

November 18, 2016

Dad:

August 2014 was the last time I ever saw or heard from you. That day, I pleaded for your heart. I asked you for more relationship. I told you that I didn't need your love anymore, that I had a husband in Nate and a father in Doug who both really loved me. *But I wanted your love.* You told me it was "B.S.," and you walked out of my life forever. You never looked back. The day I begged for your heart was the day you abandoned me for good.

Today, I looked at your wedding pictures with a young woman from the Philippines. Someone sent me a text, telling me there were pictures of my dad marrying someone who looked younger than me on Facebook. When I saw them, I couldn't believe my eyes. There you were, standing center stage in a group of young Filipinos, looking like the adult chaperone at a high school prom. But the girl standing next to you was your *bride*, and you were the *groom*. At first, I wanted to laugh. You looked so ridiculous! But then I realized that it wasn't ridiculous to you at all. This is what you had always wanted: to be married to someone younger than your daughter - someone who desperately needed to be rescued - someone who would never question you - someone who would always be grateful for whatever you decide to give or not give - someone you could use to feed your sexual addiction.... so you went half way around the globe to find the girl of your dreams to be your wife.

Somehow in that moment, it all made sense. All of the questions. All of the unresolved mysteries. Now I know why you completely pulled away and wouldn't physically touch me or emotionally engage me when I developed into a young woman. I know why you were always so scared that someone would accuse you of sexually abusing one of our foster kids. I know why you always flirted with my high school friends, and why you continued to pursue high school girls after I was long out of high school. You had a fantasy. And this year in August, two years after you turned your back on me for good, you claimed your fantasy as your own.

Joy has two small children, so once again, you have an instant family to pretend with. I thought about how you traded our family for sex. I thought about the girl you slept with in Kansas City, Heather. She had kids too, right? I think they were the instant family you flew to Minneapolis....or was that a different family? I was thinking about Janet and her family. Eventually you traded that family out too. I don't know how many more families you've traded out in the past couple of

years, but now, you've got Joy and her two kids. But they don't actually live with you in the United States yet. So you're still pretending with Graci that she is your only young child.

Ecclesiastes 3 talks about how there is a time to be silent and a time to speak. This is my time to speak. This is my heart, raw and unfiltered. For 30 years, you've had a choice in how you respond to my heart. As you read this letter, you will have that same choice. I wanted to give you the chance to read it before other people read it. I felt I at least owed you that much as someone who was supposed to be my dad.

While there were a number of players in the Valleybrook story, I know the role you played. You laid the groundwork for so much of what happened, telling lies behind the scenes, trying to cover your tracks in preparation for the day you were discovered. You've continued to blame Doug Lebsack for all the things you've done to your family, but Doug Lebsack can't make you into a horrible dad or terrible husband. He can't make you abandon your family, and he certainly can't force you to sleep with other women. You're the only one responsible for what you've done. You've played your lies to people who are just as angry about the truth as you are. They want their lies, their sin, and their denial as much as you do, so they're willing to back you in your "It's not my fault all this stuff happened; Doug Lebsack is the problem." It's so ridiculous.

The lead overseer at Valleybrook Church, Greg Mitchell, was a lie. I want to say to people: *You thought he loved his family and set the greatest example for other families? You thought he had a good relationship with his wife, and that is why they met with countless couples to help them with their marriages? What a joke! While my mom was actually invested in her marriage and all of your marriages, he was sleeping with multiple women in the Chippewa Valley and beyond. He was busy meeting his sexual needs on Craigslist, one contact at a time. He was so busy lying, in fact, that his wife and kids meant nothing to him, unless of course in a moment, he could tell a story about them for the sake of his image.*

I admit I was shocked when I found out how deep your sexual addiction ran. I knew it was there; I had talked to you about it before. But as you've already seen, no matter how much you live in denial, it doesn't stop the truth from bubbling to the surface. Pretending only lasts for a short time, and when God says that it's time, the truth shows up to wipe you out. The truth is coming for you again, Dad. You may think you're in the clear, but God is going to pull the covers back on all of it.

