

A Safe Place

Moving out of our nice, roomy house seemed like an impossible task. I loved that house...but it was also the most unsafe place in the world for me. We lived with an extremely abusive man...my husband and y children's father. Finally, the pain of staying became bigger than the fear of leaving...and we left...me and the children. We moved into a friend's basement. On the way there, the only thing I could think about was: will this be a safe place? I felt like a fugitive on the run and seeking a safe place to hide.

It was a real basement with small windows and one floor-level walk out door with two large windows beside it. Going down that steps to the basement I knew not what to expect. Cement floor, cement walls all around. I took one look at what would serve as my "kitchen" and said "It's beautiful! Oh, I just love it!" The bathroom was upstairs along with the shower. Only cold running water no hot. No stove and one small fridge. But this was our "haven". We had one king sized bed on the floor where we all slept together. We lived out of our suitcases and boxes. No dressers or vanities at all. I did not mind that one bit. We improvised and made "do" and were happy and safe...so safe. For six weeks, our abuser did not know where we were. I felt gloriously free and safe. Like a little bird with a storm raging all

around...but the bird was safe and snug in its warm nest.

"Sometimes God lets the storm rage and calms the child."

About eight years later after becoming stronger and truly believing it's ok to not live with our abuser I went back to that basement where we first had lived. I was so shocked! "Did you do anything to this basement at all? Has it always been this size?" The answer: "Yes. This is still the way it was when you lived here."

My mind could scarcely believe this. It was small, dungy, dreary, bare and not a place I would want to live in now by any means! I remember I used to have a lot of visitors while I lived there. I now wonder what they thought of my "hold in the wall".

In looking back I can see how far I have come in healing from the pain and also growing in faith. For that I can say "Thank you lord for the trials you allowed in my life...They have drawn me closer to God every day.

We lived there for seven months.

-JoAnna