My name is Debbie. I came in to therapy rather late in life. Frightened. Not trusting anyone. Angry at God, but compelled to try to please Him because of my fear of His judgement. I knew I needed help, but I had no idea how I would choose a therapist – or even find one who could help ME. A victim of childhood sexual abuse. I felt so much shame, I was afraid to even ask my pastor or anyone else for a recommendation. But God heard my cry for help. And He sent an answer in an amazing way.

One afternoon, at the Christian school where I worked, I noticed Doug Tweedy’s business card tacked to a door in the hallway. A therapist right there. I’d heard he was a counselor of some kind. The card said a specialty was counseling victims of sexual abuse. God met my need before I even asked Him! I was scared, but still made the appointment. An appointment that changed my life in a powerful way.

It took time, and hard work, learning how to trust him completely with the secrets I’d kept hidden from everyone else. It was very difficult for me in the beginning; I almost quit a few times, but I’m very grateful for the patience Doug has shown as I allowed those old memories of my childhood come to the surface, where they could be dealt with safely.

Doug taught me that the sexual abuses of my childhood were absolutely not my fault. The responsibility and shame for the abuses belonged to my abusers alone. I did not deserve to be abused. It is not what defines me as a person. I am a beloved child of God. Chosen by Him. And He has a plan for me. A plan of healing and redemption. I learned about God’s grace and His never ending love.

He taught me how to express my feelings in a safe way. How to write about them. And about the abuse and how it affected me. Doug also encouraged me to allow that little girl inside me to finally express her feelings and tell what happened to her. This was something I was not allowed to do as a child. He taught me how to begin the process of forgiving my abusers and their enablers. About my own codependency with others – including my husband and adult children. He helped me find the courage to stand up for myself and to express my anger in healthy ways. He also reminded me to forgive myself – because Jesus Christ already did.

After a while, Doug suggested I would benefit from the 12 Step program at Celebrate Recovery – a Bible based program for all kinds of hurts, habits, and hangups. I found a local group, and have been continuing there, serving as a leader and helping others through telling my story and mentoring other survivors of abuse. I am no longer a victim of childhood sexual abuse. I am a victorious survivor of what was meant to destroy me. I am a believer and follower of Jesus Christ. A beloved child of God. I am not the same person I once was. And I thank God for leading me to the right therapist, Doug Tweedy, at just the right time in my life. And thank you, Doug, for never giving up on me – even when I wanted to give up on myself.