ministry in us. The depth with which God's Spirit works through us in the lives and marriages of other couples today is a direct result of the depth and breadth of the saving and healing power of God's Spirit in us.

God's Spirit calls ministry into existence in the very place in the soul where the most acute pain and complete healing have resided. We have learned that the deep pain in our soul is what God uses to allow us to feel the pain in the souls of those whom we serve. The deep despair in our own soul is one with the heartbreak in the heart of God for His people. We understand that both pain and healing are core elements of redemption in the beautiful story of God in us.

Even at our ages now, Linda (79) and Dave (80) this ministry is alive in us day by day. RSM is the expression of God's work in our hearts, and it is clearly His call on our lives. Our personal testimony of suffering and healing, which we will share here, is the good seed that continues to produce fruit in this ministry. As God's Spirit leads us each day in ministry, we feel His heart as we come alongside hurting people, marriages, and families. RSM is not a choice for us; it is a calling and anointing of *"the Spirit of the Sovereign LORD"* who empowers each of our days.

Calling

At age 30, I (Dave) over a two-year period and with Linda's blessing, made the decision to leave my teaching career while seeking God's direction for our lives. Was God wanting us to serve Him at home or in missions? In our search, God gave me a vision for serving His people and clear insight into His purpose for our lives. He used these verses to lead me in His calling.

"When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd … These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: "Do not go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans. Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel. As you go, proclaim this message: 'The kingdom of heaven has come near.' Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received; freely give." Matthew 9:36; 10:5-8 NIV

What I received from God was this: My purpose for you is to shepherd, teach and encourage the lost and hurting people in the church. Go to the *"lost sheep of the house of Israel"* … God's people. They are

"like sheep without a shepherd." In line with this vision God gave us the spiritual gift of exhortation (KJV) or encouragement (NIV). See Romans 12:8.

What is the heart of God for His people? We can never fathom the depth and expanse, the detail, every nook and cranny of God's heart of love for us and for our marriages and families. Perhaps that's why there are so many authors and teachers seeking to capture the heart of God for husbands and wives and moms and dads in these difficult days.

The RSM Identity - A Journey of Hope

Relationship Support Ministries is the expression of God's heart. It is a safe place. In our living room people open their hearts to us, receive prayer, teaching, and encouragement, and experience Jesus' healing in their personal, marriage, and family life. James wrote, *"Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective."* James 5:16

Most important is that RSM was born and flourishes today because of the Holy Spirit. It is led by the Spirit. It belongs to the Lord. What it has been, what it is, and what it will be, is entirely of the Spirit of God. RSM is a ministry provided freely to people in personal and relationship need.

The primary focus of this coming alongside ministry is helping marriages in crisis. We also give spiritual direction and encouragement for parents facing a crisis in their family life. We meet with couples and individuals in our living room for coaching sessions that last up to two hours. We listen, pray, and provide solutions from Scripture and from our own 57-year marriage journey. The most challenging part of the coaching process for people in crisis is to trust, to obey, and to apply God's solutions in lives and marriage. The bulk of our time and energy is needed here because human nature fights against submission to the word and the Holy Spirit.

In helping people through the issues of their marriage crisis our goal is to encourage in them a biblical foundation that will support a spirit of growing oneness in the marriage. This may require emotional healing, forgiveness, grace, reconciliation, and commitment to obeying the word and the leading of the Spirit. Couples in crisis cannot work through their emotional barriers to oneness on their own. They need help, teaching, encouraging, and accountability.

Does the truth of the Bible change? No, but the ways in which trouble finds its way into our homes change and people need to know how to apply the truth of God in every life situation.

In his devotional, My Utmost for His Highest, Oswald Chambers writes, *"One of the most difficult questions to answer in Christian work is, "What do you expect to do?" You don't know what you are going to do. The only thing you know is that God knows what He is doing."*

How God Birthed RSM

Launching ourselves into the RSM ministry was not just a whim or an idea we had one day. We didn't look at existing marriage and family type ministries and say to ourselves, "That looks interesting. Let's do what they're doing." Nor did we see the great need and decide to build a ministry solution. We didn't do a business plan or make an inventory of marriage ministries.

