

Bio Clip 3 - The Meeting

The meeting left me in such deep depression that for the next two weeks I didn't eat. I couldn't even talk. I spoke only words that were necessary and mostly only to my three boys. I thought, "So this is how people who commit suicide feel. They just don't want to live." I was destroyed. Her family and the family of my children's dad had been friends in Cuba. It hadn't been long since she had arrived in Miami. She became friends with my sister-in-law. I was lead to believe that she had an eye for my brother-in-law. Not so. The day I found out the truth I was at work and she also worked in the area. I walked over to speak to her, taking each step with great effort, for I felt as if all energy had left me. Even breathing I found difficult. When she saw me she acted concerned asking me what was wrong because I looked shattered. I replied in pathos saying I had just found out, and presented a convincing argument appealing to logic, telling her we were a family with three young children. And I went on for a bit finalizing by telling her, "I love my husband." She replied, "*¿Me lo puedes decir en español? Porque yo no sé inglés.*" ("Could you tell me in Spanish? Because I don't know English.")

It was surreal. I had been so distraught that it had not dawned on me that she had greeted me in Spanish. So there I was, without strength, forced to start all over again from square one. But this time her body language began to infer entitlement, culminating in the arrogant tone of her reply, "I love him too." My heart sank. Devastated, I walked away in silence. It would take seas of tears to cure my pain, and a miracle to restore me. As I forced my way back through the streets, I reasoned about what had just taken place and understood its potential in a Hollywood comedy. But it wasn't funny to me. Yet, in a gesture of thanksgiving, in spite of my distress, I raised my eyes up to heaven and said, "Lord, thank you for the joke." And I began to cry. Little did I know that it was an omen, as if God were saying to me, "Girl, you just wait and see, because you will laugh again." That evening I called my mother and asked her to come and stay over. She waited sitting in the sofa as I put the boys to bed. Then, just like a mother cradles a weeping child, I went to my mother's arms where she cradled me as I wept bitterly. What a pitiful sight of a grown woman!

I needed to take my rival to the Throne in prayer and did so for many days. I would kneel down, raise my arms to heaven, and shout, "I hate her! I hate her!" But then I would calm down and began to reason with God. "But I know You. You love her also. You want to save her too. You want us both in heaven with You. I get that." Then rage resurfaced, and shaking my head to compliment my attitude, I dared God. "So what's Your trick? How're You gonna do that? How're You gonna get both of us into heaven?" And I ended my prayer repeating in defiance, "What's Your trick? Because heaven is not big enough for the two of us there!"

Three years went by. Miami Temple SDA Church had an evangelistic series presented by Pr. Ron Halvorsen. My oldest son, then nine years old, rather than be with the other children, sat in the front pew every night listening intently; except for one night that we were a little late and that pew was all taken. But he still walked up front and sat on the floor before the podium. At the end of the series he asked to be baptized. Seeing his fervor for so many weeks, his petition was not denied. I invited my son's dad to the baptismal ceremony. That day, after I

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March 2013

Archived at www.women1844.com

parked my car, I noticed him with her standing outside the doors to the church. She was now the wife. I had not seen her again since that fateful meeting. I had planned to enter by the side door, but my legs took me towards them. Why was I doing that? They spotted me and both immediately turned their back to me. But to my own surprise, I kept making a bee line straight to them. Once there I said, "Hello." They turned around. I extended out my hand to greet her and she placed her hand in mine. I looked her in the eye and told her, "Thank you for coming, and thank you for treating my children so well." Where did all that come from? Then I turned and walked away. I was stunned at what I had done. I began to cry tears of joy because all was well with me. I was more than okay. I was thrilled and at peace.

The moment for my son to be baptized had come. All the people were now inside and the church was packed full. I wanted to take a photo. The baptistry in Miami Temple is to one side. I walked up and stood at the center of the platform. I knew no one would even notice me, for all eyes were on Pr. Carlos Turcios and my son. And then it happened. Pr. Turcios looked at the congregation and began to speak about that boy's wonderful mother. He then turned his head to look at me with a big smile on his face, and he paused long enough as if to say, this lady in center stage is the one I'm talking about. I felt embarrassed. I didn't want to be there. But I was placed on the spot holding my little camera. And there they were, listening to Pr. Turcios tell everyone that I was great, and by then she already spoke English. A Bible verse came to mind, "*Thou preparest a table before me...*" (Psalm 23:5) I knew then that God's vengeance is merely justice.

When she had her first child I bought him a present and visited her to meet my sons' new brother. I did the same when their sister was born. Through the years I've always been there for her and my son's siblings. They are always welcomed into my home. Do you want to know what happened to my hate? It's gone. How much of it is gone? All of it. When did it disappear? I don't know. How did it disappear? I don't know. All I know is that it did. If my hate had been a ceramic figure that broke, I could still pick up the pieces and glue them back together. But God broke my hate into a powder so fine, that it would be impossible to reassemble. It is as if it had become dust that blew away in the wind. Generally, an ex-wife can't stand her replacement and avoids her, and if not, nonetheless it seems that there's always a residue, a little hint of a past not forgotten and not forgiven. Not so in my case for God showed me His trick, and His trick is a miracle: circumcision of the heart. Further, God replaced my hate with love. Do I love her? Yes, I do. Indeed, I do. If you would ever see us chatting away and laughing, you would never ever fathom for a moment that she is the one from the meeting.