



# *You Are Not Alone.*

**A PRAYER BOOK FOR VICTIMS  
OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**





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# INTRODUCTION

This little booklet of prayers is the result of countless hours of prayer, soul-searching and processing of difficult and confusing emotions. It was not what I expected, as the author, when I set out to write prayers to help victims process their experiences and the emotions surrounding intimate partner abuse.

The purpose of this project is to help victims and survivors of abuse. Each and every prayer points the reader to Christ and His love for them over, and over and over again. Victims of abuse survive by trying to follow irrational and burdensome laws. We have spent good portions of our lives walking on eggshells, taking care not to do certain things and making sure to do others — all in an unsuccessful attempt to avoid the inevitable explosion of abuse. Our abusers blame us when things go wrong, and we follow suit by blaming ourselves for failing to keep all the rules that are supposed to appease the abuser and keep us safe.

As a result, a victim of abuse needs to hear an inordinate amount of Gospel, especially early in the recovery process. In contrast to our partners' self-justifying excuses, we need to hear that we are not to blame for the abusive actions they perpetrated against us. While we would never claim to be perfect before man or God, the actions of our abusers were not our fault. We need to be told that, no matter what we did or did not do in the relationship, we did not deserve mistreatment by our intimate partners. Instead, we need to be told that we are forgiven — unconditionally and completely. Victims are desperate to hear absolution for the sins we have committed against our partners in thought, word and deed. And we also need absolution for the ones that might not seem like real sins to someone outside the relationship, but were ultimately a failure to serve our partners as well as we could have done, and often resulted in blame and abuse. Pastors, please look for formal and informal opportunities to provide comforting words of absolution and forgiveness.

The emotions expressed in this booklet are often very raw and strong. Many victims do not have the luxury of expressing or even feeling their emotions openly while in an abusive relationship. The only one whose emotions matter is the abuser. One of the early steps of recovery for victims is to allow themselves to feel and express emotions, which have often been repressed for so long that when they release it is an overwhelming flood. Over time, and with good spiritual and psychological counseling, emotions will resolve to a more balanced level.

This little booklet is a beginning, a first step on a long road. It provides written prayers for victims to use in different occasions, when they may not be able to identify what they're feeling or what they need. The prayers are divided into sections, based on a loose progression that starts with the surreal experience of a crisis and the realization that they are currently being abused or have been abused in the past, to acceptance and moving forward through hope in Christ.

Pastors and church workers can also benefit from the insights the prayers provide into the heart and mind of someone who is being or has been abused by an intimate partner. Allow these prayers to start conversations as you provide spiritual counseling, and let the Gospel not only predominate but completely saturate your conversations with victims of abuse.



# STARTING OUT



# I CAN'T PRAY.

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE ✠ SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

Father,

I can't pray.

I just can't.

I try, but I just sit here.

I'm only praying now

because it's already written out for me.

I don't know what to pray.

... don't know what to do.

... don't know what to think.

... don't know where to go.

... don't know who to trust.

... don't know what's real, and what's just a lie I told myself.

I know I *should* pray,

but how?

Father, hear the groanings of my heart;

Give them words to bring before You.

Lord, remember me in Your kingdom,

teach me to pray when I don't know how.

Listen to me as Your dear child and answer me!

You are holy, even Your name,

so make Your name holy in my life, too.

Your kingdom comes even without my prayer,

grant me faith to believe Your promises,

so that Your kingdom may come to me also.

Your will for me is good and gracious;

break and hinder every evil plan against me,

strengthen and keep me in faith —

even when I don't understand what's going on.

Open my eyes to see all the good gifts You provide for me in Christ,

and to receive them with thanksgiving.

I know I deserve nothing but punishment for my sins,

not even for You to hear my prayers,

but I pray that You will forgive me and hear them, for Christ's sake.

Keep me from falling into temptation and despair,

and rescue me from all evil.

You have compelled me to pray,

and You have promised to hear me.

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE ✠ SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

*"Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought,  
but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words" (ROM. 8:26).*

# WALKING ON EGGSHELLS

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE ✠ SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

Father,

I don't understand what's happening,  
what set things off this time.

But I know it's not supposed to be this way.

No one should have to live like this.

I'm scared all the time,

even in my own home...

especially in my own home.

I'm constantly making checklist after checklist,

feeling like a prisoner,

being treated like a child.

Or, worse — like someone who is hated.

I walk on eggshells,

always tense and on guard,

bracing for what might come next.

I know I'm not crazy.

I'm not making it up.

I'm not blowing it out of proportion.

This is real.

I don't know what to do.

I can't just pick up and leave,

that's too dangerous,

too unpredictable.

Lord, You love me.

Protect me from all danger,

deliver me from all manner of evil.

Hear my pleas for great and abundant mercy,

my crying out in secret.

In You, I am safe.

from all things that can harm me.

You are my rock and my fortress,

I trust in You.

Help me find help.

Rescue me!

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE ✠ SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

*"In you, O LORD, do I take refuge; me never be put to shame; in your righteousness deliver me! Incline your ear to me; rescue me speedily! Be a rock of refuge for me, a strong fortress to save me!" (PS. 31:1-2).*

# I'M A VICTIM?

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE ✠ SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

Father,

I've tried so hard,  
gone out of my way,  
done everything I could to make things right.

I know I haven't been perfect.  
could've done better.

I really tried to make this relationship work.  
But nothing I did  
was ever right or good enough.

And everything I said  
always ended up being the wrong thing.

How could this have happened to me?

To ME?

Abuse happens to other people ...  
people I don't know.

You were supposed to protect me!  
How have I ended up as a victim?

Lord, I don't understand.

You are supposed to have only good gifts for me in Christ.  
This sure doesn't look good at all!  
What kind of sick gift is this?

Even so, I know You sent Your Son to die for me,  
to forgive all my sins,  
to conquer sin, death and the devil.

You punished Him for my sin;  
You have no wrath left for me.

You abandoned Him on the Cross;  
and now nothing can separate me from You.

So You must be doing something good,  
even in all this mess.

You *must* be.

You know what's best for me,  
even when I can't see it.

So now I'm clinging for dear life to Your Word,  
Your promises to always be working for my good.

Even now.

Because that's the kind of Father  
You are for me in Christ.

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE ✠ SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

*"Deliver me from my enemies, O my God; protect me from those who rise up against me;  
deliver me from those who work evil, and save me from bloodthirsty men" (PS. 59:1-2).*

# PEOPLE DON'T BELIEVE ME.

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE ✠ SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

Father,

Maybe if I walked around,  
covered in cuts and bruises,  
black eyes, and scrapes ...  
Maybe if they were a fly on the wall  
next to the place where I had been pinned  
just before a fist went through it ...