The vision and call for helping marriages and families began at a deep place in our hearts as classroom teachers in the early 1970's, but God used an event to kick-start the ministry. We both felt an urge in our hearts to 'step up' when God opened a door in 1999. Durham District Board of Education was hosting a parenting conference, and teachers were invited to apply to present a parenting workshop. God had already given Linda a vision of us working as a couple in retirement in a speaking ministry of some kind.

We applied to present a parenting workshop and our application was accepted. In faith, we simply walked through the open door with a homemade parenting workshop which we called 'Growing Great Kids'. We taught the two-hour workshop to 50 parents, and we knew God was in it. That October morning was the beginning. From that day till now He has led by opening doors for us to walk through. From 1999 on, RSM has grown in our hearts and fills our days with the Spirit's vision to expand the coming alongside ministry to marriages and families in crisis.

Our Healing - A Holy Story

Why do we believe in a Sovereign God who brings into being what might seem impossible? Why do we believe it is purely the power of the Holy Spirit that produces amazing healing in lives and relationships? Why do we trust in an intimate Heavenly Father as the sole source of the love that frees us to love and forgive others who have damaged our wounded hearts? Why do we believe that God's Spirit calls, anoints, and gifts His people to share his love, truth, and grace? Why do we absolutely know that Jesus is our Saviour, Lord, Friend, and Protector who helps us stand against the devil who prowls about like a lion seeking to devour marriages and families? Why do we cling to Scripture and prayer as the weapons strong enough to break strongholds that imprison people in destructive patterns opposed to God's marriage design?

Why are we empowered by God to hold hope for every couple and person He sends our way?

The answers to these questions are the fruit of the healing story of God in our lives. The story of our healing spans a 14-year period, beginning around 1974 and culminating in 1988 when we were in our thirties raising two wonderful children, Christy and Scott. We have kept this powerful story in our hearts till now because it is a holy story. It is God's story, not ours. If God is allowing us the freedom to release the story now our prayer is that anyone who reads it will be strengthened in their faith and in their knowledge that God can do anything He wants. We are completely humbled by what God did in our lives. To us, this story is holy ground, and we ask that it will be holy ground for the reader. God is the focus of the story. We share this now to give praise to God, and to encourage your faith in His love and power.

History

We met in High School in Scarborough, Ontario. We both had chosen teaching as a career. We were married in 1968 and moved to Oshawa, Ontario to live, teach, and raise a family. We joined a large Baptist Church and became Youth Sponsors for about 40 teens for five years. During those years, we came alive spiritually, seeing God work powerfully in the teens' lives.

I (Dave) was ambitious about advancing early in education, so I completed a Masters in Education in

1972, thinking it would lead to becoming a principal one day. However, between ages 28 and 30, I grew restless with teaching and felt a stirring inside to leave teaching and pursue fulltime Christian work as a Youth Pastor. Linda had serious questions about this decision, but she eventually accepted the fact that I was determined to become a pastor. Linda believed that obeying God meant submitting to her husband *"as to the Lord."* Ephesians 5:22.

I resigned from an excellent High School teaching and leadership position, intending to not return to education. Linda supported our family by teaching while I completed three years of studies at Ontario Theological Seminary (now Tyndale Seminary) in Toronto. Linda had God's peace and strength during this three-year period as she served the Lord and our family.

After graduating, equipped now with a B.A., a Masters in Education, and a Masters in Divinity, and our years of experience leading teens, I naively approached the board of our church, asking the men to consider hiring me as Youth Pastor. The answer was an abrupt "No" and I was devastated. In my spiritually immature thinking, I had imagined I would be a perfect fit for pastoring teens. Along with a stern rejection, the board gave no spiritual or emotional support, remarking that as far as they were concerned I should have stayed in teaching.

I had no backup plan. This was going to be a cruel lesson. It reminds me of the book title, A Severe Mercy? Is it possible that what makes perfect sense to us may be the furthest thing from what God has in mind for us? This was a hard lesson, but merciful and necessary.

In shock and disbelief, I questioned why God had led me to give up a promising career in education and spend three years in seminary for nothing. I know why now but not then. The hard truth is that I know now I was not called to be a church pastor. The sacrifice and loss of a career were my own doing and had come out of my own neediness. I now see that I was looking for approval from people important to me. I wanted to make the 'bad' Dave become 'good.' I didn't know my true self yet. Men need an answer to their 'Who am I?' question.

