



By Blythe Fowler

# Yielding to the Hand of the Master Weaver

**DeeAnn's story is one that exemplifies the work of the Master's hand at the loom – weaving a beautiful garment from raw fiber.** As a young girl, DeeAnn moved many, many times with her family. Hoping that each new hometown would provide a foundation of friends, DeeAnn adopted the characteristics of a chameleon: a versatile skin that camouflaged deep wounds from multiple sexual molestations,

a defensive hide that deflected fiery darts of fear and mistrust, and a color-changing persona that enabled her to blend into the social surroundings. Even though DeeAnn still tries to piece her fragmented upbringing together, the pattern of the Master is visible to the illuminated eye.

## *God saves us to glorify Himself*

Meeting her first love in high school, DeeAnn married after graduation and looked forward to building a life with her husband. It wasn't long until they began drinking and another love was discovered: cocaine, which melted the fears hidden beneath her chameleon coat. The predictable spiral of addiction, isolation, guilt, loss of self-worth, and collapse of relationships followed, as did the death of her mother.

The blessing of two children, Nicholas and Nichole, and relocation of the family was not enough to overcome the impact of

addiction and co-dependency. DeeAnn's marriage ended and she was alone, trying to raise two children while still an emotional child herself.

"Loving someone is loving them enough to want something better for them, no matter how bad it hurts," DeeAnn says of her

tough decision to let go of the children, turning the responsibility of providing and parenting over to their dad. Time passed along with many sessions in counseling and rehabilitation; all her promises and efforts to change failed.

### *God saves us to glorify Himself*

The struggles with fear, grief, guilt, and shame finally drove DeeAnn to the end of herself – surrender was all that remained. Earnest prayer for deliverance drove DeeAnn to turn herself into the Florida police for a probation violation. Stripped of everything

and incarcerated in the county jail, DeeAnn found salvation and was baptized -- the light and love of God poured into the gaping hole. The death of her dad during this time in jail closed the door on their relationship, but God opened another for His adopted daughter.

DeeAnn left jail to attend her dad's funeral in Oklahoma, wearing pieces of a new covering that the Lord was crafting strand by strand. There, she shared with her cousin Norma a desire to help others overcome the devastation wrought by abuse and addiction through the power of Christ. In the meantime, God placed a plan in Norma's heart for DeeAnn to come to Tulsa where she would be surrounded by family and others who were spiritually grounded.

In 2001, the court modified DeeAnn's terms for release. The two women traveled to Saddleback Church for a Celebrate Recovery (CR) Summit and returned to Southern Hills Baptist Church (SHBC) to plant the ministry in Oklahoma. Built on Jesus Christ's teaching in the Beatitudes, CR uses eight recovery principles to provide stepping-stones for setting captives free from hurts, hang-ups and habits that enslave.

DeeAnn completed her first CR Step-study and served in various capacities in the ministry, walking out CR Principle Eight: "Yield myself to be used by God to bring the good news to others." She reached out to incarcerated women and launched a pen pal program to those in Florida with women from SHBC.

DeeAnn's ministry to women on the inside grew rapidly, as did her admitted pride and arrogance. According to DeeAnn, "EGO (edging God out) took over," and she fell back into old patterns of thinking and behavior. Returning to CR Principle Seven: "Reserve daily time with God in order to know Him," her thinking turned as she studied God's Word and started standing on His promises, rather than her failure to keep promises made to Him.

### *There is no measure to God's grace and mercy.*

As DeeAnn gave her brokenness and trust to the Lord, He began to weave every piece of her tattered life together again. She rejoices in the yield of fruit: relationships severed 15 years ago have been restored, daughter Nichole is a freshman at ORU, healing is underway with son Nick, peace has been established with her former husband, and the ministry to incarcerated women has blossomed.

Today, DeeAnn serves as the CR Inside Ministry leader at SHBC, helping women from reentry facilities and providing the opportunity to integrate Celebrate Recovery into their lives. This Christmas will mark the fifth year for DeeAnn to lead a drive to provide gifts for children of incarcerated women. Partnering with Prison Fellowship, the Angel Tree ministry at SHBC incorporates a night of CR ministry into a party for family members, exposing all to the power of the Christ-centered recovery program.

DeeAnn is committed to reducing the risk of relapse and recidivism for the women she serves – her personal experience is the best lesson that Christ alone can break the chains that bind. DeeAnn's vision of establishing a group home for women in reentry is clear and her accomplishment of this should not be doubted. After all, she is wearing a beautiful new coat, carefully woven by God and reflecting His glory, love and plans to provide a future and a hope in each thread. 🧡

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## MEETINGS IN EASTERN OKLAHOMA

### Fridays

Southern Hills Baptist Church, Tulsa  
918.743.8897  
New Community Church, Muskogee  
918.683.9111  
Olivet Baptist Church, Tulsa  
918.245.2241  
Park Plaza Church of Christ, Tulsa  
918.627.3201

### Saturdays

Family Church, Tulsa  
918.455.8094

### Sundays

Angus Church, Sand Springs  
918.245.0266  
Destiny Life, Claremore  
918.341.1765  
Eagle Heights Baptist, Stillwater  
405.624.3422  
First United Methodist, Owasso  
918.272.5731

### Mondays

Asbury United Methodist Church, Tulsa  
918.392.1103  
Faith Church, Glenpool  
918.827.7901  
Grace Community, Bartlesville  
918.333.2030  
New Heart Fellowship, Broken Arrow  
918.455.5400

### Tuesdays

First United Methodist Church, Tulsa  
918.832.1379  
Believer's Church, Tulsa  
918.688.0552  
First Baptist Church, Claremore  
918.694.8355  
First Baptist Church, Owasso  
918.381.7801

### Wednesdays

Cedar Ridge Christian Church, BA  
918.254.0621

### Thursdays

First Baptist Church, Pawnee  
918.762.3669  
Highland Park Christian, Tulsa  
918.627.0783