Maybe if they heard  
what a useless, stupid,  
waste of skin and air I was ...

Maybe if they saw me  
running in terror to the bathroom  
and locking the door, praying it'd hold ...

Maybe then, people would believe me.

But they never witnessed,  
And so they don't believe me.

I'm know I'm supposed to get help,  
but how can I when no one believes what's been happening?

The mess of this relationship isn't my fault!  
I did my best to hold everything together,  
but it was never enough.

Two did not tango —  
One chased, the other fled.

And yet, I'm told to just try harder,  
be more patient ...

That will make everything all better,  
keep me safe the next time.

But You know.  
You were there with me.  
You heard.  
You saw.

You believe me.

Show me mercy, Lord!

Send someone to help me,  
to believe me.

Someone who doesn't question,  
who doesn't blame me,  
who doesn't judge how I have survived,  
who will actually help.

And grant me trust again,  
to be helped.

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE ✠ SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

*“Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbor?” He said, “The one who showed mercy.”  
And Jesus said to him, “You go, and do likewise” (LUKE 10:36-37).*

# BEING SAFE

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE ✠ SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

Father,

I hate living this way.

Scanning every room I enter.

Just in case ...

Where are the exits?

How easy are they to get to?

What furniture can be used as a barrier,

if someone comes at me?

What objects are potential weapons against me?

Who around me can I ask for help?

Who will actually help me?

I don't feel safe.

I can't relax.

Ever.

I lie awake,

worrying,

planning

and in fear.

Give me peace, Lord.

Peace that the world cannot give,

Peace that You speak into existence.

Peace that is only found

in Christ.

Tell me again how sin, death and the devil himself

have been forever defeated on the cross.

No one can truly harm me.

I am Baptized,

I have God as my Father,

Christ as my Savior

and the Holy Spirit as my Advocate.

I am always safe in You,

even when I don't feel it.

For You, alone, O Lord,

make me dwell in safety.

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE ✠ SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

*"In peace I will both lie down and sleep; for you alone, O LORD, make me dwell in safety" (PS. 4:8).*



# THE FIRST TIME

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE ✠ SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

Father,

If I had realized that it was just the first time ...

a phone would be hurled across the room,  
a cruel word would crush my spirit,  
a threat would be issued to keep me in line,  
a bruise would need to be hidden,

Would I have done anything differently?

I hate that I was such a fool,

believing false promises,  
allowing myself to be manipulated,  
letting myself to be hurt.

Sometimes I wish I had paid more attention

that first time it happened;

I should've stood my ground,

and had seen my partner's actions for what they were,  
rather than accept blame for something that wasn't my fault.

I should've recognized it as abuse,

the first time it happened.

Lord, You are my God!

Nothing in my life has escaped Your notice.

Every moment ...

the first time,  
the last time  
and every time in between;

Are all in Your hands.

covered in Christ's holy, precious blood  
and His innocent suffering and death.

You defend me against all danger,

and guard and protect me from all evil.

You rescue me from all sins, from death

and from the power of the devil

Just as Christ is risen from the dead,

lives and reigns to all eternity.

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE ✠ SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

*"But I trust in you, O LORD; I say, You are my God. My times are in your hand; rescue me from the hand of my enemies  
and from my persecutors! Make your face shine on your servant; save me in your steadfast love!" (PS. 31:14-16).*

# WHAT IF I'M WRONG?

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE ✠ SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

Father,

My world has turned upside-down, backwards and inside-out.

I don't know what to think,

I don't know what to do.

I feel paralyzed.

Maybe it's all true —

I really am oversensitive.

Maybe I'm imagining how bad it is.

It's all just in my head.

Maybe I just want the attention

and permission to leave.

I'm certain could've tried harder,

done something to keep us together.

But no one really believes me.

I'm not sure I believe me anymore.

What if I'm wrong?

But ... what if I'm right?

I don't deserve to be treated as less than a person,

a buffer to the big, bad world.

No one does.

I can't make anyone's world perfect.

It can't always be my fault,

my responsibility to change.

Father, You give me all things —

even Your name in Baptism.

I am who I am

because of Your gifts for me.

And just as certain as Your Son, Jesus, has risen from the dead,

You've given me new life in Him.

Father, I'm exhausted and overwhelmed.

Give me time to rest my body and clear my head.

Remind me of who You've made me in Christ,

You marked me as Your own child,

in the waters of my Baptism,

I don't know what everything means right now ...

but I don't have to.

I'm Yours.

And I can rest safely in You.

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE ✠ SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

*"Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls" (MATT. 11:28-29).*



# WHAT IF MY ABUSER IS RIGHT?

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE ✠ SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

Father,

His voice comes to me in the dark,  
relentlessly whispering the familiar accusations,  
replaying moments I'd rather forget.

"You really screwed that up."

"You should've done better."

"Why didn't you ...?"

"If you hadn't ..."

"How could you be so stupid?"

"It's true, you know. It was your fault."

"You brought this on yourself."

What if the Accuser is right?

What if my abuser is right?

I know all too well

I'm far from perfect,  
and I really should've done better.

I've made so many bad decisions.

What if it's really all true?

O Lord, have mercy on me!

Forgive me where I have sinned!

For every untrue accusation,  
forgive me.

For the false ones I've believed,  
have mercy on me.

Please don't let me slip into despair.

Silence the constant attacks against me,  
because You have defeated the Accuser who makes them.

Bring me once more  
to hear Your comforting words of absolution.

Feed me again  
with Your forgiveness in Jesus's Body and Blood,

Wash me clean  
in my Baptism.

Remind me of Your promises to be my Father,  
And tell me who I am in Christ, Your Son.

I am baptized,

I am Yours.

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE ✠ SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

*"And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, 'Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come, for the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God. And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb'" (REV. 12:10-11A).*

# I'M SO ANGRY!

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE ✠ SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

Father,

How dare anyone think it's okay to hurt me!  
Do I just look like an easy target?  
Like I'd just put up with being abused,  
never defending myself?  
And I'd keep it all secret forever?

This wasn't supposed to happen to me.  
This wasn't supposed to be my life.  
But here I am.

And I'm so angry  
at my abuser,  
at You, God,  
and at myself.

How could this have happened?  
How could You have let this happen?

Lord, please don't withhold forgiveness my sins  
as I withhold forgiveness for the one  
who has trespassed against me!

Grant me just a little bit of peace,  
so that I do not sinfully act out on my anger

Forgive my hateful thoughts and deeds,  
and my self-righteous indignation.

Mocked, whipped, pierced,  
Your Son cried out to You,  
as He hung dying on the cross for me,  
demanding to know why You had forsaken Him.