Roots

In the story of every adult, we can trace the patterns of our dysfunction back into childhood. On her own as a child, Linda, by God's sovereign grace, found her faith in Him through a belief that God was her Father. Then, she met Christian friends who introduced her to salvation and knowing God personally by receiving Christ. She has always had a deep, quiet faith that was a great strength in our marriage through the crisis years and in our lives and marriage today.

Dave was a middle child in a Baptist church family in which the commitment was to serve the Lord and the church. His father and mother were all-in for Christ and their church. Referring to the church, dad told us to "Get involved". He was hyper involved while mom ran the family. My brother, John, was 5 years older, and my sister, Sharon, 6 years younger. It was good to have a brother and sister on each side. We grew up with a good support system.

However, in our family it was common knowledge that I was the problem child. Being in trouble and out of step with expected Christian behaviour was normal for me as a boy. What seemed to come naturally was breaking the rules. I knew what was right and wrong, but I had this risk-taking soul that made me want to find out what life offered outside the rules. I'm an "outside the box" type. I need to try

things. Since so many things were don'ts for good Baptists, I was in trouble a lot, so I internalized the message, "I'm bad." I grew up doing what I wanted but this behaviour created an unhealthy stronghold in my Baptist heart. I believed in Jesus, but I was a bad Christian. I was a failure in the God part of my life. I was "bad" and everyone in the family and at church were "good." I shared life with two cruel inner companions, guilt and shame.

As a young boy I remember doing bad things and getting the strap regularly at home. It was black leather and about 20 inches long with several tails that would strike the skin with enough force to really hurt. It didn't change my ways; it just hurt a lot. Apparently, the strap disappeared one day, and I was accused of getting rid of it. I don't remember doing that, but I seem to be the only one accused so maybe I did and I blocked it from my memory.

Our grandmother lived upstairs. She was a dominant force in our family. She was a strong-willed, legalistic Baptist lady with no filter on her words. I knew she cared and loved all of us and I loved her. I loved that she was a hockey fan and came to my games. However, as I grew older, she disapproved of my bad choices. One day she told me I would end up in jail. That had a huge impact on me and even today I can see her and hear her words because I cared about her and I know I was a disappointment to her. I hope she knows I didn't end up in jail.

Some Christians would say her words were a curse on me. Am I living under her curse? I don't know about that. I do know I still carry those cruel words in my heart. I battle with guilt and shame and self-worth issues. This powerful negative stronghold grew in my thinking as I absorbed the layering of guilt and self hatred in my mind. It's easy to feel guilty all the time because there was so much evidence that I was a bad Christian. Of course, I couldn't know that other people had a dark side too because good church people don't share their flaws.

I was a prime candidate for the message of God's abundant mercy and grace. After all, when you think about it, 'good' people don't need God's grace, right? My problem was that I couldn't allow myself to internalize the message of grace. The message I heard was that God's love was only for the 'good' Christians. The message I heard was condemnation. I was bad, and I thought God was against me. No wonder God's love and mercy and grace are so important to me today.

"The Thief Comes ..."

"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full." John 10:10

My deeply rooted but distorted spiritual messages eventually created horrible physical, emotional, and mental manifestations in my life. What surfaced in my early adult life came from an evil spiritual root of shame, blame, guilt, and self-condemnation. The enemy was free to prowl around in my mind, and he tapped into my core infirmities of guilt, shame, and self-doubt. My Christian failings were a bullseye for demonic attack.

The strange attack began early in my classroom teaching. I would be standing in front of a class teaching a lesson. It would just happen. I would become terrifyingly self-conscious that 30 pairs of students' eyes were focusing on me. In my sense of deep insecurity, the attack came at me. The attacker would speak to me. "What are these students thinking of you right now? They're thinking you are a

fraud. They know how bad and weak you are. They know you're a phony, pretending to be a good teacher." I felt in the moment they could see inside me, and they were all thinking how bad I was, how "not good enough" I was. I didn't deserve to be a teacher.

