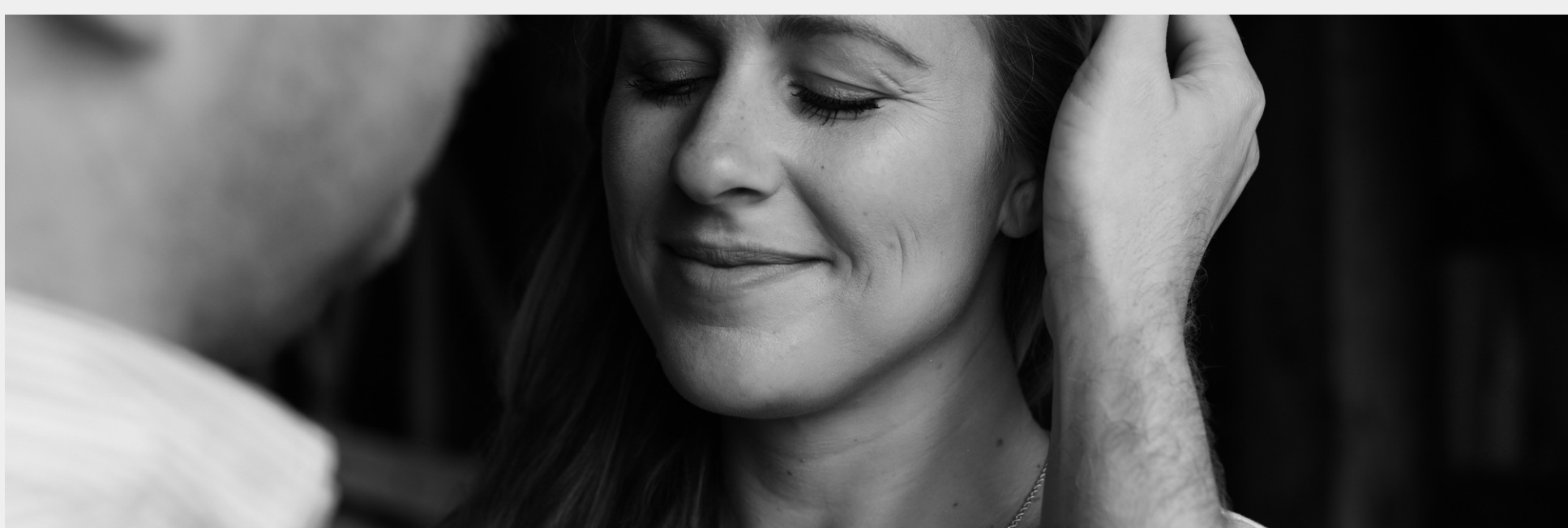




## *A MARRIAGE BACK FROM THE ASHES*



**“Our family was pretty much destroyed...  
I got to a point where I hit rock bottom.”**

Shauna and John had been married 25 years when their family fell apart. The Australian couple had been living apart for months, and divorce seemed inevitable. John had been struggling with a pornography addiction, and after several infidelities, Shauna felt like their marriage was broken beyond repair. “Our family was pretty much destroyed,” she says. “I got to a point where I hit rock bottom.” Though they desired to raise their four children in a faithful home at the beginning of their marriage, they now felt isolated and distant from God. Shame over sin and what their family had become kept Shauna and John from seeking guidance in the Christian community. Eventually, they stopped attending church altogether.

“We were in a dark valley,” Shauna explains. “We were in the ashes of our life. Earlier on, we tried to do God, and we tried to do church, but I was trying to do it all on my own strength and understanding.”

**“I was literally on my knees crying out,” she says. “It was then that I got the verse from Joel about restoring the years that life has taken (Joel 2:25). And at that time, I thought, ‘Okay, God. I trust you enough in my tiny, little faith that you will restore my family.’”**

"We were on shaky grounds to start with," Shauna continues. "When things went bad, we withdrew." It didn't take long for Shauna to hit her breaking point. She felt like her marriage was hopeless, and she didn't know where to turn. Desperate and realizing that God was the only one who could heal her family, she started to pray. "I was literally on my knees crying out," she says. "It was then that I got the verse from Joel about restoring the years that life has taken (Joel 2:25). And at that time, I thought, 'Okay, God. I trust you enough in my tiny, little faith that you will restore my family.'" **Shauna describes what happened next as an act of God.** Almost instantly, Focus on the Family articles started to appear everywhere she turned. Whether it was posts on social media or referrals from friends, the articles all seemed to be centered on marriage restoration, healing and forgiveness. Shauna read and read, sometimes for hours on end. The content gave her guidance for the difficulties she was facing, **and after a time, she began to believe that the Lord could rebuild her marriage through faith.** "The articles were massively helpful because it got us off a really destructive path and put us onto a path of reconciliation and restoration — not only in our marriage, but also back with our relationship with God," she says.



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John, on the other hand, had been feeling blinded to faith for a long time. However, when Shauna finally worked up the courage to share what she had been learning and reading, he felt like God removed scales from his eyes and he could finally see clearly again. "Due to her faithfulness, crying to God on her knees, **it opened my eyes again to how**

**God can change us."** John says. "He cleared my mind, and I could see us being together for the rest of our lives." Now, through prayer, counseling, and community, Shauna and John's marriage has been renewed for two years. It wasn't an easy reconciliation though.

They had to learn how to rebuild their individual relationships with God before rebuilding their marriage. Shauna says it was only through faith and God's goodness that their family was healed.

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As part of their restoration process, Shauna and John participated in Focus on the Family Australia's Real Life: Real Love online marriage conference, where they gained tools and strategies to help understand each other's reactions and motives in conflict. Shauna says they wished they had known about the seminar years earlier. "We could both sit there and go, 'This is how I react. This is my trigger. This is why you react the way you do,'" she explains. "It has been a game changer." Today, Shauna and John still read and listen to Focus on the Family content frequently. John found Focus's broadcasts on the local radio station, and

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he listens to the messages in the car each morning on his way to work. Meanwhile, Shauna continues to read articles. Instead of studying how to fix her circumstances, she now reads to gain advice on walking rightly with Christ and in marriage. "You just don't

know who might hear or read the message that's going to change their lives," she says. "When they are in their darkest moment, that one article or podcast from an organization like Focus on the Family — it can change a lot."



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