You used our family to perform for other people. We made you appear to be a great guy, a good dad, a good husband, and an honest man of God, as you stood at Valleybrook Church *dirty as hell!!!!* Although there was a lot of denial in our family and a ton of pride around being a Mitchell, I always knew something wasn't right. I never felt the love of my father. You never showed affection, love, compassion, care, or concern. I felt like a huge inconvenience for you, just to meet my basic needs. I remember Mom taking me shopping in secret to buy me necessities like jeans, bras, and underwear, and she would use cash so that you wouldn't get mad about the credit card bill. She would say, "Don't let your dad see those bags."

I grew up in an environment of secrets and lies, and it was full of codependence. We were trained to protect your feelings, to make you feel only the things you wanted to feel. When I needed to get my needs met, I had to fight for it, which usually meant my emotion would build until I became a victim, and Mom would finally have to deal with my drama. You constantly drove us to spend less, eat out less, shop less, work harder, do better, look better, and the list goes on. However, no matter how hard we tried, deep down I knew it would never be good enough for you. You would never love us no matter what we did. You would never get the help that you needed, help that would free your heart enough to care about someone other than yourself. You were always selfish, and bottom line, money was your one true love.

"Well just wait a minute," someone might say, "he was always serving: moving people, hosting people, putting homeless people up for the night, taking high school kids on a mission trip, leading bible studies at his house etc." That is true, but none of it was genuine. It was all for your image. It was all about what the public would see. You made sure that everyone continued to believe that you were who you demonstrated you were. This is what you lived for; this is what mattered to you. It didn't matter what was going on in your own house. When someone walked into our house, you turned on the charm, the funny guy, full of life and stories, especially if they were female..... Go figure!! The Greg Mitchell that I knew as my dad was shut down, disengaged, always working out, and doing things that would benefit himself. In my ten years of competing in gymnastics, I went to State multiple years, and even placed 1st place All-Around at State twice. I also went to Nationals one year, and I took 2nd place All-Around in my age group. In those years, gymnastics meant everything to me, but you only came to two competitions that I can recall. What does that say about who you really were?

Behind closed doors, we were living in a house full of control. When you couldn't control something or someone, you would just jump ship. That is how every one of your relationships was

and still is. If you don't have a good deal of control in the relationship or a level of respect from the other person, you just ditch out of the relationship. That is why you always had a problem with me, because even though I gave you the benefit of the doubt most of the time, I didn't comply to your control, and more than that, I confronted it often. On multiple occasions, I begged you for more relationship. That began long before Doug became our pastor.

I would ask you to hug me more, because I needed your affection. I would ask why you didn't ever call me just to talk and see how I was doing, to tell me that you missed me. I asked you to be more honest about what was going on in your heart and share your feelings. I asked if we could spend time together, not always surrounded by my kids and Graci. More than anything, I wanted you to desire me as a daughter. I knew that without counseling/professional help with your own story, I would never have that. Even so, three years ago, you approached me to ask if I would speak with you at a men's breakfast sometime. I asked you why, and you said that you thought we could talk to them about how our relationship was healed and share with the men how to do that with their daughters. I told you I would actually need to experience a healed relationship with you before I would ever even consider doing something like that. I couldn't believe you were actually asking me to speak with you about a topic that was so personally painful for me.

And let's not forget your famous concussion - the excuse you used to explain your bizarre behaviors in recent years. Both Mom and I are RNs. We have medical training. We constantly asked you to seek medical attention. We begged you to get tests, to do something, anything to help your brain heal. Not only did you not listen, you actually made fun of us, and then you got mad at us. I could never figure that one out...until it dawned on me. If you went for testing and you were OK, you couldn't use your "concussion" as a cover for your sin anymore.

I remember when you left for the cabin, using it as a "peaceful" place where you could go to get better. You were going to spend time with God and have a quiet place to get help for your head. The truth of that weekend is that you went to the cabin to have sex with Heather who was up from Kansas City for Rock Fest. You got help for the wrong head, Dad! Once again, you looked so noble, but you pretended to have character to cover up your affair! And in true fashion, once our family found out, you were expecting all of us to cover up for you and present the public image that you had groomed us for! And to think that there are still people in Eau Claire who think your head injury was real. Maybe it started out being real, but if it was, you milked it for all it was worth. People still feel sorry for you and excuse you because of your concussion, just like you wanted them to. Not long after, you just took off on a Sunday morning. Somehow, word spread through

church that you were going to the International House of Prayer in Kansas City to pray and figure things out. People were so relieved to hear that you were seriously seeking God. But once again, you were going to have more sex with Heather in Kansas City. You would use anything to lie. For you, it was just great because people believed you!

