

My name is Maria Elena Rivera Olivas. There are nine brothers & sisters in my family. I am a single 33 year old. I am a lawyer and notary public with experience as a general administrative in different companies. I am originally from Leon, Nicaragua. I was able to go to the University because of a grant I received. I made a commitment that I would excel in my classes. When I was close to finishing my career, my father passed away. I thought with the pain of his death I was going to decline in my studies, but it was the contrary. That was when God gave me more strength to continue fighting. Since then, I have been responsible for my mother, who is very old now. Also, I am the only source of income in my family.

Ever since I was very young, I have worked part-time to help with my studies, while at the University. The grant was not enough. I worked as dental assistant, a teacher, a secretary, etc. I worked at whatever people gave me the opportunity to do. After I graduated from the University, I started working in a law office to get experience, but the pay was low and work was very irregular. As a result, I decided to take a more secure job in another place. I found a job as a general manager in human resources at the Zona franca (sewing industry). At the same time, I was also working for another law office in order to keep up with my career. I acquired lot of experience and I met many people, but work was very irregular. I got a good opportunity to work with a company called Union FENOSA, in west side. I worked there for a long time as a financial administrator. I was in charge of the budget for Leon and Chinandega, as well as the other 12 towns. I had many responsibilities in this job, and I was making good money; however, the pressure and stress were very high. I again gained lots of experience. Then I decided to work on my own, but soon decided this wouldn't be a good idea, because of the unstableness of my profession. The judicial system in Nicaragua is very corrupt.

I was baptized when I was one month old in a Catholic church. I was catholic for 29 years. Then one day, without knowing it, I went to an evangelistic service, and I accepted Christ in my life. Ever since then He has not let me go. I was baptized again at 30 years of age, believing in a Christ full of power. I repented of all of my sins. After I was baptized, the enemy came and I was detoured from God's ways. I took my sight away from Christ, and I got lost. I lost everything - I lost my spiritual life, my work, my profession, my personal life, my partner, my family. I lost it all. I fell into a deep depression. I didn't want to know anything, and there were days when I didn't eat or get out of bed. Throughout this time, I had many dreams where I battled against the enemy, but I didn't know what they meant.

I started attending a Christian church again, and after months I asked the Lord to guide my life. I went through a seven day fasting. I asked God to forgive me and re-dedicated my life to Him. I told Him I would serve Him in all that I could. This is where Eddie Mendoza who works for Project H.O.P.E. came in the picture. I believe God used him as a messenger. He took me to Project H.O.P.E. and introduced me around. After much prayer and fasting, God led me to begin working for Project full time in September 2007.

Project H.O.P.E. has been a blessing, not only for my country, but for me personally and also for my church and the ministries within our church – for example the women's jail ministry in Chinandega, the women with cancer in the hospital in Leon and to the single mothers. My God has used Project H.O.P.E. as His instrument to return hope and the will to continue fighting for my life, and for many other lives that are going through the same things I was going through at one time.

Thank you Project H.O.P.E.

Maria Elena Rivera