

God Meant it for Good: A Lesson from Joseph – Craig Beickelman



Craig is a licensed Minister of the Gospel in the International Fellowship of Christian Assemblies. He joined the ministry team of Reconciliation Ministries in 2023 as a ministerial caregiver and prayer minister. Craig's passion for recovery ministry comes from his own process of healing from childhood neglect, emotional and sexual abuse, and relational challenges. He has experienced the Lord's transforming power in his life and has a passion to help others grow in Christ and experience the healing that the Lord provides.

“You intended to harm me, but God intended it all for good. He brought me to this position so I could save the lives of many people.”

Genesis 50:20 NLT



As the youngest of 3 boys in an extremely dysfunctional and abusive home, I have always been the caretaker and the strong one. I started counseling people when I was in junior high and have taken care of hurting/needy people all of my life. It was easier to take care of others than to face my own life because when you are helping others, no one asks about you.

I had always been different growing up and my dad never accepted me. Anyone not like him was wrong. He was an accountant and very logical and I was creative, sensitive and not the normal rough and tumble boy like my two older brothers.

My dad was in his own world which consisted of work and having a “Better Homes & Garden” yard. This fit with the image that he wanted to have of us being the “perfect” family to all on the outside. My brothers and I were on our own to figure out life and how to not get dad angry. My oldest brother made the mistake of trying to get close to my dad, and we watched in horror as my dad emotionally destroyed him. Needless to say, being close with my dad was not an option for me. My mother was very stressed out with 3 boys very close in age and having no family support in raising us. When I was very young my mother had a nervous breakdown from the pressure of raising three boys and trying to be perfect enough to please my perfectionistic, workaholic, raging father. I learned at a very early age not to be a burden to anyone and not to need. My mom became completely depleted emotionally and started to turn in greater ways to me as the youngest and more sensitive child for her emotional needs, intimacy, and support. We had been enmeshed since I was born, but it became even more so now to the point where I had no identity of my own. In this I learned that I was not allowed to live, need, feel, or exist because I was there to meet her needs. Basically, I was a non-person. If I felt smothered or had any preferences to not be so close to her, I was wrong. I felt like a fly in the web of a spider who was trapped by the web and having my blood sucked out of me a little at a time. Some of the time the spider was kind and other times I could tell that it was killing me. I learned to suppress my hatred of my mom because how can you hate your mom especially when she is “Mother Teresa” to the rest of the world. She really was a great lady it was just that she was also very broken, and I was the one who bore the brunt of her brokenness. I was beginning to view “love” as something destructive because as I was to learn later, abusive people tend to tell their victims often that they love or care for them.

At age 10 a male member of the family started to molest me and this went on for 3½ to 4 years; this just about destroyed me. I didn't know how to deal with the shame, confusion, and devastation, so I learned to shut down and become numb in order to cope. As I look back, I can see why the longer the abusive relationship lasts the more damage it causes. The reason being is that over time you become more and more dysfunctional as you try to cope with the on-going horribleness of it all. You start out in a shock and trauma phase and gradually adjust. I even got to the place of lying to myself that this was some kind of special relationship where he really cared about me. Needless to say, the damage was quite severe. I walked into junior high school while this was still going on and was immediately labeled as gay, because I was so confused, and treated as a leper. Most of my friends split and I was left to survive on my own. In an effort to try and make sense of everything that was happening to me, I turned to the world of make believe: the theatre. I could pretend to be someone else and that people liked me. I reached out for a male image to become and ended up with the male model image popularized at the time by "GQ" magazine. I grabbed onto this with all of my might and transformed myself into this image. I also lost myself in the theatre and the hope of being a star someday. The GQ image brought with it a lot of problems as men and some women started responding to the alluring person I had become. Being propositioned and made passes at became a normal thing, but it was very confusing for me. While I was still being abused by the male family member, I had become a Christian in 7th grade, but never allowed the Lord to do much in my heart because I didn't trust anyone. I didn't even discover the Bible until I started to go to a youth group in high school. I didn't know what to do with all of the confusion in my life, so I buried it. My brother had introduced me to hardcore porn during the years of my molestation, so I went to the local bookstore and found a whole world of porn that I immersed myself into trying to deal with my pain and confusion.