And yet, He entrusted His spirit in Your hands.  
He died to forgive my sins,

And even the sins of the one who hurt me.  
Give me forgiveness for my sins  
and more.

I need Your forgiveness to forgive.  
So I into Your hands I commend myself,  
my body and soul and all things.

Let Your holy Angel be with me,  
that the evil foe may have no power over me.

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE ✠ SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

*"But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed" (Is. 53:5).*

## IT'S NOT TRUE.

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE ✠ SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

Father,

I know I'm not perfect,  
always falling short, and failing;  
doing the things I shouldn't do,  
and not doing the things I should.

I've endured insults and barbs,  
that cut to my inmost being,  
making me tremble in shame.

I can't do anything right,  
nothing is ever good enough.

It can't all be true ...  
but then why does it hurt so much to hear?

You have made me Your child,  
washed me clean  
given me Your own name.

You have made me perfect, spotless,  
holy, sinless —  
not even a wrinkle or blemish to be found.

You couldn't find a flaw if You tried!  
Your Son has covered them all.

He took upon Himself all my sins,  
my flaws and my shortcomings.

And He has given me His righteousness,  
His perfection, His holiness.

Be near me, O God. Help me!

Your sacrifice has saved me,  
Even me.

I know my righteousness is not my own  
but Yours for me.

No matter what anyone may say about me,  
Your Word is true.

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE ✠ SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

*"But I will hope continually and will praise you yet more and more. My mouth will tell of your righteous acts, of your deeds of salvation all the day, for their number is past my knowledge. With the mighty deeds of the Lord GOD I will come; I will remind them of your righteousness, yours alone" (PS. 71:14-16).*

# I DON'T WANT TO LEAVE.

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE ✠ SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

Father,

I have a home here.

I don't belong in a strange place,  
depending on strangers,  
uprooting my kids,  
hiding.

I'm terrified of what will happen.

If I'm not here,  
how will I know what to expect?

How will I sense the impending danger?

What will happen after I'm gone,  
when I'm not there to be the buffer  
when the abuse is no longer kept secret?

I shouldn't have to be the one who leaves.

This is my home,  
my life.

But I don't feel safe here anymore.  
I'm not safe here anymore.

Give me courage, Lord.

You are with me,  
and You will not leave me.

You have provided me with a quiet place,  
where I can live in peace with You.

You have brought people to help,  
to comfort,  
to advise.

Make me strong in You.

Bring me to hear Your Word,  
and be strengthened by Your Son's body and blood.

Sanctify this time apart.

Keep me clinging to Your promises  
of forgiveness  
of reconciliation.

I don't want to leave,  
but it doesn't have to be for forever.

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE ✠ SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

*"Be strong and courageous. Do not fear or be in dread of them, for it is the LORD your God who goes with you.  
He will not leave you or forsake you" (DEUT. 31:6).*

# BEGINNING TO HEAL



# Did I TRY HARD ENOUGH?

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE ✠ SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

Father,

My mind is swimming with regrets.

I know I've sinned,

I've messed up,

I *am* messed up.

There's so much I could've done differently,

so many things I could have said.

and so many others I couldn't.

Did I give up too easily?

Could I have fixed this relationship?

I feel like such a failure.

But there is no trying hard enough,

when the lines keep moving.

As much as I want to,

I can't fix this.

As much as I regret,

I can't change the past.

As much as I don't want to admit defeat,

I can't keep doing this by myself.

I just can't do it at all.

And I shouldn't have to do it out of fear.

Lord, I can resolve to do better, try harder.

But I also know all too well

how weak I am,

how often I fail.

For all those times,

the actions, those words, that haunt me,

I'm so ashamed of my sins.

All I can do is cling to Your mercy and grace for me in Christ.

You give me Your Body and Blood

so that I may know that forgiveness is even for me.

All my failures.

All my shortcomings.

All my sins.

All forgiven.

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE ✠ SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

*"For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (HEB. 4:15-16).*



# STAYING

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE ✠ SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

Father,

I have so many reasons to leave.

That's what everyone says to do.

"If that ever happened to me,

I'd be out of there so fast ..."

It's easy to say what you would do,

when you're not the one

actually doing it,

or living in that decision.

The overwhelming reality paralyzes me.

Leaving isn't as simple,

as just walking out the door.

It's dangerous

and I'm terrified of what might happen next.

Leaving would set in motion

things that I'm not I'm ready for;

Besides, giving up isn't an option.

Right now, at least,

maybe it's better for me to stay.

Lord, make me wise as a serpent!

Point me to Christ,

Who is Your wisdom and power.

Give me the discernment

to set boundaries that protect me.

And grant me the strength to keep them

even in the face of fear.

Protect me from further harm,

and grant me clear judgment

to do what is necessary for safety.

Lord, make me innocent as a dove!

Wash me in the blood of the Lamb,

Who was crucified for my forgiveness.

Give me faithfulness

to trust in Your promises to me,

to trust in my spouse's promises to me.

Quiet my heart and mind

even when they are rushing to sin.

Keep me calm

and give me Your peace.

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE ✠ SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

*"Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves" (MATT. 10:16).*

# LEAVING

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE ✠ SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

Father,

Normally,

when I walk out this door,  
I know that I'll be home again.

But this time ...

I honestly don't know.

It has just become a place,  
a place in which I've lived,  
full of memories;

But not my home.

Home is a place where I am safe,  
a refuge from the world,  
a place to be myself  
and be restored.

I know the safe places here,  
the escape routes,  
and the rooms to avoid.

It's time to find a new place,  
where I can truly be safe.

Lord, You are my refuge and my strength.

You keep me safe.

You have prepared a place just for me  
and You are coming to bring me  
to be with You.

Lord, now let me depart in peace,  
according to Your Word.

Bring me to Your house,  
to hear Your Words for me,  
and receive Your forgiveness  
in Christ's Body and Blood.

Keep my eyes on Your salvation  
which You have prepared for me in Christ.

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE ✠ SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

*"In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also" (JOHN 14:2-3).*



# I'M STILL AFRAID.

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE ✠ SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

Father,

So often You told Your people:

“Fear not.”

But as much as I try, I fear.

I worry.

Sometimes, I even panic.

I have lived in danger and dread for so long,

I don't know anymore what it is

to live another way.

My fear kept me safe,

My fear kept me alive.

I don't like being this way —

Constantly vigilant,

glancing over my shoulder,

surveying my route for safe exits

and friendly faces who might rescue.

As much as I don't want to feel tense and worried

I'm powerless to keep my fears at bay.

I'm still afraid.

Lord, You protect the weak

and save those

who cannot save themselves.

Bring me comfort today.

