

Channel 27 News and Entertainment, Grant County
Feature article January 23, 2025

Jodi Lynch's life began in pieces—her parents were filing for divorce when they discovered they were pregnant. Born into that fracture, she became a third child in a broken home in the small, tight-knit town of Fairmount. Her grandmother, a devoutly religious woman with her hair always pinned in a bun, stepped in to help her mother raise Jodi and her siblings.

"I always knew who God was," Jodi said, reflecting on the roots of faith planted early in her chaotic life.

Faith was her foundation, but she had no shield for what came into her life. When she was five, Jodi's mother married a man she met at a factory job. He was an alcoholic who never drank at home but came back drunk three nights a week, fists ready. "What did that mean for us kids?" Jodi asked rhetorically. It meant a childhood spent in fear. This meant no birthday parties, no friends allowed over, and being labeled by the town as "one of those kids."

By 15, Jodi was looking for connection anywhere she could find it. She lost her virginity at 15, got pregnant at 16, and gave birth to her son at 17. "We were babies trying to raise a baby," she said of her doomed relationship with the father. Without the stability of faith or family, Jodi turned to alcohol. What started as a coping mechanism turned into a daily necessity. By 23, she was a full-blown alcoholic. "I ruined my son's childhood," she said bluntly. "I did everything except parent him."

At 29, Jodi got married for the first time. Ten years later, the marriage collapsed under the weight of her drinking. At 41, after years of drowning in alcohol, she prayed at the altar and was delivered. Jodi never touched another drop of alcohol. But that was just one chapter of her story.

Spiraling Further

Not long after, Jodi's mother fell ill, and Jodi moved back home with her son to care for her. Addiction crept back in, but this time it was worse. Jodi and her son began using drugs together—a nightmare scenario for any parent. "I was using drugs on a daily basis with my only child," she admitted. "A parent's nightmare, right?"

One morning, her mother, hooked up to an oxygen tank, dropped her cigarette. In seconds, flames erupted to the ceiling. Her mother survived the fire but passed away three weeks later from her injuries. The trauma left Jodi shattered. The night terrors started soon after. Unable to sleep and desperate for an escape, she turned to methamphetamines. "At 48 years old, I was smoking meth daily," she said. "I had no home and no life. Everything had burned to the ground—literally and figuratively."

Life didn't relent. At 50, Jodi ran into an old acquaintance from her drug-using days. She relapsed and got arrested, earning her first felony. The charges came with an electronic ankle

monitor, forcing her to move to a halfway house. It wasn't salvation. A roommate relapsed, and Jodi, who had nothing to do with it, but was treated as guilty by association. Disillusioned, she packed her car, drove to the jail, and offered to turn herself in. "Jail didn't want me," she said bitterly.

A Glimmer of Hope

Jodi stumbled upon hope where she least expected it: an AA meeting. Someone suggested Papa's House, a sober living community, but the application process was daunting for someone like Jodi, who knew little about computers. Frustrated, she walked into the facility during dinner and demanded an application. "Three days later, they called and said I was accepted," she said, tears in her voice. Her arrival was met with a banner that read "Welcome Home."

For someone who hadn't felt the warmth of a home in years, it was a life-altering moment. "When your house has burned to the ground and you've been homeless, that banner... it was everything. God had me exactly where He wanted me." At Papa's House, Jodi found something she hadn't felt in decades—family. They ate meals together, talked about their days, and rebuilt the values she had long lost. "I went from taking everything from the community to giving back to it," she said proudly. She began mentoring others and formed bonds that helped her heal.

The Fight Isn't Over

Just as life seemed to stabilize, Jodi received a devastating diagnosis: breast cancer. "At first, it felt like the weight of the world," she said. "But God reminded me—when the battle is bigger than you, it's not yours to fight. It's God's battle." Despite the diagnosis, Jodi remains steadfast in her purpose. She has started speaking in jails and prisons, sharing her story to inspire others. "If I can use my pain for His glory, then it was all worth it," she said. Her message is clear: no matter how far you've fallen, it's never too late to rise.

A Message for the Broken

Jodi's life is not a polished redemption story. It is raw, messy, and riddled with pain.

It is also a testament to resilience.

To those still trapped in the throes of addiction, Jodi has this to say:

"God's got your to-do list on His refrigerator.

No matter how far you run, He's not done with you yet."