



LEAVING YESTERDAY BEHIND

A Victim No More

WILLIAM L. HINES



CHRISTIAN FOCUS





Cases described in this book

All of the events described in these pages are those which do exist in the lives of actual people. Many of these examples are composites to protect confidentiality. Names and certain details of these composites are changed yet the basic thrust of the stories is true. The reader will, no doubt, find him or herself in many of these stories as we all face similar trials in life (1 Cor. 10:13).

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To Joy Hines
who departed this world
to be with her Lord, March 1994
and to
Robert Hines
who continues the fight without her
but never alone.

Parents who worked hard to make
all my yesterdays a foundation of
hope for the future.





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Introduction to the Second Edition

Since the first printing of this work it has been gratifying to hear the comments of so many people on its usefulness to those seeking to overcome the problems of the past. Some of those problems are of the most heinous nature while some are more common. The common denominator is that whether the problems are particularly tragic or common people have found a loving merciful God ready to help them press on in their walk with Christ.

Suggestions have been made as to how this work could be more useful. One suggestion included in the current edition was to create a series of study guides for individual or group use. These study guides, found at the end of each chapter, have been designed to aid in the application of the material. Included in these study guides are many references to Scriptures, along with the Digging Deeper sections, are designed to help people go beyond the pages of this book in search of God's answers to their problems. Included also is a shorter study guide at the end of the book that is designed to help individuals identify issues in their lives that need to be addressed and help guide them through a plan for resolution of those issues.

May god grant all who read these pages grace for the journey and the courage to live the victory Christ has won!

Bill Hines, Summer 2002







Introduction

Christians aren't perfect nor do they all experience a sense of peace. In fact, many are just plain miserable, feeling as if there is a great weight around their necks which prevents them from pressing on and enjoying what they understood the Christian life would be. They thought that because God is in their lives they should be free of the struggles that weigh them down or, at least, those struggles ought to be easier to overcome.

The truth is, however, that the same things that hurt the rest of the world hurt Christians too. Christians grow up in the homes of alcoholic parents or experience the trauma of incest and a number of unspeakable abuses from those who are the guardians of their well being. None of us is immune to the attitudes and behaviors that eat away at the soul. But the struggles don't have to be of such tragic proportions to have a negative effect. Perhaps it is the sense of inadequacy that comes from a father who was home but paid little attention to us or never had a kind word to say. Maybe the most bitter memories are traced to the mother who demanded perfection but did little to help her children develop character. Some homes are so full of cynicism, permissiveness, harshness or cruel manipulations that the children just don't sense that they are loved very much or worth very much.

As if all of these situations weren't enough to deal with we run to the church for help only to find a 'christianized', but ultimately empty, pop-psychology or the 'let go and let God' attitude that increases our sense of guilt but offers no real help. That is not the way God means it to be.



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This book was originally conceived because I found so many people who believed they were destined to turn out like their parents. It was written because I have a deep belief, rooted in Scripture itself, that we can and must find our truest identity not in our earthly parentage but from God Himself. I believe that regardless of a person's past it is possible to make a break with the cycles of sin and disappointment that have dogged him or her, perhaps for a very long time. The perspective of this book takes humanity's dilemma seriously and will show that at the heart of humanity's most intense struggle is the heart of a merciful God, ready and willing to do for us what we are unable to do for ourselves and were never designed to do alone.

God uses processes to change people. He is aware of the sin we commit and the sin committed against us and He has a plan to deal with both. His plan matures us into the people He desires us to be and in a way that allows us to minister to the world around us – even those who have hurt us the most. In the following pages we will examine God's way of allowing us to understand the past, deal with it and leave it behind as we press on to a fulfilling life significantly freed from the pain that we have lived with for so long. Free to love Him, free to grow up to be like Him.

May all who read these pages pursue the Lord with all diligence, thus finding their load lighter and their path clear.

Bill Hines

Fort Worth, Texas 1997