Speak Your Word even to me

through Your called servant,

whose voice is as true and certain as Your own.

Slow my racing heart.

Calm my tense nerves.

Remind me that, in You,

I am safe.

No one can truly harm me.

You hold me safely in Your hand.

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE ✠ SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

*“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is great-er than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand” (JOHN 10:27-29).*

## *I NEED HELP.*

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE ✠ SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

Father,

Lord, I need You to take care of me.  
My paycheck isn't stretching far enough.  
I don't have enough gas for the week.  
My clothes are worn out.  
And daycare is so expensive!  
I'm so tired and alone, but there's too much to do.  
I hardly have the time or energy  
    To think about all the things that need my attention,  
Much less my own well-being.  
I'm embarrassed that I need to depend so much  
    on other people  
Just to get through each day.  
I wish I was able to take care of my own life.  
Stand on my own two feet.

Father, forgive my selfish pride!  
Give me courage to ask for what I need.  
I know You have sent people to care for me,  
    who are happy to help and provide for me.  
Through them,  
You provide me richly and daily  
    with all that I need to support this body and life,  
    protect me from all danger,  
    and guard me and preserve me from all evil.  
Nourish me with Your Body and Blood,  
    provide me with the forgiveness, life and salvation  
    that I truly need above all things.  
You will not leave me without help.  
Watch over and protect me,  
And help me in my time of need.

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE ✠ SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

*"I lift up my eyes to the hills. From where does my help come?  
My help comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth" (PS. 121:1-2).*

# Is God Angry With Me?

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE ✠ SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

Father,

For better or worse, I promised.  
I swore I'd never give up.  
And now emptiness echoes through those vows.  
I've failed.  
I've sinned.  
I've done things I shouldn't have done  
and haven't done what I should've done.  
I'm disappointed and angry with myself.  
You should be, too.

But You're not.  
You can't be.  
Not anymore.  
Not since Jesus.  
I have been marked with the sign of His cross,  
Wearing it on my forehead and on my heart.  
And just like Him, I am Your beloved child.  
He took on Himself all my sins.  
He took on Himself all my broken promises.  
He took on Himself all my failures.  
He took on Himself all Your anger,  
So that You would have nothing  
but grace and mercy and love for me.

Heavenly Father, send me the Holy Spirit,  
and remind me of my Jesus, whose Words are always sure;  
Whose promises will never break;  
Who rose from the dead  
so that I may *know* His Word is true.  
You can't be angry at me  
because Your Son's blood covers me.  
Remind me that I am baptized,  
that I am Your beloved child.

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE ✠ SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

*"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him" (JOHN 3:16-17).*

# CAN I REALLY DO THIS?

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE ✠ SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

Father,

Lord, save me!

I can't do this.

It feels like everyone is against me,  
and I can't catch a break.

I can barely even catch my breath.

Every day is grueling.

And I'm so worn out.

At every turn, I'm tempted to give up.

Just when I think I've got a handle on my life,  
I'm knocked back to my knees  
by unexpected blows to my spirit.

What's the point of even trying?

It'd be so much easier just to admit defeat,  
and resume the life I knew so well.

Even if it was steeped in abuse.

Lord, have mercy!

Christ, have mercy!

Lord, have mercy ... please!

(Right now would be good.)

I'm about to crumble into a million pieces.

I'm waiting for You to show me mercy.

Tell me again that I am not alone;

That I am Yours,

That You have already saved me.

That You have already rescued me from my sin-bound life  
in the giving of Your Son for me.

I don't need to be strong.

because Christ was already strong for me.

And I have rest in Him.

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE ✠ SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

*"The LORD is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation; this is my God, and I will praise him,  
my father's God, and I will exalt him" (EX. 15:2).*

# PEOPLE DON'T UNDERSTAND.

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE ✠ SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

Father,

I feel so cut off from my life,  
isolated from the world,  
even when I'm surrounded by people who love me.

I know they mean well,  
they care about me,  
I think.

They just don't understand.

They speak in awkward platitudes,  
making vague and empty promises,  
giving me unsolicited and usually unhelpful advice  
and leave me feeling even worse than I did before.

I feel so alone in this.

I know it, and I accept it.

Your Son knows abandonment,  
even by people who loved Him.

Lord, bring people into my life who will just listen,  
who will quietly sit with me;  
who won't be offended by the ugliness I'm struggling against;  
who will comfort me with Your promises in Christ.

Give courage to the kind people who try to understand,  
that they may share in my troubles;  
that I may know I'm not alone.

Help me to love them,  
and be patient with them,  
even now while I'm struggling to get through each hour.

Bring me to Your Church,  
where I will hear Your Word again,  
where I will be fed with Your Body and Blood.

You know.

You understand.

You love me.

With You I am never alone.

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE ✠ SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

*"I can do all things through him who strengthens me. Yet it was kind of you to share my trouble" (PHIL. 4:13-14).*

# WILL MY KIDS HATE ME?

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE ✠ SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

Father,

You are the perfect Father,  
Who only does what is good for His children;  
Who loves us without even a hint of selfishness.  
I'm definitely not the parent my kids deserve,  
uprooting and disrupting their lives.

They don't understand what's happened to their family,  
to their lives,  
to the only world they knew.

I try to maintain some semblance of normalcy,  
but life is anything but normal.

They're torn between the parents they love,  
and they blame me,  
treat me like an enemy.

Their voices, filled with contempt,  
often echo Satan's, the Accuser's,  
recalling all my failures as a parent.

I really have made a mess of everything;  
My life, their lives.

I'm doing the best I can, but it's not enough.  
It will never be enough.

But You are more than enough.

You are my Father,  
their Father.

My baptism into Christ is Your promise to save me.  
Their baptisms are Your promise to save them, too.  
You keep your vows.

You are the Father who never fails,  
Who always loves  
Who spares nothing  
to save us from an eternity of abuse and despair.

Save me.

Hear me.

Give me Your peace.

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE ✠ SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

*"For the son treats the father with contempt, the daughter rises up against her mother, the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; a man's enemies are the men of his own house. But as for me, I will look to the LORD; I will wait for the God of my salvation; my God will hear me" (MICAH 7:6-7).*

## SPEAKING UP.

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE ✠ SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

Father,

I see abuse everywhere now.  
TV shows, movies, books,  
    friends, family, neighbors ...  
I don't want to think  
    about what I've survived,  
    about what others still endure.

It's too soon, too raw,  
    setting loose emotions I can't control  
    and just don't want to feel anymore.  
I'd rather just hide away,  
And quietly heal in private.