The last conversation that I had with you, with tears streaming down my face I said, "I love you, Dad, and this is an invitation for a deeper relationship with me." I had no idea about what you truly had been up to. Like I said at the beginning of this letter, you walked out on my heart that day. The end! Shortly after that, your Craigslist affairs began to rise to the surface, and the truth started coming out about everything. I was so relieved when everything started to come out, because I never felt like things made sense. I would always say to Mom, "Mom, he doesn't care about me, don't you get it!?" She always brushed those comments off in her denial and landed on the idea that I was being a dramatic teenager.

The truth is that you didn't ever love or care about me. As a young teenage girl, I walked into one unhealthy relationship after the next. You watched it all, but you didn't say one word to me about it. The first relationship was a friend. She taught me how to be seductive, to dress and act in a way to get male attention. Most importantly, I was taught on a deeper level how to live codependent. You watched as I began to dress inappropriately, wear too much makeup, act seductive, and get lost in the codependency, losing all of my other friendships in the process.

Then I started dating my first boyfriend. The guy was manipulative, controlling, and full of lies. Yet as the relationship started to develop, what did you do? You invited him to live in our house and sleep on the same floor as your daughter. He pushed me to get physical quickly in our relationship, under your roof. Your middle-school aged daughter was being sexually abused, and you invited it and watched it happen. Even when I would say "no" he would push the situation to get what he wanted. I would cry, and he wouldn't care. I was in desperate need of male affection and love. So of course, I would end up with a loser guy and lose my virginity at the age of 15! Of course my dad, the church overseer, would ignore the whole thing!

God rescued me from that relationship miraculously, only for me to stumble into another codependent relationship a few years later. Once again, I gave myself in all of the ways I never wanted to, because I was so desperate to be loved and so aware of what was required of me. I would cry every night asking God to forgive me, and I felt stuck again. God rescued me again, and

this time, He put me on more solid ground, where He began to speak healing and truth into my heart. He began to change how I viewed myself.

Then in 2008, I finally worked up the courage to tell you my story, because I was sure that you had missed it and had no idea what happened to me. I told you about the sexual abuse, the using, the manipulation, and the lies. When I told you everything and cried before you, all you said was “I’m sorry that stuff happened.” You stood there awkwardly for a few minutes and then left me crying. You didn’t hug me or anything!!!! That was it; you didn’t care!!! What kind of dad is that?!! You never managed to show up for any of your family, not even in our greatest pain.

Throughout the years, you would give us what I call “hush money.” This is where you would give us a generous chunk of money, or pay for something that we needed at the time, but there was always a catch. We were supposed to be duped by that gesture and carry on protecting your image. Even to this day, you send money to the boys, but you’re done with me. You jumped ship as you always do when you find out that there is no chance that you will ever be able to steer it. You knew you were losing control of me when I told you that I didn’t want any more of your money, if there wasn’t going to be a relationship. I felt it was cheap, and your money meant nothing to me. I could tell you were angry, because money was your only leverage. You had no intention of having a relationship with me or anyone else in our family. So if I no longer shared your love for money, then what? I could feel the fear rising up in you as you were losing control of me.

You were afraid of being unveiled for all to see. You couldn’t keep up your act if the truth came out: the truth that you didn’t care, that you didn’t love any of us, that you had a monster sexual addiction, and that you had been pretending with everyone that surrounded you. When you started feeling at risk, you quickly turned in your resignation letter to the overseer team. At that point, I knew there was much more happening than any of us could imagine. It was all confirmed when Jeremiah found the Craigslist contacts on your phone. You had many actions that followed that. Mom wanted you to get help and work everything out in your marriage, but you didn’t. You wanted freedom to finally be able to live out your selfishness and addictions without being held back. That was the best gift that you ever gave Mom. She finally is free from you and able to pursue healing, and a life that she never could’ve had with you. You never cared about your wife, kids, grandkids, your siblings, or anyone. You cared about yourself and getting what you wanted, which is money, sex, and freedom from real relationship.

