**Can I Forgive Myself?**

 **By Thomas Smith**

I was a teenager in high school, enjoying my friends and life.

For real, I thought I was the man when this young lady, I had known for a short time told me she had a crush on me. I was digging someone else at the time, trying to get her to like me.

I was surprised to hear that she wanted more than a friendship, after all, she had a baby, and most of the dudes I hug around knew somewhat, about her. I will call her Lacy, she asked me if I liked her, and if I thought she looked good.

She was alright, but just not for me. So I said I thought we were just friends. She responded with: Why don’t you like me? She started pouring all her problems on me. Then she asked if I had any money to help buy her baby pampers.

I really just wanted to run as fast as I could, to get away, so I said; I do like you, but just not that way you are a beautiful person, and a lot of people like you. Then I gave her some money for her baby's pampers and said I had to go to work, and I will see her tomorrow.

She was crying, and I did not know what to do. It made me feel bad, but what could I do?

I left and went to work. I couldn’t wait to get home and talk to my mom about what happened, she would know what to tell me, if I told her the right thing or not.

I told my mom about what happened, and she told me, I did the right thing, but I did not have to give her money for pampers. Also, It was a nice thing to do, that made me feel a little better.

The next day at school, I heard she took her life. That made me feel some kinda way like maybe it was my fault because I did not go with her. I can't explain how I was feeling. I couldn't eat or sleep very well.

My mom talked to me and prayed for me, and with me. My dad had died, so I could not talk to him. My mom and I were very close. Then I prayed for myself and asked God if it was my fault. If it was, then I was sorry.

I started feeling much better, I later realized I blamed myself for her death, and it was not my fault. So I had to forgive myself because I blamed myself.

Thank God, because He took time out and listened to me, and my problems. He showed me how much, He really cared for me. That helped me to stop blaming myself.

In Love

Thomas Smith

 **My Heart is Broken Into Pieces…**

 **By Bonita Sweeney**

I had always thought summer to be a time, for shedding all those heavy clothes, stepping outside and enjoying time with family and friends.

Until one summer day in June, my teenager was with friends. I was at home, supervising my younger son in the kitchen cooking dinner for the family. He had always wanted to cook a whole meal by himself.

A short time later my older son called to let me know he was on his way home and will be there in about twenty minutes. I said ok, then informed him how his brother was cooking dinner, and for him to say it tasted good, we both laughed, and he said ok mom love you see you later.

My son was in a car with his two friends, and the driver was to drop my son off first, but he didn’t, he made a stop at some other young man's house that he had argued with earlier that day. The two young men saw him pull up, but my son and the other young man was unaware of the earlier incidence.

The driver pulled up and told my son and the other young man to get out with him, and they did, there waiting were two young men, who then pulled out guns, and started shooting at them, bullets flying everywhere, they all ran to get back into the car as fast as they could and took off.

But they all had been hit. My son was hit bad, they drove to the hospital and I was notified to come ASAP It was as if I couldn't breathe, my heart was pounding, I needed to get there as fast as possible. I began to pray and talk to God on my way there.

When I got there my family was there crying, a nurse met me, and told me my son had died". I was frozen, numb, I couldn’t move, they had to be wrong, I just talked to my son on the phone and he was on his way home, safe.

My first born, whom I loved so much, we had a bond that was so tight. My heart was broken, it ached, and I was speechless. I wanted revenge; I wanted all those responsible to pay. I wanted them to feel the pain I was feeling. My older brother wanted to handle that part.

 When my brother and I went to one of the young man houses that were responsible for the shooting, the Holy Spirit spoke to my spirit and said stop, 4give them. I said what! No, I can't. I finally cried and said God I need you to help me because I can't do it on my own. God helped change my heart toward those young men.

I had to talk to my brother a few times to get him to put his revenge away. In many ways, we helped each other heal.

Looking back, I remember being in so much pain. I had stopped eating and did not sleep. I was unable to help my younger son grieve because I did not have the strength to help myself.

I can’t believe where I am now compared to where I was then.

Thank God for our relationship, because life is short lived and family means a great deal to me. Most important is God's relationship with me.

Always 4give

Bonita Sweeney