

Personal Timeline

Student: Marilyn Washington washingtonm2@nyack.edu

Program: Masters of Divinity

SF703: Spiritual Formation Capstone
Spring 2020

Professor: Dr. Wanda Walborn

Alliance Theological Seminary

February 5, 2020

Personal Timeline

Childhood

- Youngest of 3 (2 older brothers); grew up with mostly older males (brothers and cousins)
- Age 2, mother left for America to build a better life for the family; raised by maternal aunt and my father
- Discovered the world of books and the Spanish language
- Age 6, raped by unknown; became a tomboy
- Skipped the equivalent of first grade because my youngest brother, 3 years older than me, would teach me what he was being taught
- Age 8, brought to America with my brother because the community was beginning to talk about how smart I was and so young
 - o In America, made fun of in school because of age, accent and the way I dressed; bullied by girls because I was developing fast and boys noticed; threatened by boys because I didn't notice; Robbed by gang of girls on the street. Hated America. Was painfully shy to the point of hiding behind my mother when meeting people
- From a harsh comment from my mother, I learned the concept of love being taken away if you're not well-behaved

Teens

- Accepted into specialized high school honors program; earned scholarship to a prestigious prep school summer program. Still the youngest in my peer group; socially awkward and naïve; did not fit in because of how strict my parents were: no movies, pants, going out of any kind, etc.

- Often suicidal because of lack of acceptance at home. Stayed for afterschool activities: gospel choir, cheerleading, yearbook staff to keep me from home, but mother worried so much every day that my father and brother had issues with me. My brother called me a bitch. I withdrew.
- My father wanted to kick me out of the house, so I went to stay with my cousin for a while. Deeply wounded that my mother never defended me.
- Graduated right after I turned 17 but with the naïveté of a 12-year-old.

College

- Lost virginity at 17 or 18 to a guy who, I later found out, cheated on me with multiple girls.
 - o Discovered my temper when I took a knife and went to the room where he was with another girl.
- Joined a gospel choir and answered an altar call at one our gigs. Went back to living the regular college life afterwards.
- Did not graduate the 4th or 5th year; came home feeling like a failure to live with my parents.
- First long-term relationship (3 years); broke up after I cheated, we got back together, I left school, suspected he cheated. Played the role of a female player for a while; had no interest in long-term commitment; determined not to open my heart like that again.

Career

- Started working filling in for a friend as a receptionist when she went on vacation, then found a job doing data entry. Took over for my friend as receptionist when she was promoted to secretary.

- o Had to be spoken to about my surly attitude; I was moody. I blamed it on toothaches, but I changed. Was promoted to secretary at some point.
- o Stayed with firm when they merged into another law firm, then another larger law firm and yet another larger law firm and then back to a small boutique firm. 26 years later still with firm in a comfortable position utilizing skills but not stepping out and often frustrated.

Church

- Came back to the Lord after college failure; initially looking for Bible Study and a choir.
- Began serving as any and everything: youth choir, usher, custodian (cleaned the bathroom); secretary for the youth ministry; administrator/treasurer for singles ministry; planning committee for church conventions; proofreader of printed materials; VP for women's ministry; Administrator for Worship Art ministry; actor, singer, dancer, opened and closed the church. I lost touch with friends and family.
- Sang a solo and one of the musicians said it sounded bad, that I sounded nervous and I have been fearful since. Felt safer playing the background; played a part in changes in the church but no one ever knew.

Reflections

Fear of ...

I had an accident with my brother's car when I first started driving and the side mirror broke. I paid for it and even drove after that. I was the only licensed in Florida and had never driven on the highway. By the grace of God, I got us there safely but one of the passengers made sure to tell me that she had been scared. It messed with my confidence. It's been years now since I got behind the wheel of a car. My excuse is that I live in the city. The reality is fear. It

seems to permeate my life. Fear of not being able to help my parents with their finances made me anxious. Paying for things for them sometimes made me not have enough and then I handled finances poorly which made me anxious and fearful of being poor or losing my job. It probably made me stay at my job longer than I should have. It keeps me from stepping out spiritually as well.

Pride/Independence

I worked very hard from I was very young to not be dependent upon anyone for anything. I would also achieve what I wanted before telling anyone. If I needed to get anywhere far, I would exhaust all avenues before feeling forced to ask anyone for help. I still find it difficult to ask for help but the Lord repeatedly puts me in situations where I have no choice but to lean on Him and ask Him for help.

Patterns

Looking for Love in the Wrong Places

There was no lack of love in our family growing up; it just wasn't shown through affection. It was shown through providing and staying. When I left home, I looked for the affection in acceptance by others and in relationships with men. I was always disappointed. With females, I felt they couldn't be trusted. I only let people in as far as I thought they could handle. I realized that I kept God at arm's length the same way and blocked my heart from really opening up to Him. It's still an ongoing process to live in His love for me.

Playing Background aka Hiding

I've always been told that I have a lot of potential in a lot of areas yet even when I am in a leadership position, I question myself. If I substitute for the director in the play and they talk about how much I helped them, I push the praise onto the first director. I find the songs that the

dancers have ministered, or the choirs and worship teams have sung but no one knows. I worked behind the scenes for the things that were out front. Every time I tried to step back the Lord propelled me into the front. I wanted to find a choir; He put me in the Worship Team. I wanted to work as a helper in the Women's Ministry; He made me a Vice President. I brought ideas and programs to the ministry for years; the last time I did He made me the leader of the entire initiative.

Isolation

God stripped a lot of people away from me after I got baptized; they just started to go, including my boyfriend at the time. Every time I go into transition, I find that there is no one around for me to speak to and I realize the Lord wants me dependent on Him only because He wants me at a deeper level.

How God Has Used Me to Minister to Others

Encouragement

Almost from the moment I dedicated my life to the Lord in 1999, He began to use me to encourage people. From texts to phone calls to sending out devotionals faithfully for years, this was one of the first gifts that I knew I had. Once a name pops into my mind and I begin to type, the Holy Spirit will take over and send a Scripture, a song or some form of encouragement. They would respond with comments like, "That was so on time" or "I really needed that" and I would be (and still am) amazed every time by the faithfulness of God, yet humbled that He uses me to do that. People would sometimes email me and let me know that they were encouraged by the devotions; even if they were reading them years later, they were still on time.

Bridge Builder

A recent development that I have learned is that I am a bridge builder. For many years, people would call me at work to ask for directions or to find out information on how to do things, from restaurant to recipes, from shampoo to Scripture. Because I was stationary at a desk, for the most part, I was able to quickly research things that they themselves had not been able to find or direct them to a location if they were lost. It was an honor for me, especially when I realized that it was one of the reasons I was working with a computer. This has branched out to connecting people with each other, such as my singer friend being connected to a producer through another friend of mine; or, by attending events through Nyack, connecting my church with programs that allow them to have free materials for evangelism and other outreach programs, as well as in other areas. I am strategically positioned by God to make connections that better people's lives!

Hugs Ministry

Although I would like to be able to lay hands on the infirmed and see them physically and immediately healed, the Lord uses the simple things in my life. He has used my hugs to heal in ways that I will never know until eternity. I will get an image in my head to hug someone, and when I don't question or become disobedient, and ask that person if I can hug them, something breaks in them and the Lord begins to give me words to minister to them. Sometimes it is all in tongues and I don't know what He's speaking to them but I go with it and pray that they receive all He had for them in that hug and if He gives me the interpretation, I pass it on.