There is a lot of confusion in a home when the father is living a double life with such a convincing performance. I was always trying to convince myself that you were invested in me, because you paid the bills, or you paid for me to be in gymnastics. One thing that made it really confusing was when you occasionally pretended to walk into more healing, or when you pretended to be full of repentance...tears and all. This one is so clear now, because I understand what an excellent actor you are and I understand repentance so much clearer. Repentance means as you move forward, you walk into change. True repentance is in the heart.

Another confusing area for me was when you took us on vacation every year. Wasn't that a loving thing to do? Actually, no. The whole trip was based on your selfishness. We always went where you wanted to go, and every detail had to go your way, or we would have a crabby, pouting dad on our hands. Then there were the times we played football with the neighbor kids. Guess what? I was the one who pushed for that, because I wanted time with you and our family, and I was hoping that I would have an emotional connection with you because I got a touchdown, or that maybe you would tackle me just to be silly and I could experience a physical connection with my dad. I know for you, it was just another opportunity to be "awesome" and show off for the neighbor kids.

I need to mention another area of deep dysfunction that has really troubled me. I remember when you would occasionally sit with the boys and me in our living room and read an absolutely depressing article about a child that was abused, or that died, or something horrific that was tormenting. Then you would say "goodnight" as we all went to bed, alone with our anxiety. Sometimes, we would be crying at the end of the story, and you would just laugh at us... I now understand that you got sick pleasure from torturing us emotionally, because it made us feel what you felt every day. That is so codependent. I still to this day cannot watch or read something that has drama in it before I go to bed, or I get sick to stomach and have anxiety that is absolutely overwhelming. It is that kind of torment that I often lived under as a kid.

I always felt uneasy when Mom wasn't home. I used to think that it was normal for kids to want their mom so much that they slept on the kitchen floor, waiting for her to come home at the end of her evening shift, usually sometime after midnight. You would be fast asleep in your bed, and you didn't care about what your kids were feeling, or that they weren't getting any sleep. Your needs always took precedence. You liked that we were scared. You liked that you could control our emotions with those stories. You only tortured us with that stuff when mom wasn't home, because she would never have allowed that! It was that messed up!!

How were my brothers and I supposed to grow up in that environment, with someone who laughed at our emotions and didn't take us seriously? Kids need to be taken seriously by their parents especially emotionally. I see so much more clearly, now that I am a parent. I am fighting every day to take my kids seriously, to see their emotions and validate them. Nate and I are constantly discussing what we see in them, what they need, how to help them become who God has created them to be. We want more than anything for our kids to see themselves clearly and to live with confidence and security, because they know who they are. We want them to know how loved they are, and that no matter what, they have a solid foundation to support them in any area of their lives. Our kids know that when they need comfort, all they have to do is ask. We are not perfect parents, not by a long shot. But I can see the difference. We care. We try. Our deep love that flows inside of us for our children causes us to daily push forward with everything that lives in us, to selflessly give to our children. When I think back about your parenting, all I can say is, "Thanks for the money that you gave us when you felt like it, and for stingily meeting our basic human needs, but understand me when I say that I would've eaten rice and beans everyday if it meant that I could've had your heart!"

Just like you've never seen me, you don't see Graci either. You're playing a game with her. It's sad to me that you are continuing to use your kids for your image. I wish you would have learned from your first time around with your relationship with your kids and chose to do things different with Graci. It's clear that you won't. You just continue with all of your relationships to control, manipulate, use, and lie. This is the only path that you know, and you don't plan on ever learning a new one. I know God has that little girl's heart though, and just like God used all of your wrongs in my story for His glory, I know that he has a plan to do the same in Graci's story. I can't wait to see who God has created Graci to be.

You still think that you are in the right. Mom told me a while ago that you said you wanted to come to Texas to get me out of "the cult." Give me a break!! If you really believed any of it and cared at all, you would've been here a long time ago. You don't believe all of that crap about Doug. You're just using him as a diversion to block people from seeing what you're up to. The truth is that you are a coward, and you can't own what you really are, and what you've been up to all of these years.