O Lord, open my lips,  
    and my mouth will declare Your praise.  
The mercy You have shown me  
    compels me to show mercy to others,  
    telling them how You have set me free in Christ,  
    of the forgiveness and freedom You give to all.  
Give me confidence to direct attention  
    and give voice to those  
    who still suffer in silence  
    under the power and control of an abuser.  
My abuser meant to cause me evil,  
    but You use it for good,  
    to help others,  
    to save lives.

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE ✠ SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

*“Open your mouth for the mute, for the rights of all who are destitute. Open your mouth,  
    judge righteously, defend the rights of the poor and needy” (PROV. 31:8-9).*



# WHAT WILL PEOPLE THINK OF ME?

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE ✠ SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

Father,

You have given the gift of marriage,  
an earthly image of the Church's heavenly relationship  
with Christ.

In my own relationship,  
I have not lived that.

I could have been more faithful.

I should've done better.

And now ... everything's out in the open.

My life, my failures, my secrets,  
all laid out for everyone to pick apart,  
scrutinize.

"Did you hear what was going on with them?"

"I can't believe they were like that."

"I'd never put up with being treated that way."

"It's just a he said/she said situation."

"You never can tell who to really believe."

People even invent sins for me.

Gossiping ...

sharing their accusing concerns  
and watching every move I make.

I see their looks of pity.

Feel their eyes on me,  
and hear the whispers.

But not You.

You see me in Christ.

In Him, I am holy, perfect, sinless.

I certainly haven't lived that way,

But He died to make me so,

and has washed away all my sins in my Baptism.

Help me ignore the worry

of what anyone else thinks of me.

You say I am forgiven, holy and sinless.

And so I am.

You bless me and keep me

You make Your face to smile upon me.

You know me and love me,  
in Christ.

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE ✠ SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

*"For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (GAL 3:27).*



# HAVE I MESSED UP MY LIFE?

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE ✠ SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

Father,

You are God of all creation,  
nothing escapes Your notice.  
Not a single bird falls without Your knowledge.  
You even know how many hairs are on my head.  
You love me in the giving up of Your Son.

Why, then, am I brimming with doubt and fear?  
Everything is at once so familiar  
and yet so strange and different.  
I am strange and different.  
Am I making a mistake?  
Is this really the best decision?  
Have I just completely messed up my life?

Strengthen me in Your Words to bear my crosses,  
faithfully suffering through this sin-filled life,  
always confessing You —  
even through the dark valleys of life.  
Bring me to receive again Your Body and Blood,  
because in Your gifts, I am reminded of Your love.

No decision of mine ...  
no mistake,  
no threat,  
no fear,  
can ever separate me from Your love for me  
in Christ Jesus, my Lord.

When I sin, forgive me.  
When I need guidance, lead me.  
When I am scared, comfort me.  
When I doubt, give me the faith to cling to Your promises.  
because I am baptized.  
I am Yours.  
I am loved.

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE ✠ SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

*“For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come,  
nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God  
in Christ Jesus our Lord” (ROM. 8:38–39).*

# RECONCILIATION?

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE ✠ SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

Father,

I know I'm supposed to make things better,  
do what I can,  
and keep my promises.

But I don't want to!

I've had enough.

No more!

How can I love someone who is so self-serving,  
and who only wants to control me?

What kind of relationship is that?

But I can't just bring myself to walk away,  
never looking back.

This has been my life, my home, my love.  
I have to at least try.

Lord, bring my abuser to repentance.

Reconcile us with each other.

You're the only One who can.

You've already reconciled us to Yourself;  
forgiven our self-serving attempts to control you.

Your Son has taken on human flesh —  
not like we would,  
not for His own selfish ego ...

But to seek and save us.

In His death, we live.

He has made us both holy and blameless.

He has removed our sin ...  
and our shame.

In Him, we are above reproach  
And cannot be disgraced before You.

Father, give me courage  
to reconcile;  
to forgive;  
to try and make things better;  
to give this relationship

One more chance.

Because You have already reconciled me with him in Christ.

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE ✠ SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

*"And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him" (COL. 1:21-22).*

THE NEW  
*NORMAL*



# GRIEVING, BUT NOT FALLING APART.

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE ✠ SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

Father,

I feel like I'm living a double life,  
that may come crashing down at any moment  
in a spectacular display.

But I have to keep it together,  
keep putting one foot in front of the other,

Living one day,  
one hour,  
one minute at a time.

Surviving each moment  
is its own bittersweet victory.

You saved me from my abuser.  
I've seen, now, that ending that relationship  
also means the loss  
of so many dreams, hopes, plans,  
people ...  
friends.

And that hurts, no matter the circumstance.

I am trying to put on a good face,  
for my children  
for the people around me.

But the fragile mask crumbles all too easily.

Even if my reason and strength fail,  
and everyone sees me fall apart,  
You love me in Christ Jesus, my Lord.

Call me again by Your Gospel.

Remind me of Your promises,  
given in my Baptism.

Strengthen me in body and soul  
with Your Supper.

Keep me united with You  
unto life everlasting,

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE ✠ SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

*"A bruised reed he will not break, and a faintly burning wick he will not quench; he will faithfully bring forth justice" (IS. 42:3).*

# ALLIES OF ABUSE.

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE ✠ SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

Father,

Why are people so eager to believe lies?

People think I'm making up stories.

An abuser's excuses are easier to accept.

I certainly believed them ...

until I couldn't anymore.

I must be a horrible person,

to say such things about someone so nice.

There must be something wrong with me,

Something ... off.

People I trusted trust,

People I believed knew me.

People I thought supported me

instead have fallen for slander about me;

My family,

my friends,

my neighbors,

the police ...

my pastor.

In well-intentioned and clumsy attempts to appear neutral

inadvertently make themselves into allies against me,

unwittingly defending my abuser,

joining their voices with the accusing chorus.

I feel utterly alone and betrayed.

But the Lord God has chosen me,

He is on my side!

What do I have to fear?

You are my greatest Ally.

What can anyone do to me?

You stay by my side as my true Helper.

Bring me into Your presence,

where your life-giving Word fills my ears.

Take away my fear and despair.

I am not truly alone,

You are my helper.

Help me, Lord.

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE ✠ SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

*"Out of my distress I called on the LORD; the LORD answered me and set me free. The LORD is on my side; I will not fear.  
What can man do to me? The LORD is on my side as my helper; I shall look in tri-umph on those who hate me" (PS. 118:5-7).*

## UPDATING PERSONAL INFORMATION.

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE ✠ SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

Father,

I checked the box today;  
the one at the post office,  
the one that said not to publish my name or new address.  
No postcards to be sent out.  
No joyful housewarming parties.  
Just me and an empty home,  
and a few things I managed to take.  
Is this what starting over is like?  
Who am I now?  
Everything seems so unfamiliar  
I don't know where I fit in anymore;  
Only where I don't.