The enemy was coming to steal and kill and destroy. The inner voice was accusing me. "Who do you think you are? You don't deserve to be teaching these students, pretending to be someone you aren't. They see right through you. They know who you really are, you're a joke. You're a nobody." In that moment everything in me would shut down. I froze in terror. Horrible fear and self doubt came over me. I was trapped and exposed for being a shameful fraud.

In awful panic my brain struggled for control. But the voice of condemnation was too powerful. I caved to it. It was reinforcing what I believed about myself. As I stood in front of the students, I could feel myself slipping out of control. I would fall into a trance-like state. This condition is what is called a petit mal seizure. It was a debilitating power that lasted up to minute. During the seizure my brain was fighting desperately to get back control. I was told by people seeing this that I would make strange facial gestures. My breathing would get heavy and rapid. Mercifully, the spell would break, and I would re-gain consciousness. I felt a surge of relief mixed with awful shame and humiliation. Everyone would be staring at me wondering what weird thing was happening. I was helpless, overpowered by a force stronger than me that was using my self-loathing against me. This horrible enemy had me in its grip.

These attacks became more frequent. They came often while teaching a class, but they would happen in other settings as well. Even while talking with one other person I could feel the self-doubt and accusation rising and I would begin losing myself to this little hell on earth. "Who do you think you are? Don't be so sure of yourself. You're a fraud. The person you're talking with knows you're a phony. People see how weak and bad you are." The seizure would suck me in while the person I was talking to would look at me strangely. Shame overwhelmed me again.

Then it began to happen while I was driving. I remember driving in the middle lane of Highway 401 and looking at the tires of an 18-wheeler beside me, just a few feet away. The voice would say, "Look how close those tires are. It wouldn't take much for that truck to swerve over and wipe you out. You should be terrified." I would be gripped in fear. The seizure would hit me. Reflex made me steer straight ahead and take my foot off the gas. Everything seized in me. About 30 seconds later my head would clear. Cars and trucks were streaming past on both sides, honking. I would 'wake up' to the fact that our car had slowed to about 60 km an hour in the middle lane of the expressway. Linda and the kids were often in the car. I felt awful!

A couple of times I blanked out while making a left turn and I would hit the far curb. I would slow down to a stop until the seizure passed. I had to get help!

In Denial

Men need to feel significant. Adult men are supposed to be strong, in charge. Feeling this helpless and exposed is demeaning, humiliating. Our first reaction is denial. Men don't want to admit their problem is bigger than they are. As a young, strong man this enemy entered my world with no explanation. When a man can't control his world and he doesn't understand why, his reaction is unhealthy. It's to deny, shut down, cover up, hope the problem will go away.

It Gets Much Worse

It got worse; it had to. I wasn't there yet. Along with the daytime petit mal seizures came an even more frightening and debilitating enemy. About once a month, during sleep, the big attack came. Grand mal seizures began. These seizures would come in the middle of the night. Violent convulsions and groaning would wake Linda. I would be in a deep sleep during and after the grand mal seizure. In the morning I knew I had suffered a grand mal because I felt so sick and completely exhausted. I had a horrible taste in my mouth from chemicals secreted during the seizure. The convulsions sapped my strength. For most of the day I had no strength to get up.

The grand mal seizures were especially frightening because they came when I was sleeping, helpless. I had no warning, no control, no defence, no escape. I was at the mercy of the attack. It wasn't fair. What did I do to deserve this? It was an invasion, violating my manhood, my dignity, like a thief in the night stealing my self respect and power. It was humiliating.

Along with the physical and emotional impact of the grand mals, something else was more sinister about them. The seizure was a physical malfunction but there was more. The fact that I was powerless to stop the seizures combined with another ominous reality. The trigger for each seizure was a recurring, horrifying nightmare. In each nightmare, I saw myself desperately running from a mob of angry, scary, nonhuman forms dressed in black robes and black hoods over their heads and faces. They were enraged and chasing me.

I must have done something to anger them. For some reason I was the cause of their fury, and they were determined to kill me. These black forms would chase me down a deserted alley. When I came to the end of the alley I turned to face them. They were shooting flaming arrows at me. I was trapped, a human target. Hundreds of arrows were screaming through the air straight at me. It was beyond terrifying. I would call out in terror. As these arrows were just about to hit me the grand mal seizure began. The nightmare ended. In the morning I knew the nightmare had caused the seizure. I think that my only escape from the terror was the seizure.