It has required a lot for me to see the reality of our family and the dad who stood at the head of it. God knew that it would. I kept feeling God telling me to talk to you, to confront you about your relationships. In my heart, I believed that I was doing that to help you, to get you on the right

path to healing, so that you could work to restore everything that you had destroyed. I felt an urgency every time God spoke to me about you. However, the truth was, God had me speak to you all of those different times, so that as I confronted you, I could see the truth of what lived in you come pouring out. My denial broke more every time we had a “talk.” God was doing it for my healing, not yours. God broke my denial, and although it was so incredibly painful, He has since restored so much in my heart. He is obliterating the family curse that you gave me as an inheritance.

I have a new inheritance now, and it is a gift from God. I am a new person that you wouldn't even recognize. I am not beat down from the things that have happened, because of the long list of things that you did to me. I am more alive than ever, so you and your allies should've tried harder to destroy me and my family, because my God had huge plans, and he won't rest until they ALL come to fruition. I want you to know that I am going to school right now, and I am getting my master's degree in nursing. I currently have a 4.0. Since beginning to sever my relationship with you and finding so much freedom and life, God has used Doug's love as a father to fill me up. I'm finally inheriting an academic ability that I never knew I had, but I do!! My long-term plan is to be a professor teaching nursing students at a university. That's certainly a different inheritance what I ever received from you. It feels so good to tell you that without looking for your approval and love, because I no longer need or want that from you.

I sometimes watch Nate with the kids, especially the girls, and I see his love for them. I often wonder what my life would have looked like if you would have looked like Nate, invested in your family. I'm starting to understand what that would have done for me, because I'm seeing the fruit of finally having a father's love. I am a woman of great character. I am bold, smart, funny, and beautiful. God created me so unique, and against all odds, I see truth and live with a sound mind. I am not powerless; in fact, God has created me to be dominant. With everything that I went through, I am finally coming to see what God has put inside of me. I am discerning. I am decisive. I am extremely capable of anything that I put my heart to. I am loving, nurturing, and selfless.

These are the qualities that you tried so hard to extinguish. They made you afraid, because you knew you couldn't hide much longer. You worked really hard to put me in my place. I will never be in that place again! I will continue to move forward into my new inheritance, into everything that God has created me to be, and I will continue to live in that reality without codependency. I never think of you with fond memories, missing something old that I used to have with you. You have defiled everything. Nothing can ever be looked at the same again. Anything that I used to

hold up as a pleasant memory is dead now, because of the truth that has been revealed about the liar, pretender, and disgusting person that you really are. I let go of every hope that I ever had for you and our family. I put my hope in Christ, and I trust in his will. He will have the final say over you. I place it all in his hands. I choose to step out of God's way, so that He can do with you whatever He feels is just. His ways are far beyond anything that I could ever imagine. He is a father worth trusting. You are a father worth severing.

One last word: You really hurt your grandkids' hearts when you chose to abandon them for sex. Landon has had a really difficult time letting go of "Grandpa Greg." It's something that Nate and I have spent a lot of time helping him understand, deal with, and let go. I explained to Landon and Brinnley that you were just like Prince Hans in *Frozen*, although it seemed like Prince Hans loved Anna in the movie, at the end, we see that he was pretending the whole time. He was lying and cheating, and he never really cared about her. I think that pretty much sums you up. I also explained to them that I was writing a letter to you, because I had things that I needed to say in order for my heart to heal. Because I take my children's emotions seriously, I asked them if they needed to say anything to you, for their hearts to heal. This is what Brinnley said "We missed you. You were mean. You made me feel sad, and you lied." Landon said this, "You are the stinkiest, naughtiest, and meanest grandpa ever, and I want to choke your neck. You make me feel angry, and I do not want to see you ever. I want to karate your face and pull your hair."

This is the man that Joy Mitchell has married. This is the true fruit of who you are and what you have done. And all the blame in the world can't cover up that kind of truth. What happens when Joy wakes up and figures it all out?!! Then what? Are you going to get another "concussion?" Or are you just going to trade your new family out for a newer one again?!! Sadly, this has become your legacy. You earned it, fair and square. This the mark you've chosen to make on this world. May God have the final word over your life. My final words for you are truly unfit to print.

Jessica