You know, Lord.  
You know everything about me.  
You see.  
You'll remember.  
You know where I am,  
You know who I am.  
You know my name —  
because You gave Yours to me.  
That can't be changed.  
My baptism into Christ  
means I have a home with You.  
You've prepared it just for me.  
You've embraced me into Your family,  
where You daily and richly forgive all my sins.  
I have a home in Christ,  
with You.

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE ✠ SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

*“O LORD, you have searched me and known me! You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from afar. You search out my path and my lying down are acquainted with all my ways. Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O LORD, you know it altogether. You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high; I cannot at-tain it” (PS. 139:1-6).*



## VISITATION / PARENTING TIME

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE ✠ SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

Father,

Lord, You know the love of a parent for His Child;  
what it is to brood over creation.

You have made us all Your children  
adopting us as sons,  
baptizing us into Christ.

All good things come from You,  
and You only provide what is good  
for Your beloved children.

Keep watch over my children  
as they spend time with their other parent,  
apart from my vigilant eyes.

Calm the anxiety welling up within me,  
as they spend time with the very person  
who threatens my life and well-being.

Ease my worries,  
and help me ease theirs.

Give me words to speak of their other parent  
in the kindest ways  
so that they may always honor  
both their father and their mother.

Into Your hands I commend my children,  
their bodies and souls, and all things.

Let Your holy Angel be with them,  
that the evil foe may have no power over them.

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE ✠ SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

*“Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself” (ACTS 2:38-39).*

## GOING TO COURT.

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE ✠ SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

Father,

Protect me today, Lord.

I'm terrified.

I entrust my safety and condition

to the authorities You have set in place.

Give wisdom to those arbitrating this mess,

and clarity of thought and speech to my counselors.

Grant me confidence and bring me peace.

Keep me respectful and gentle in speech,

calmly responding to the questions I am asked,

Even when I am slandered.

You have established justice,

all government exists under Your authority.

all true wisdom comes from You.

You love Your dear children.

Your Son was silent for me.

He was slandered for me.

He is my salvation.

No matter the outcome,

You will make it good for me.

That's what You do.

I know this because You sent Your Son,

I have nothing to fear.

Lord, protect my coming in and my going out

from this day forth and even forever more.

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE ✠ SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

*"Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame" (1 PETER 3:14-16).*



# I'VE BEEN REPLACED.

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE ✠ SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

Father,

I'm confused by my emotions.  
I thought I was over this relationship,  
beginning to heal,  
learning to live again.

But now my emotions jumble together, all confused.  
Even though I'm no longer with my abuser —  
even though my abuser *was* an abuser,  
... I still feel rejected.

Someone new is taking my spot.  
Someone else is now living  
what was supposed to be my life,  
in what was my home,  
even my bed.

I've been replaced.

And the one who promised  
to love and cherish me above all others  
now makes those promises  
to someone else.

The remaining shreds of the hopes and dreams  
hidden in the depths of my soul  
have now completely evaporated.

And it hurts.

Lord, soothe this unexpected pain.  
Turn my eyes to You  
and give me contentment in Your love,  
which far surpasses that of any earthly companion.

Your love is true and unchanging.

You love me this way:

You gave your only-begotten Son to die for me.

Because of Him, You will never forsake me.

You will never reject me.

You will never replace me.

Your promises for me in Christ can never be broken.

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE ✠ SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

*"It is he who remembered us in our low estate, for his steadfast love endures forever; and rescued us from our foes, for his steadfast love endures forever; he who gives food to all flesh, for his steadfast love endures forever" (PS. 136:23-25).*

# LOSING FAMILY AND FRIENDS.

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE ✠ SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

Father,

Sometimes it seems like there's no winning.  
I've lost family, friends,  
    all because I stayed when they thought I shouldn't.  
My abuser isolated me  
    cutting off contact with people who saw the warning signs.  
It was just "us" against the world.  
And now I've lost even more,  
    ended up on the short end of choosing sides.  
I don't know how they could not take mine,  
    not see how I've been treated...  
    how I *am* being treated.  
I know I don't need people like that in my life.  
But it still hurts to be rejected  
    by people I thought I could trust,  
    people I thought loved me.

Your Son knows what it is to be betrayed,  
    to be abandoned by those You love.  
Release me from any grudges  
    and lingering bitterness  
    toward those who chose another relationship.  
Forgive me for the evil things  
    I've desired to say to them,  
    and, please, don't do the things I've wished upon them.

Dear Father, You have chosen me in Christ.  
    adopted me through the waters of baptism,  
    claimed me as Your own dear child.  
Your promises to be for me are as sure  
    as Christ has been crucified and risen.  
You are working everything out for my good,  
    and for the good of those around me.  
Everything I have is a gift from You,  
    and so is everything I don't have anymore.

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE ✠ SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

*"He chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved" (EPH. 1:4-6).*

MOVING  
*FORWARD*



# FREE?

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE ✠ SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

Father,

Such a relief, to be free!  
Life without persistent fear,  
    without constantly changing rules and protocols  
    trying to safeguard the quiet of each day.  
Free! Walking boldly upright,  
    and courageous through the world.  
Free ... and grateful.

More like free ... and terrified.  
Alone with all the responsibility,  
    struggling to keep my head above the water.  
At least I knew what to expect before,  
    where the boundaries stood,  
    what my role was.  
In some ways, life was actually easier,  
    more predictable,  
    more manageable  
    even under the slavery of abuse.

Remind me that Jesus, my Lord,  
    redeems me.  
    purchased and won my freedom  
    from sin, from death and from the power of the devil.  
Even from abuse.  
Not with gold or silver  
    but with His holy and precious blood  
    and His innocent suffering and death,  
    that I may be His own,  
    live under Him in His kingdom,  
    and freely serve Him in righteousness, innocence and blessedness.  
Even as He has risen from the dead,  
    and lives and reigns eternally.  
This is most certainly true.

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE ✠ SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

*“For though I am free from all, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win more of them” (1 COR. 9:19).*

# HELP MY PASTOR.

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE ✠ SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

Father,

Help my pastor.

I've never had to talk to him privately before,  
and I don't know him well.

I know what the Bible teaches about marriage ...  
and divorce.

He's seen us week after week,  
or at least now and then.

Such a nice couple.

But now ...

what will he think of me once he knows the truth?

What if he tells me this is just my fate?

What if he doesn't believe me?

What if he takes my abuser's side?

But You've called this man to serve me;

to be Your voice to me,  
to speak to me Your Word,  
to stand in the place of Christ for me  
and deliver me Your gifts.

