

GOD'S AMAZING GRACE

This is the story of a woman who has gone from bondage to freedom in Christ. Sallie had been abused by her first husband and knew she had to get herself and her two children out of that home. She had no way to support them and was approached by someone about working in an "escort business." Seeing how cruelly the employees were treated, she decided to start her own service, determined to see that her employees were treated with respect and not harmed. She became known for safety, fairness and privacy. She considered the girls' family, helping them beyond the scope of escorting, always encouraging them to leave the business and assisting them in finding other employment. This was only a temporary position for them to gain a higher education level. Invited to many college graduations, she was proud of their accomplishments.

Sallie remarried after being in this business for eight years. Don was not involved in her business and continued his thirty-year career in the dental industry. After twenty-eight years of operation, things started to spiral out of control for Sallie. She attempted to quit the business, quickly learning her high profile clients would not accept that. Months after disconnecting the business phone, private detectives and business associates of these clients came to her home. She felt these visits and veiled threats were a real danger. Many former clients were nervous, knowing all the detailed information she had accumulated and feared for their personal exposure. They wanted her back in the business to ensure her continued silence. She realized she was a coward not to contact the authorities, taking that opportunity to end the business, yet, she was afraid of going to prison, loss of income, and exposure to her family and Don's work. She resumed the business with the foolish idea that by doubling the fees it would send these clients elsewhere. They liked the service even more, feeling it was more exclusive. For her protection, she started using Green Dot prepaid credit cards so that she would not have to leave her home. This gave her the exclusive distinction as the most sophisticated on-line escort business in America!

The fall of 2007, Sallie hit bottom. She made plans to commit suicide. But one evening in her desperation, she cried out to God, whom she had always believed in, having gone forward at a Billy Graham Crusade as a young person. When she cried out, "Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, help me!" in her spirit she heard, "I'm here." She was gloriously saved that evening. God intervened and just two months later, when their street filled with police, investigators, FBI, and the media, and she was arrested, her only words as she walked out the door were, "I'm free. Praise God!"

During her three months in jail, she led many women to Christ. A woman doing a Bible Study at the jail sent men from her church to minister to her husband, now out of jail but on house arrest. He also gave his life to Christ. When she was released, they both went forward in this church to publicly make their commitment to Christ. They were baptized a few weeks later. They were both sentenced in August 2008, and are serving two years in minimum security facilities. They are involved in Bible Studies and part of the Christian community in these prisons.

They were stripped of everything they owned and all the wealth they had accumulated, but nothing in the world could ever compare to what they now have in Christ, their Savior and Lord. They gladly have given it all up. Jail and prison ministry is now Sallie's passion and she looks with anticipation to the day she will be released and ready for service!

(Joyce Parker has a heart for hurting women and is the wife of Rev. Marvin Parker, Church Health Director and Administrator for the South Atlantic District. She has two married children and four grandchildren.)