About four weeks later it would happen again, the same angry black forms chasing me and firing flaming arrows at me. The identical nightmare was returning, always without warning. This was too insane and humiliating to speak about with other people. It was bad enough that Linda had to know about this embarrassing weakness in my manhood. What could anyone do to help anyway? As far as I knew, no one else had this kind of bizarre life. This horror was so unbelievable that I began to suspect the devil had something to do with it. For no apparent reason, I was being targeted and the enemy had me hopelessly trapped. I didn't think about going to the church for help. I couldn't risk being seen as so bad that Satan would be in me. Good Baptists don't experience demons. What could I do?

Help!

I knew I needed help from somewhere. I couldn't live with these uncontrollable seizures. I was lost; I had no idea what was happening to me.

Our doctor referred me to the top neurologist at Toronto General Hospital. I was admitted for a week of tests. I had already had several EEG tests during which they would stick electrodes in your scalp

and ears and use a strobe light to measure brain activity. These tests at the hospital were brutal. They did a different procedure each day. Since this was back in the 70's, the tests were lower tech and primitive. Each test was like torture. At the end of a week after enduring this battery of neurological tests the neurologist concluded there was no physical cause for the seizures. I remember her words. She said they didn't know what was causing the seizures so it would just have to be called "epilepsy." I would need to take medication to control the seizures.

To this day, I can still hear her say the word "epilepsy" and I can hear my silent reply, "No way, it's not epilepsy. It's something else." I remember having a sinking feeling. I couldn't figure it out. There had to be a cause. This can't be random. Everything has a cause, I thought. How can there be no cause? In my world there always had to be a good explanation for everything. This was unacceptable. I couldn't live with this. I refused to accept that I would be controlled by either unexplained seizures or drugs all my life. It made no sense.

I thought I was too strong to be controlled by epilepsy and by medication to block it. I would fight this. I wouldn't let it stop me and I certainly wouldn't be taking drugs all my life for something that had no explanation. In hindsight, I look back and see that from the beginning I had always lived the life I wanted, no controls unless I agreed to them. God was beginning to teach a harsh lesson to a proud, strong, stubborn young man. The lesson: giving up control.

The two medications prescribed were Dilantin and Phenobarbital. I saw these pills as my enemy. They were like a crutch or a mask to cover over a mysterious enemy. I really dislike anything that masks people. Since I didn't know my real problem, why did I need drugs? Taking pills felt like giving in to this intruder. What made it worse was the side effect. The medication made me feel groggy, fuzzy headed, like a zombie. What was worse, the seizures or the pills? I didn't commit to taking the pills regularly. This sort of denial was not making life any easier for Linda. She wanted the seizures to be stopped, pills or no pills, and rightly so.

This is what a man in the prime of life will do, fight or flight. When overpowered by something as ego-bruising as this, I would fight. Men have this crazy, out of control, testosterone-driven pride that makes them think they are indestructible. 'I will beat this,' he vows to himself. A wife can be frustrated with him or agonize over him, but she will never really understand this male ego because she has never experienced the effect of raging testosterone. A man will either cave in or fight till he is overpowered by a force beyond his strength. But I needed to learn that only Jesus can empower a man with the strength and love he needs. The LORD Jesus is almighty! Why is it so hard for men to get that? Why do we fight so hard to do it our way? Only the Sovereign LORD can break a man down enough to become a true servant in God's kingdom.

Brokenness and Hitting Bottom

The first chapter of the book The Calvary Road is titled "Brokenness." The author, Roy Hession, writes that personal revival begins with brokenness at the cross. I agree because I lived it. Where is the bottom? We think we know our breaking point but only God really knows it. There was still more breaking down of my will needed. Battling with unexplained seizures, the question of taking or not taking the pills, and my inner guilt and shame about being helpless, led me into a period of deep depression. I remember sitting in our

family room, staring at the wall for hours, unable to move. I could work when I had to, but the rest of my world was devastating. I cringe thinking about the harm being done to Linda and our two children.

