

Hold On Until Your Change Comes

By Furquan Stafford

Childhood should be the best time of your life, but for me it was a nightmare. My father was a drug addict and died before I was born. After my father died, my mother seemed to attract the wrong kind of men into her life, which made things bad for me.

From a very early age I was beaten, and mistreated by my stepfather. He treated me so badly I felt like I was worthless and I didn't want to live. But there was an innervoice that told me to hold on, everything was going to be all right. There wasn't anybody to reach out to for help, for when you are a child your parents are the people you look to for love, encouragement and protection. I had none of that, and I had nobody to turn to.

When I started school, I knew something was definitely wrong with my family life. I noticed how happy other kids were at school and with their families. They laughed, played, rode bikes – just had fun. I wondered why I couldn't be happy like that? At that time I decided to run away from home and escape the abuse of my stepfather and reach out for help from anyone who would listen. I ran away to a friend's house, but my stepfather found me, and when he got me home I received the worst beating of my life. I felt there was no escape from the horrible life I was forced to live. Why couldn't I just die? Despite all the abuse I suffered at the hands of my step-father, something would not let me die, physically or mentally. I didn't understand it at that time, but there was a calling on my life, and I had to endure all that was happening to me to be able to stand and do God's work later in life.

After many years, the authorities from Child Protective Services finally removed me from my abusive home. I thought everything was finally going to be all right, but that was the beginning of another nightmare. I was shuffled from one abusive foster home to another, sent to institutions and sent to a juvenile detention center. My family failed me, and the "system" failed me – who could I turn to? I felt like I was at the end of my rope but, like an old comforting friend, that innervoice that had spoken to me

so many times before, was there once again to encourage me to hold on and be strong.

I realize that the innervoice that guided me and gave me strength to go on all those years was the voice of God. I accepted Jesus into my life and was saved. I went on to receive my diploma from B.E. Banneker High School, College Park, Georgia. From there I went on to receive my Associate of Science Degree in Pre-Nursing at McCook Community College, McCook, Nebraska. While in college, I received my calling from God to start the first African-American Plasma Center (honoring Dr. Charles R. Drew). Things are still a little rough sometimes, but I know that with God all things are possible.

Sometimes God has to take us through lots of trials and tribulations but through them all, you learn how to trust, lean, and depend on him. I encourage all of you to hold on until your change comes. Hold on through the storms and all the bad times, for the good times always outweigh the bad. Just hold to God's unchanging hand.

Romans 8:31, 35, 37-39

- 31 *What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?*
- 35 *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril or sword?*
- 37 *Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.*
- 38 *For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,*
- 39 *Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*