I also lost myself in the theatre and the hope of being a star someday. The GQ image brought with it a lot of problems as men and some women started responding to the alluring person I had become. Being propositioned and made passes at became a normal thing, but it was very confusing for me. While I was still being abused by the male family member, I had become a Christian in 7th grade, but never allowed the Lord to do much in my heart because I didn't trust anyone. I didn't even discover the Bible until I started to go to a youth group in high school. I didn't know what to do with all of the confusion in my life, so I buried it. My brother had introduced me to hardcore porn during the years of my molestation, so I went to the local bookstore and found a whole world of porn that I immersed myself into trying to deal with my pain and confusion.

In college the propositions became more frequent and I immersed myself into helping others even more than before. During that time, I did grow a lot in my walk with the Lord, but I still did not know what to do with all the struggles I was having or my confusing life. After college, I started out in ministry and swore off dating since I always ended up in abusive/destructive relationships; this became one more step to lose myself in ministry and forget even having a life or needs of my own. The unfortunate consequence of these decisions was my own near total nervous breakdown at age 30, when the Lord clearly ordered me to get out of ministry. It took almost ten years to recover from this as I worked hard to carve out a new career in the secular work force. With the Lord's help I was able to work more than ten years in the human resource field; furthermore, after many years of working through forgiving my father, I even became an accountant myself and could embrace the talents that I had inherited from him.

Over the years, I tried everything I could think of to get some help: counselors, pastors, and books. While I learned many facts and information about my struggles, I really didn't receive

any healing. A friend of mine told me about Living Waters and I will admit that I didn't have much hope that the program would do anything for me. I cried my way through my first Living Waters program in 2002. For the first time someone was speaking right to me and the Lord was giving me some hope for change. During Living Waters, bondages were broken, walls started to come down and many years of pain were beginning to be removed. After my initial session, I continued in Living Waters as a leader in training and then as a leader. The Lord has done a great work in my life through my years of involvement in the Living Waters program and through inner healing prayer. The Lord has healed my fractionalized identity and helped me accept who I was created to be. He also healed my broken heart and taught me how to forgive.

Previously, living as a victim who was not allowed to need, feel, or exist, I would draw people to me that wanted one-sided relationships: I being the giver and they being the taker. I also seemed to have a sign over my head that drew abusers. As I have come to life through the Lord's healing, I now can feel, have preferences, and desire two-way relationships. Where I once was content to just listen to endless monologues, I now want to have two-way discussion; this is not to say that there isn't a time and place where friends need to dump or get something off of their chest, but this should not be the normal mode in a friendship. I also can see the abusers a mile away and can run because I no longer feel worthless and deserving of bad treatment.

I used to hide from my pain and background by filling my life with other people's needs. This was safer for me because my emotional energy was channeled outward and I could ignore my inner struggles. I became addicted to the feelings that came from helping others and it was like a drug that made me feel good about myself. The more I helped people, the better I felt, so it became quite a cycle until I crashed. Now I no longer need to help others to feel good about myself or to ignore the things in my life because the Lord has healed me and helps me address the things going on in my life. Today, I am developing disciples, doing some prayer ministry and ministerial care for Reconciliation Ministries, and making my way back into full-time ministry as a planter of house churches. As I move back into ministry this time, the Lord has taught me a great deal about having a balanced life. It is okay for me to have a life and be alive and enjoy having friends. I am no longer hiding from my background and pain through helping others. He has healed me and I am ready to give again using my God given gifts as they were intended to be used. It is not God's desire to use me as my abusers did and chew me up and spit me out when He is done. The Lord desires to work through my life to help others, and He also desires to have relationship with me.

Craig is licensed as a Minister of the Gospel. He provides ministerial care and prayer ministry. If you would like to schedule an appointment with him, call 586.739.5114.

Photo of boy with mother, and photo of sad teen, used under license with www.shutterstock.com.
© 2023 Reconciliation Ministries of Michigan, Inc. This article may be reproduced and distributed as long as no fee is charged and credit is given.