Lord, give my pastor words of comfort,  
that calm my fears

and tell me of Your love for me in Christ.

Give him the wisdom to know,  
that while I am a sinner who needs to hear the Law;  
right now,  
what I need most is Your Gospel.

And lots of it.

Remind him to tell me that Christ is for me.

Even me.

That You have forgiven all the things that I believed were sinful,  
when I simply failed to serve my partner as I ought  
and all the things I did to sin against them.

Give me faith to trust this man, my pastor  
and to look for You working through him.

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE ✠ SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

*"He will tend his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms; he will carry them in his bosom,  
and gently lead those that are with young" (IS. 40:11).*

# WILL ANYONE EVER LOVE ME?

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE ✠ SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

Father,

Look at me.

I'm such a failure.

So damaged,

... in ways that I am only beginning to understand.

I used to be so carefree, so open —

Open to love,

and to being loved.

Now I instinctively bristle

with suspicion and fear.

I recoil from others.

Love that I once gave so fully, so easily

has been used against me

in the most destructive ways possible.

How can I ever love anyone again?

How can anyone ever love me?

Me, with my scars and my baggage?

But You have loved me,

more than Yourself.

You have loved me in the selfless giving of Your Son,

and His willing sacrifice on the Cross for me.

So fill my ears with Your Words of love.

Remind me that I have been washed in Christ's blood;

That in Your eyes,

I am already,

right now,

sinless, spotless, beautiful, whole and holy.

Show me what it is to love,

and to be loved,

with patience and kindness.

Nourish me with Your Body and Blood,

and satisfy me with Your perfect love.

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE ✠ SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

*"Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth" (1 COR. 13:4-6).*



# NOT GOING BACK.

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE ✠ SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

Father,  
Before I left,  
    leaving seemed impossible —  
    full of danger and fear.  
Careful plans,  
    sudden decisions,  
    such a blur!  
But looking back,  
    leaving was the easy part.  
Life was so much easier then.  
I knew the rules,  
    what to do and not to do.  
I could manage my days,  
    manage the abuse,  
    or at least think I did.  
Now I hear pleas for forgiveness,  
    accusations of the pain my absence causes.  
I know it's just part of the game,  
    another attempt to bring me back under control.  
Things haven't really changed.  
My abuser hasn't changed ...  
    but I still know how to help,  
    how to make things better,  
    just like I always did.  
How can it be so tempting to return  
    to that life of slavery?  
  
Lord, You tempt no one,  
    so guard and keep me.  
Don't let my weak flesh and feelings be deceived  
    by concocted guilt trips over invented sins.  
Christ has set me free  
    from sin, death and the power of the devil ...  
    and from abuse.  
You have made me free.  
Help me to resist this temptation,  
    and stand firm in the freedom I have in You.

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE ✠ SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

*"But we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience" (ROM. 8:23-25).*



## DOING THE RIGHT THING.

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE ✠ SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

Father,

Sometimes I really wish

I didn't have a conscience,  
or that the Holy Spirit would just stop  
compelling me to do the right thing.

In this relationship

it always ends up causing me more pain.

Just once,

I want to be the one who gets to lash out.

I want to be the one who gets away with doing the stupid thing,

the mean thing,

the selfish thing;

To be the one who is justified in causing pain

instead of the one who gets hurt.

When I do the right thing,

it's like I'm just taking the long way around  
to hurt myself.

Lord, You allow Yourself and Your love

to be rejected.

Your Son was scorned for my sake.

Your Love, crucified for my sins ...

and for the sins committed against me.

You will protect me,

You will avenge the wrongs done to me.

You alone can do it.

You never shied away from doing the right thing.

"Not My will, but Yours be done,"

Your Son prayed,

even after He was betrayed.

Help me to say it, too.

And mean it.

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE ✠ SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

*"Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.' To the contrary, 'if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head'" (ROM. 12:19-20).*

# I DON'T WANT A DIVORCE.

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE ✠ SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

Father,

Divorce is such an ugly word,  
an even worse reality,  
a sin in Your eyes  
and a disgrace before the world.

Divorce means I have failed in my marriage;  
that I now reject the gift of a spouse that You gave.

I have broken my promises.

I should stay.

I should forgive.

I should be reconciled.

I just can't keep trying,  
and only receiving rejection.

I don't want a divorce.  
but nothing else has ended the abuse  
in my life.

This relationship is so irreparably broken,  
My trust shattered.  
I'm so ashamed.  
I'm horrified at my failure.

You hate divorce.

So do I.

But here I am, getting one.

Lord, use this divorce,  
this consequence of sin  
to bring repentance in my abuser.

Use this and make it a gift for me in Christ.

Only You can.

But today, it's not a gift,  
not at all.

I've sinned.

I'm without hope.

Save me, Lord.

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE ✠ SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

*"For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!" (ROM. 7:22-25).*

# How Do I Forgive My Abuser?

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE ✠ SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

Father,

It keeps happening.

Just when I start to relax,

let down my guard and breathe ...

I'm struck again out of nowhere.

I'm still living with abuse,

it just doesn't ever seem to end!

Even when I'm no longer in the relationship ...

a new crisis is devised,

a skewed attempt to drag me back in,

another attempt to punish me for leaving.

I am hurt yet again.

The barely-healed wounds of my heart rip open anew.

How many times do I have to go through this?!

Forgiving and being sinned against,

time after time after time after time ...

will it ever end?

Lord, forgive me for not wanting to forgive!

I know I'm supposed to forgive those who sin against me,

but I also know I'm just going to be sinned against some more,

again and again and again.

A person who does that doesn't deserve forgiveness.

I've had enough.

I'm done.

I just don't have it in me to forgive anymore.

But I sin against You again and again and again.

I'm one who doesn't deserve Your forgiveness.

Yet, You never run out of forgiveness for me.

Lord, show me Your grace and forgive me one more time.

Remind me that the only forgiveness I have to give

is the forgiveness I have received from You.

You've set me free in Christ

from the bondage of clinging to resentment.

Holding on to these sins will only harm me,

will only harm my soul.

All forgiveness is Your forgiveness...

forgive me, Jesus.

And enliven me to forgive,

just one more time.

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE ✠ SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

*"Then Peter came up and said to him, 'Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?'  
Jesus said to him, 'I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times'" (MATT. 18:21-22).*

PEACE



## USING IT FOR GOOD.

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE ✠ SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

Father,

How could this have happened to me?  
My life is such a mess.  
Nothing has turned out the way I expected.  
My life has become unrecognizable,  
    full of chaos and upheaval.  
It's taken unexpected twists and turns.  
I had taken so much for granted.  
Life is overwhelming every day.  
Every day is an uphill battle.  
Just when I think I'm healing,  
    there's yet another setback,  
    a never ending fall into chaos and pain.  
I'm just not seeing how this can ever be good.

