

# Third Way Media



## SHAPING FAMILIES

**Pilot Script: Faith Offers Hope**

**Jodi**

**June 1, 2009**

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**Hi. I'm Burton Buller. And this is *Shaping Families*, where every week we serve up a menu designed to build strong families and positive relationships while recognizing God as an important force in our lives. This program comes to you from the studios of Third Way Media in Harrisonburg, Va.**

Music down and under.

**Melodie: And I'm Melodie Davis, producer for *Shaping Families*. As parents, sometimes we worry that the religious example we are trying to set for our children is not taking hold. Today, Burton talks with a young adult, Jodi, about the role of parents in her life.**

**Burton: I met Jodi when I was conducting interviews for a television documentary we were producing on addiction, and how God became real to those addicted and to their families in a time of intense family crises. Jodi's biological parents both suffered from the disease of addiction.**

Jodi: My mom was in and out of institutions when I was growing up and I don't really know my biological father very well. He left when I was very young, and I didn't speak to him for many, many years.

**Burton: The impact of such a childhood was enormous.**

Jodi: I always felt different growing up – I always felt like I didn't belong. My household was very chaotic. I was abused as a child, in all ways, so you know I was trying to numb all that pain that I just didn't know where to go with it. I didn't feel like I had any support anywhere. No one ever really asked, you know, how are you or what's going on?

**Burton: She soon found drugs to be a way to numb that pain and loneliness:**

**Jodi: I started using drugs and alcohol when I was probably 13. The first time I ever did my drug of choice, which was IV heroin and cocaine, I was 14 years old. By the time I was 19, I was an IV drug user. You know, high school is kind of a blur. I went to school and I tried to do very well, you know, I was involved in cheerleading and you know**

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clubs, but in the evening, you know, I would go into the city, smoke crack, do heroin, so I lived a dual life, and it was exhausting. Because I was trying to find my place in the world, I guess, and also I was trying to numb a lot of things.

**Burton: Jodi began a relationship with a boy who loved her and if it had not been for a tragedy, her life may have begun to turn around.**

**Jodi:** I got married before I graduated from high school, and his parents kind of became my parents. They are wonderful Christian people. I had a baby during my active addiction and my husband was killed in April 2000 and they took my daughter right after that.

**Burton: Her in-laws knew she was in no shape to take care of her daughter, but the early death of her husband ended what may possibly have been a path out of addiction. We'll hear more from Jodi in a moment after this message.**

Sponsor or station break - :30

**Burton: We're talking to Jodi, who began using drugs at an early age to numb the pain of her family life. She married while in high school, to a young man with wonderful Christian parents. Then he was killed and her life took a fresh downward turn.**

**Jodi:** I just started running the streets. I was homeless, I'm sorry. And I did pretty much anything I could to get high and to be numb. I lived in a car. I lived in a tent. I did whatever I had to do. So, it was difficult.

**Burton: Jodi was beginning to bottom out. She remained in contact with her father and mother-in-law who were caring for her daughter. They continued to encourage her to get help for her addiction.**

**Jodi:** For many years, they wanted me to go to a year-long Christian program and I was totally against it. I think I was afraid of God. I think that I was afraid that he wouldn't love me and that, I don't know, I was just really ashamed of what I had done and where I'd been, so it was a fear factor.

**Burton: Finally, at the end of her own emotional resources, she agreed to enter a drug rehab facility.**

**Jodi:** It was a year-long Christian program. And it changed my life. I didn't know how to live. They taught me how to live. When I got to the mission, I didn't know how to do laundry. I didn't realize that people, you know brush their teeth after every meal. I mean, I was living like an animal. I didn't know how to take care of myself, let alone my daughter. I didn't know how to get a job and hold a job, and they taught all those things

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to us. I didn't know how to have a relationship with someone of the opposite sex without trying to sell myself to them. I just didn't know how to be a normal person and they taught me how to do that. It was a place that you could stay as long as you needed to stay. They let me stay there until I was ready and I felt safe to leave. They just changed my life.

They taught us about, you know, grace and mercy and forgiveness, things that for me, the streets don't teach you. You don't forgive, you don't have mercy, I mean you survive. They just taught me how to be a woman, something that, you know, I lost along the way because I was caught up in a world that was about survival. It wasn't about being a grown up and being responsible and taking care of myself. It was about getting more and doing anything to do that.

**Burton: While in this Christian rehab program, Jodi began a relationship with someone new—God.**

**Jodi:** My faith is one of the most important things in my life today, and I believe that it's something that's helped change me. I had a hole inside of me that was eating me from the inside out and the only things that have fixed that are God and a 12-step program.

**Burton: Today, Jodi works at an addictions counseling center where she helps manage the medications for people addicted to opiates. She is attending college and has dreams of getting her Master's Degree. Her daughter is living with her. Her faith is strong. Unless she told you, you would never know that Jodi once, by her own description, lived like an animal. But it took parents-in-law willing to sacrifice their own personal space by caring for their grandchild while mother was unable to do so.**

**Burton: While Jodi's family situation was a bit unusual, Doug Tieman, president of the Caron Treatment Centers, Wernersville, Pa. notes the importance of typical families participating in the recovery effort.**

Doug: "The family typically will come to participate in a family education program when their loved one is in treatment, because they think that they're going to help their loved one get well. What they don't realize is that the addiction in that family has had a profound impact on them as well. And oftentimes, while they don't appreciate it initially, they are typically as sick as the person who is coming in for the disease of addiction."

**Burton: In Jodi's case, her in-law's example and their continuing care for Jodi, encouraging her to bring faith into her life, finally brought results when Jodi agreed to enter a creative Christian rehab facility that completely changed the direction of her life.**

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Music bridge

**Burton:** A life of faith is a journey. It often takes us into unexpected places. The important thing is to know that God walks this journey with us. We are not alone. “I will never leave you or forsake you,” we are told in scripture. And we simply don’t know how our faith journey will impact us or those close to us. God works in miraculous ways, as Jodi and her parents-in-law discovered. Faith, the faith of her parents-in-law and the faith she came to harbor in her own life, simply changed the course of Jodi’s life.

**Melodie:** Now from our Mailbag. At our Web site on addictions, [FindingHopeInRecovery.com](http://FindingHopeInRecovery.com), another young mother, Peggy, writes about her addiction to meth and how she found help: “I had a baby that was two years old that my older daughter, seven, was taking care of most of the time. I asked myself, how could God have let this happen to me? I wondered, how could a 36-year-old woman be an addict? ... With each line I snorted I asked God to make my heart stop so it would be over. I could not stop for anything. [Finally] I reached out and spoke to my insurance company. They referred me to someone who found a treatment center that was in the city that I lived in. They taught me to live one day at a time. Today I have been clean and sober, God willing, 14 years in February.”

**Burton:** There is help and hope, but it takes hard work. For links to treatment programs, go to our Web site, [ShapingFamilies.com](http://ShapingFamilies.com) where you can also find information on the documentary featuring Jodi and many others like her.

I also want to tell you about a free helpful booklet we have for families, “Loving someone with a drinking or drug problem.” We’ll be happy to send you a copy. Visit our Web site for phone numbers and an email address, or write to us at [Shaping Families, Box 22, Harrisonburg, VA 22803](mailto:ShapingFamilies@ThirdWayMedia.com). I hope you join us again next week. *Shaping Families* is a ministry of Third Way Media for the Mennonite churches. We appreciate your gifts and prayerful support.

Music up