A new, weird enemy snuck into my confused mind. I had always hidden my private inner guilt and self-loathing. I began to be deluded into thinking that the whole world was being told what a bad person I was. Many times, while watching TV or listening to the radio an accusing voice would speak out against me. I was hallucinating, thinking that the person on the TV or radio was broadcasting publicly that I was a bad person. This was delusional, insanity, because for a few moments I thought it was real. A panic came over me. Either alone or with someone in the room I would suffer a petit mal seizure. This moment of insanity would occur and then fade away within a minute or so and my head would clear. I would be relieved and embarrassed, relieved that it wasn't real and embarrassed that I believed the insanity was real.

All through this time Linda was a rock. She stood strong in her belief in God. She knew she had to go to work each day to keep the family going. I didn't know how badly my condition and my stubbornness were undermining our marriage. We were living in a perpetual nightmare. I was completely out of esteem and out of control and stuck in a pity party and hurting Linda. She was amazing; how she could stay with me through all this breakdown is beyond understanding. Her faith in God and her determination to protect our children kept her going while I was a mess. Our church friends and family could see our struggle but kept silent about it. A few ladies apparently told Linda she should separate from me but that is not who she is.

I made attempts at getting professional help. I remember going to two different specialists. One was a psychologist and therapist. I remember being in his office, sitting, listening, paying him, and leaving. I can't remember anything he said. Obviously, he had nothing to offer. He probably told me to keep taking the pills. The second visit was to a Christian psychiatrist in Toronto. This would be my best bet, I thought. Who is more high-powered than a psychiatrist who is also a Christian. I remember going to his office, listening but hearing nothing of value and leaving with no hope. I don't remember anything he said, I don't remember him using any scripture or prayer. I do remember how lost and empty I felt because he was my last resort.

The downward spiral took me into deeper despair. The increasing seizures, depression, and the delusional episodes left me in emotional and mental prison. I was helpless, and no one had an answer. I was wrecking my marriage and betraying my two beautiful children. Christy and Scott were losing their father because I was so disconnected. Linda was carrying the whole load. The thought was beginning to come to me - it would be better for my wife and kids if I was out of the way. Suicide might be the only way out, but was I even man enough to do it? *"What a wretched man I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?"* (Romans 7: 24)

Jesus ...

During this time, I saw myself at the bottom of a deep well and looking up. All I could see was Jesus. A friend from IVCF visited and gave me this verse. It gave me a great promise. *"Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God and in due time he will lift you up."* 1 Peter 5:6. I needed that hope and promise, big time. I needed to *"humble myself."*

Then it came. One weekend we were at the cottage of a Christian couple we knew well. They were

all charged up about having become part of what was called the 'charismatic movement.' What they said was that I needed to have more faith. I should claim God's healing and prove my faith by quitting the medication cold turkey. I was desperate, so I did.

That was a Sunday. I went off the pills and believed that God would reward my faith by taking away the seizures. That Wednesday night, with no medicine in my system, I suffered six grand mal seizures in succession. This had never happened. The first two seizures happened at home. Linda told me I was turning blue and convulsing on the floor so she called for an ambulance. I had four more seizures that night in the hospital. I had not respected the power of these drugs. I read recently that one should never abruptly stop taking phenobarbital. I did. All I remember from that night were two men in blue uniforms dragging me somewhere. I was unconscious.

A day and half later, I woke up in the hospital. When I came to, I felt like I was pasted to the bed, flat on my back. I remember thinking I should be able to move but I had zero strength, not enough to move a muscle. I was half conscious, but I was aware of something happening that seemed very strange, but real. I had the sense that I was being pinned to the bed by a very large Man who was on top me. It was like I was a kid in the playground being pinned by a much bigger person making me say "I give" the way we used to surrender in a wrestling match.

My man strength was gone. I was helpless. The One on top of me looked down at me and said, "I have two questions for you. Do you want to live, or do you want to die? I replied, "I want to live." The second question was, "Are you going to do it your way or My way?" I needed to admit that my way was not working. My answer was, "Your way." Later, I knew that encounter was a visit from God, and it meant my life was going to be very different. By answering, "Your way" everything would shift. This was called brokenness, my time of complete surrender to God.

