

Silent No Longer
By
Kate

He called me his “Kate.” Oh, how those words sting now...

My life was my husband and our four children. The only thing that could make it any better was to return to the faith of my childhood. The opportunity would soon offer itself. We were extended an invitation to Church, and gladly accepted. How little we knew at the time, of the way our life was about to change.

A month or so after we started attending, I decided to go to the pastor for counseling. I had been carrying the burden of youthful scars and pain for too many years. Never had I devoted the time to exploring my past. I wanted to do so now. The pastor soon learned of my distrust of men, and assured me, that he was a man of character...a man I could trust...a man who would never betray my boundaries. For the next three years, he worked to prove himself true. I trusted him completely.

A deep bond of friendship developed. At 37 years my senior, I looked up to him as a daughter would a father. In fact, for nearly all of those three years, he called me his “daughter #2,” and I referred to him as “dad #2.” He was like one of the family. My husband looked up to him as a mentor. Our children adored him. Even my parents spent time with him. Holiday’s, birthdays, hospital stays, family dinners, or movie nights...it wasn’t uncommon to see him comfortably mingling with the rest of us. I was happy. My happiness would not last.

One day, my pastor asked me if I thought it was possible to love more than one person. I grew quiet. He proceeded to tell me, that for the last seven months, he’d been struggling, because he had fallen in love with me. He said he had tried to shut off his feelings, but they only grew deeper. I was totally speechless. Nothing had prepared me for this conversation. I felt as though I had just run into a brick wall. I was afraid. I was confused. I didn’t know how to react. This was my pastor! This was the man I looked up to as a father figure...as a spiritual guide! What was I to do with this information?

He made me promise him that I would never tell. He made me swear to him, that whatever happened “when the door was shut” would only be between the two of us. Nobody was ever to find out. He was adamant that I give him my word. His career would be compromised...his marriage in jeopardy, if anyone were to find out. Even though I was afraid of his words, somehow, I naively trusted that he knew what was best. I gave him my word.

I didn’t understand it at the time, but what would be transpiring over the following year is considered pastoral sexual abuse. Everything about our relationship changed. He told me he could not call me “daughter #2” anymore, and I could not call him “dad #2.” From this point on, I was his “Kate.”

We were still counseling, although for quite some time, it was like we were counseling on a two way street. He began sharing his life with me...coming to me with his troubles...seeking my thoughts and input. Things in his marriage began to get shaky. I didn't understand why his wife would become so upset with him spending time with me. I promised him that I hadn't told anyone a thing. It was at this point that he sat me down and shared with me the reason his wife was so upset. He told me he had an affair before. He told me about the woman...how he had been counseling her...how they had become close friends, etc. I felt like the wind had been knocked out of me. What did this mean? What was he doing with me? Why pick me?

Every time we were together, he would not keep his hands off of me. Saying no meant nothing. Our relationship was physical from now until the end. He gave me gifts. He gave me money. He spoke of having children, of running away together, of marriage. Time just made things worse. It just kept spiraling out of control. At times he would be aggressive, at others, so tender. He became controlling and jealous, telling me who to be friends with, what to wear. He wanted to know whom I had been talking with or where I had been. He was the first to admit that he was insane with jealousy.

The control was too much. The jealousy was getting out of hand. The touches or comments, just moments before he would step behind the pulpit to deliver his sermon, began to scare me. The looks of lust and pride...looks of "ownership"...over the communion table, made my heart race, and my skin crawl. This was beyond me. Just when I would think things couldn't get any deeper, they would. I began telling him I wanted out...that I just couldn't do it anymore. The more I tried to pull away, the tighter he held on. He told me his life would be over without me. I asked him if he were to die today, how he could stand before God. He said the only thing that mattered to him, was being with me, and that he would never let me go. If it ended, I would have to do it.

After four years, of what I now understand, as grooming, manipulation, and sexual abuse, I told. I went to him for counseling. He was my friend, my mentor, "dad #2." I depended on him to honor his position of authority, and instead he used his power to abuse me. Shame keeps people silent. I will be silent no longer! Romans 9:33 promises "...the one who trusts in Him will never be put to shame."