But You are the God  
    who sent His Son to save me.  
Your love for me knows no bounds.  
You bring life where there is death,  
    healing where there is brokenness,  
    comfort where there is fear,  
    compassion where there is hurt.  
You have given me all that I truly need  
    in Christ.  
I can't always see Your hand  
    moving in my life,  
But You are always with me.  
You are working all things  
    for my good.  
Give me unexpected opportunities  
    to bravely bring Your love to others;  
Others who are suffering.  
Because in our healing together,  
    You are bringing good for us.

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE ✠ SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

*"As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today. So do not fear; I will provide for you and your little ones" (GEN. 50:20-21).*

# ANNIVERSARIES

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE ✠ SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

Father,

Today is an echo of an important day,  
one that used to be marked on calendars;  
The stuff of jewelry commercials,  
and intimate candlelit dinners.

Anniversaries are when people remember  
promises of love  
hopes for a beautiful future  
happily ever afters.

Now, it's just another day,  
with a brief pause for reflection.  
Bittersweet memories of what might've been.  
I don't know what to feel,  
because looking back,  
I know even that day was tainted.

I thank You  
that You have answered my prayers.  
You have saved me from sin, death, the power of the devil  
and abuse.  
You know rejection and betrayal, too.  
Your Son suffered them for me.  
You have never abandoned me.  
All Your promises to me are kept in Him.

Today is an echo of an important day.  
It is an important day.  
It is a day that You have made,  
so today I rejoice in it.  
I celebrate it.  
I mourn.  
And I give thanks.

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE ✠ SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

*"Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath.  
These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ" (COL. 2:16-17).*

# BRAVERY?

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE ✠ SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

Father,

People call me brave.

I survived,

I got out,

I'm alive.

I no longer live in shame or fear  
from the one who hurt me.

But often I'm still afraid  
overwhelmed,  
confused.

There's so much yet to overcome.

If brave means

I'm ready to face danger,  
endure more pain ...

I'm not.

I certainly don't feel brave.

No, I'm still afraid.

But I don't have to be brave,

You go before me.

You have been with me.

You have not left me.

Guide me in spite of my dismay.

Give me courage,

to trust in all that You have already done.

It doesn't matter if people think I'm brave,  
or they think I'm a weak coward.

My confidence is in You.

Your Son was forsaken for me,  
what do I have to fear?

You go before me,

and will always keep me safe.

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE ✠ SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

*"It is the LORD who goes before you. He will be with you;  
he will not leave you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed" (DEUT. 31:8).*



# TRIGGERED

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE ✠ SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

Father,

I thought I was doing better.  
All the abuse staying neatly contained  
in the past;  
Wounds healed,  
experiences relegated to memories,  
Everything all nice and tidy.  
Not part of my present.

Then, unexpectedly,  
the dam crumbles,  
Just a little.  
Enough.  
It seems like it just happened.  
... is about to happen.  
... is still happening right now.  
I can't get away from it!  
I don't want to feel this way.  
I don't want to remember.

Lord, You do the remembering today!  
Remember Your mercy.  
Remember Your steadfast love.  
Remember Your Son on the Cross,  
forsaken in my place.  
Lord, remember Jesus.  
Remember me, too!  
Your child by Baptism,  
forgiven and fed with Your holy food.  
Comfort me with Your Word.  
Remind me that I am not forsaken,  
that memories are just memories  
and they can't harm me anymore.  
Bless me and keep me.  
Make Your face to shine upon me,  
And give me Your peace.

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE ✠ SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

*"Remember your mercy, O LORD, and your steadfast love, for they have been from of old. Remember not the sins of my youth or my transgressions; according to your steadfast love remember me, for the sake of your goodness, O LORD!" (PS. 25:6-7).*

# OVERCOMING BITTERNESS

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE ✠ SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

Father,

It's so easy and so tempting  
to hate.

The life I was supposed to have  
was taken from me.

The love I thought I had,  
was a lie.

The friends I trusted  
betrayed me.

Labels I never expected to wear,  
burn me with shame.

I've exchanged one set of troubles  
for another.

I don't want to feel this way,  
with blame and anger sour in my mouth.

Take this hatred from me, Lord.

Pound it through the nails  
that pierced Your Son's hands and feet.

Forgive my resentment.

Forgive my bitterness.

Forgive my anger.

It all died with Him,  
and remains buried in His tomb.

Let me taste new life in You  
with Christ's Body and Blood for me.

Give me new hope,  
faith in the resurrection from the dead.

Fill my ears with Your Word.

Give me peace where there has been disappointment,  
and love where there has only been hate.

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE ✠ SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

*"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you,  
Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you" (MATT. 5:43-44).*

# NOT ALONE

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE ✠ SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

Father,

I am not alone!  
Others know what it is to be abused,  
what it is to fear the one you love.  
They have reached out to me,  
and pulled me out of my lonely isolation.  
Their words have comforted me,  
their wisdom has instructed me.  
They have shone a light  
into my darkness.

I am not alone.  
Others know what it is to be abused,  
what it is to fear the one you love  
... and still live under it.  
Teach me to reach out to others,  
to draw victims out of their isolation.  
Give me words comfort for them,  
and instruct them from my experiences.  
Make me be Your light  
breaking through their darkness

I am not alone.  
You have been with me  
I know that You will bring good  
out of my suffering  
even without my asking.  
But I ask You to use me,  
the fear, the confusion,  
the hard-won wisdom;  
That it may be so with me, too.

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE ✠ SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

*"You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven" (MATT. 5:14-16).*

# REJOICING AGAIN

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE ✠ SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

Father,

Because I had been abused,

I could see the signs  
and ask if they were safe.

Because I had been abused,

I offered help  
And didn't let fear silence me anymore.

Because I had been abused,

I spoke Your words,  
And told of the comfort found in Christ.

Because I had been abused,

another woman is safe,  
another man is safe,  
another abuser is getting help,  
another pastor is learning how to counsel.

I never thought it would happen.

I didn't believe that I'd ever get to see  
the gift You have given to so many others,

Because I had been abused.

Lord, You keep Your Word.

Your promises are true.

You never let me fall,  
even when I thought I would.

You continually nourish me with Your gifts.

You give me the strength to endure.

You have made me who I am in Christ,  
made me who I am for others.

I am not ashamed of my past,  
no one may hold it against me.

I am now stronger  
in faith toward You,  
and in love for my neighbors.

You have made me Your child,  
and I rejoice in all Your gifts for me.

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE ✠ SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

AMEN.

*"We rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us" (ROM. 5:3-5).*