That hospital episode convinced me I should stop being 'bad' and become a 'good boy.' I decided to submit. For the first time it seemed right for me to really surrender. I would do whatever I was told, even if it meant taking the pills and living with the side effects. God had me. I had no choice but to repent. Since I was hospitalized due to the seizures, my driver's license was suspended for one year. I went from being this self-sufficient, thirty-something, young, macho man to a man not even able to drive. We lived at the end of a court where the neighbours knew each other. It bothered me that our neighbours would see Linda driving with me in the passenger seat. I could only imagine what they were thinking. I couldn't be a poser now. I decided to try humility.

Looking back, I know God was guiding me down into brokenness. If there was ever a strong-willed, ambitious, self-centered Christian young man who needed to be broken, it was me.

It was God's sovereignty that brought this all-in faith message through that couple that weekend. I needed to be broken and fully trust Jesus. When I did that I landed on a hospital bed of submission. In his book, Wild at Heart, John Eldredge writes about brokenness. He says that in his life experience he has made the decision to not trust a man who hasn't been broken. In God's immense mercy and love He was leading me into a very personal and powerful period of brokenness and a new intimate trust connection with our Abba, Father.

This is really the point of this story – true faith, leading down into brokenness and death of the false self, then through healing to resurrection of the life of Jesus in my soul. In John 12, Jesus says, *"The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. The man who loves his life will lose it,*

while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves Me must follow Me, and where I am, my servant will also be. My Father will honor the one who serves Me." John 12: 23-26

The Miracle Hour of Healing

It amazes me that fourteen long years of darkness and despair can be redeemed and transformed in one hour on one day. The healing happened one day in 1988, but I need to set the scene. After graduating from Ontario Theological Seminary with a Masters in Divinity in 1979, my dream of being Youth Pastor at our church was crushed. In place of that God mercifully brought a two-year long ministry to me. I was employed half-time as the Inter School Christian Fellowship Rep serving High Schools in Durham region. The parent organization for ISCF was IVCF, Inter Varsity Christian Fellowship. My new role was to support Christian teachers and students who were running Bible Study clubs in their High Schools. When that position ended, I was employed for two years at John Howard Society in Oshawa, developing and teaching an employment life skills program for people coming out of prison.

As that position ended God brought a two-year pastoral ministry opportunity. In Oshawa, there was a small church called Ritson Road Baptist Church. The church was led by a group of older Ukrainian couples who wanted a young English-speaking pastor who could relate to their young adults. It was a half-time position, so I needed another source of income. In God's sovereign plan, I was asked to join a group of Christian professionals whose dream was to build business centres around the world. My role was to be the counsellor in this Sword Center in Oshawa. How ironic, but how much like God this was - the most dysfunctional person imaginable was given the role of counselling others in crisis. Unbelievable.

Then, God brought a young couple to Oshawa who were both beginning their career in Law. Joanne took a job working in the Sword Center and Bob and Joanne attended the church I was pastoring. Joanne was a new Christian and 'on fire' for God. She had become a Christian in a charismatic setting.

Joanne noticed my petit mal seizures. There were a few occasions when I would be speaking on a Sunday morning, and a seizure would hit me. One afternoon we were talking in my office and Joanne asked me what I thought was causing the seizures. I told her I didn't know but possibly it was God keeping me humble. She replied that she didn't think so and that it had to be something else. She asked if we could pray and ask God for an answer. For a moment, pride rose up in me, and I resisted (silently) because my thinking was, "you shouldn't let a young woman take charge of you like this because you're supposed to be her pastor." Thankfully, God gave me enough grace to swallow my pride, and I reluctantly agreed to pray with her.

It was warm in the office with the early afternoon sun shining in the large window. Joanne began to pray. In the beginning it was clear by her words she didn't know what to say to God about this problem. I just sat across from her listening and thinking this isn't going anywhere.

Then something began to happen. Her words changed from English to another language I didn't understand. I heard her saying strange words but within a few seconds I began to fall asleep. Almost immediately, in my sleep, I could see a picture forming before me the way a dream would appear. The picture was this: I saw a cozy bedroom with a crib and a mother putting her baby to sleep. As I looked at this scene, I heard Joanne pray in English, "Holy infant Jesus."

