

Undaunted

“From six to thirteen years of age I was homosexually raped in my own home by a worker on our family farm...and my parents wouldn’t stop it” — Josh McDowell

Josh McDowell is the author or co-author of over 150 books. His book *Evidence That Demands a Verdict* was ranked 13th in the *Christianity Today* list of most influential evangelical books published after World War II. In 1961, at the age of twenty two, Josh became a traveling representative of Campus Crusade International, with which he has been closely affiliated to this day. He has gained worldwide fame and respect as a leading apologist for the faith. Well-known as an articulate speaker, Josh has addressed more than 46 million people, giving over 27,000 talks in 139 countries. We were fortunate enough to have Josh speak at an MGF breakfast event in 2013.

What we were expecting from Josh was a talk filled with great stories from his exciting ministry of fifty years. We were not anticipating an account of the brutally traumatic experience of sexual abuse which pocked his formative years. The transparency and honesty of his talk was uncomfortable to hear, but very engrossing. That part of Josh’s life was not a secret. However, he did not start publicly sharing it until the release of the 2011 movie about his early life—*Undaunted*.

There’s no need to recount the details of Josh’s terrible story of abuse. That segment from the video of his talk speaks for itself. However, the post-script of that experience is worth highlighting. After trusting Christ with his life as a sophomore in college, Josh knew he had to tell someone about what had happened to him during that horrible seven-year period. He wasn’t looking for answers or for counseling. He just had a burning need and desire to tell someone—someone who would believe him, especially since his own parents did not.

Josh met with a local pastor who led him to Christ and he blurted out his experience. Being believed was like having a huge weight lifted. The pastor went on to take Josh under his wing for six months and mentored him out of the Word of God, pointing out how relevant Scripture was to his situation. During those six months, Josh saw his life and attitudes changing. At the end of that period, the pastor told Josh he needed to forgive the man who abused him. Josh’s initial reaction was “NO WAY...I want that man (Wayne) to burn in hell and I will escort him there.” Josh’s problem was that he knew the Bible was true. He knew God commanded him to forgive. He didn’t like it, and didn’t feel good about it, but he knew he needed to be obedient.

Josh drove to Jackson, Michigan from Battle Creek and knocked on his abuser’s door. Wayne opened the door and Josh didn’t mince words, telling him that what he had done to him for those seven years was very evil. He then told him that he had come to know Jesus Christ as his Savior and Lord. The next thing Josh said to him, he didn’t want to say. He knew intellectually he had to, but emotionally he didn’t want to say it. However, out of obedience to God, he said, “Wayne, I’ve come here to tell you that Jesus died as much for you as He did for me. I forgive you.”

Josh told us that if he hadn’t done that, he wouldn’t have been with us that morning. “I would have destroyed my marriage, my family and my life. That’s what bitterness and resentment does when there’s no forgiveness. That man would have controlled my life to this day.”

Jesus Christ has walked through the slough of despond and the valley of death with Josh. Josh is dependent on Him every day because of his past—a constant reminder of where he would be without His healing grace at work in his life. Our experience may not be as terrible and visceral as Josh’s, but the question remains...

“Where would you and we be today without Him?”

Click on the link to watch Josh’s 5 minute story

<https://vimeo.com/370734149>