The picture faded away. As I slept Joanne continued to pray and another picture formed. I was

walking alone in a hot desert area. The sun was scorching, and the heat was unbearable. I could see a hill not far away and on it a large bronze structure. It was in the shape of two large, connected wings standing about twenty feet above the ground and each spreading out for about fifteen feet creating shade on the hot desert sand. I saw myself struggling up the slope because of the intense heat. Reaching the wings, I stood under them and immediately felt the coolness of the shade and their protection from the hot sun. I heard Joanne pray these words, "the sheltering wings of God."

She told me later that she was not seeing these pictures or visions, but I realized later God's Spirit was giving her the words interpreting what I was seeing in my sleep. It was like sitting peacefully in my own private theatre with a screen displaying four different, dream-like scenes or visions. As I write this, 38 years later, I can still picture the scenes.

I continued to sleep, and a third picture formed in my mind's eye. The third picture was like a hospital monitor, with a black background and a lot of horizontal red lines moving across the screen. As I watched the red lines, I heard Joanne, "the blood of Jesus." The red lines and the monitor disappeared.

First, God showed me the holy infant Jesus to tell me I was His beloved child. Then He showed me His sheltering wings to restore and protect my needy body and soul. Then He was cleansing me, making me whole with His blood. Then the fourth and final vision came.

In this last picture I was in a large auditorium with rows of seats arranged from the top row down to the bottom where there was a stage. I saw myself standing in the aisle at the top row. On the stage was a warrior-like figure dressed all in purple. He was big and muscular, much taller than average height. He held a shield and sword and a wore a helmet. On the floor level opposite to and facing the warrior were a lot of angry, faceless forms dressed in black robes and hoods. This angry mob was attacking the warrior, shooting flaming arrows at Him and trying to overpower Him. The warrior stood his ground and used his sword and shield to fight them off. As I watched, I saw that this was a stand-off. The warrior was holding off the black mob, and they could not advance against him.

Then I heard a voice telling me to go down and stand behind the Warrior. I saw myself going down the stairs and standing behind Him. The battle went on but I knew I was safe behind Him.

As I stood behind the Warrior I was being protected. Then I heard Joanne's words, "Mighty Warrior Jesus." I remember the Warrior turning His head, looking behind, and making eye contact with me with just His right eye, then He turned back toward the battle. He saw me.

The visions ended. As I slept a little longer, it was like I was in a place so peaceful, Heaven-like. I'm not saying it was Heaven, but I do remember not wanting to wake up. I wanted to stay there. It was the most warm and beautiful place I have ever been.

But I did wake up. I remember saying something to Joanne like "I think I was just healed." It was too good to be true. For the next two weeks I began thinking it might be true. There were no more seizures. I kept asking God if He had healed me, hoping it was true. A few times the voice of the enemy did return to attack and tempt me back into a seizure. When that voice came, I visualized myself going back behind the Warrior. The voice stopped; the seizure never came.

That was in 1988. Since that day I have not had another seizure. Within a few weeks of the healing, I stopped taking the medication and haven't needed it since. I was completely healed!

Final Word

Linda and I continue to come alongside couples and families in crisis. We encourage the message of heart healing in our living room and church ministry. We have kept our healing story in a private place for 38 years. Prayerfully, we have decided to release it. Our concern has always been that God would get all the praise. This is a holy story. This is one hundred percent God's story. We ask that all glory go to Him only!

We give all the glory to Jesus, the Mighty Warrior. We are intimately and unconditionally loved by our Abba Father. We are led by the Holy Spirit. Faith is our shield; God's word is our sword.

If our testimony can help even one person to put their hope in Jesus, or if it can encourage and strengthen their faith, we are thankful. We also want God's people to know that brokenness is God's way to victory. Let Him bring you to the place of surrender. In His time, He will lift you up!

"The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is upon me,
for the LORD has anointed me
to bring good news to the poor.
He has sent me to comfort the broken-hearted
and to proclaim that captives will be released
and prisoners will be freed."

ISAIAH 61:1

Published August 2026



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RELATIONSHIP SUPPORT MINISTRIES (RSM) is a ministry centered in Durham Region, east of Toronto. Our mission is 'Restoring God-centered unity in marriages and families.' We serve God's people through coming alongside biblical coaching in our living room and teaching God's word in church, seminar, and retreat settings.

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