

[00:23:30] **Rod:** yeah, Deb, you were serially abused. There was physical abuse. Your book is filled with words like whippings, beatings, strappings. Leo was a monster. He was clearly the ringleader in the abuse, but there appear to be a lot of others that participated as well. In I think it was chapter 29, you wrote in your book, every morning before school, a different brother showed up to administer a beating. How many people participated in this?

[00:24:07] **Deb:** it was, it was, it was our modus operandi. It's how it worked. Children were given up and I have for years wondered how this could happen. But our parents were able to set aside that mental of protection and give us up into the good of the commune to make us better people. Uh, this is my question and will continue to be what were they trying to do?

Because I was a child. I was sinless, but in trying to make me sinless, they made me a sinner. They made me a liar. They made me a snake. Um, I wasn't a natural liar. I would say what was in, my mind. And I would say it with all I was worth. I have written in my book, how at just barely two years old, I had, I had a good vocabulary.

I, I was always in front of my sister. We were always in the same space, but she was, she would be behind me And I would speak for her, but I, somebody asked me, oh, you must be one of the you, one of those Dalton twins. And I said, I am not adult than I am a Christian, because that was the essence of my childhood.

My family name was not important. My status as a Christian was. And so that was emphatically placed in my mind. By the time I

was two years old. So when. When everyone in there is basically of like mind And they stay, these are the things that we're going to do, but we're going to give the power to this one leader, Leo Mercier.

That means we are going to take direction from him. And every adult was culpable as far as I'm concerned,

[00:26:16] **Rod:** And he would tell people, you beat this person

[00:26:20] **Deb:** he would designate people to go and shoot somebody's dog or beat somebody. He would call them to the office and have them beat. Sometimes we didn't even know what we were getting a beating for.

We were just there getting the beating.

[00:26:34] **Rod:** time to get your beating.

[00:26:36] **Deb:** It was, yeah. And it could come out of the blue. We didn't know when it was going to happen when Esther and I were littler, um, the really the really bad beatings didn't start until we were after, until after we were about Six, years old. And the first really terrible beating we got is when he sent men to kill our little dog.

And that changed my entire paradigm and they cut our hair off.

And by now I've lived for Six years in an environment where I have heard every day of my life. If you cut your hair off, you are an abomination. If you're a

[00:27:21] **Rod:** cut your hair because of some perceived thing you did wrong as a, how old were you? six. seven years old.

[00:27:28] **Deb:** They said, they said that we teased our dog and pulled his tail. And that is why he bit, our little neighbor, our little companion. She came over to play a little dog bidder, and I don't know why he bitter. It was children and a dog. You know, we were, we were children. If we were sick, she was probably five or, or younger.

And

[00:27:55] **Rod:** And was this dog a puppy at the time?

[00:27:58] **Deb:** he was, he was not a puppy. He, it was probably between a year or two years old.

[00:28:03] **Rod:** Yeah.

[00:28:03] **Deb:** Um, but he was just, there was so much joy in owning that dog and, and being part of that, that little dog. And course, every dog that we had after daddy met William, Branham was, named Fritz. So this little dog was named Fritz and we just played with him.

We played with him in the yard. He was always out there with us. And our little neighbor came over and he bit her. And the next thing I knew, we were getting our hair cut off and he made my mother and my brother, he sent my dad to tell my mother he was going to cut our hair off. They stood us in, they stood us up, my mom and my brother.

Brushed our hair out and they let him cut our hair off. My parents, let him cut our hair off.

[00:28:53] **Rod:** How short did they cut it?

[00:28:55] **Deb:** They just jagged it off above our ears, you know, it wasn't like the hair cutting. I got later in life, but

[00:29:03] **Rod:** and this was, this was after they shot your dog in front of you.

[00:29:07] **Deb:** this was after they shot the dog. And that, that was probably my first experience with just seeing something die, you know, just animation gone, just a, a happy dog, turned into meat.

And it's, a, it's a crushing thing for children to experience,

especially when their hearts are so new and young and full of love for something as simple as a puppy. and this was when I understood that my parents were not in control. My parents were doing what they were told and my mother, no matter how much she resisted was always brought into line.

[00:29:54] **Rod:** And, and the beatings got so bad that I think you relate in your book that you were a lash 150 times once.

[00:30:04] **Deb:** I've described that. That was the worst beating I ever got in there. And there's probably 40 kids who were in that same room and got those same things.

[00:30:12] **Rod:** And it's bizarre because actually the Bible says that you can't get more than 39 lashes at one time. So these guys are basically thrown out the Bible and they just said, okay, we're going to beat these kids and beat them beyond their ability to endure it. It's just, it's, bizarre.

[00:30:30] **Deb:** Well, and I don't know how, how anyone, if anyone can relate to getting 30, 30 swats with a leather belt

and the absolute agony of that, And the days of bruises and, and it was, it was part of our lives. It's how we lived. And mother, mother was just, our mama was just broken by it. She would cry. She would put us in a tub with Epsom salts and she would dip water and she would cry, but she couldn't change it And there were times when I don't even know if they knew we were being summoned for a beating, but the beating that I described, the significant beating that I described in the book, I only told my own story, but there were 40 other kids there who endured the same thing that day,

[00:31:28] **Rod:** Who all got beat.

[00:31:32] **Deb:** Yeah.

Including the one who got his head put through the wall.

when you have been hit 25 or 30 times with a leather belt, you can't feel anything, but the fire, unless you hit a new spot. And if they had a new spot, the agony is Jen, then just multiplied by 10, 20, a hundred, you know, So...

[00:31:57] **Rod:** And they invented ways to make it hurt as much as possible.

[00:32:01] **Deb:** well, they invented ways to keep us in position So they could do it. And this was one of the things that we watched happen, you know, kids and we were embarrassed for each other when a weapon would start and you would jump and you would squirm and you would put your hands back and you try to get out of the way.

So we were all embarrassed for each other, watching us, trying to do it. Any kid would try to do get away from a beating. So they, they took one of those metal folding chairs. You can see anywhere in the world today, we had lots of them and they pushed that against the wall. And the kids bent over that chair while two men

beat them to get there, because how do you administer 50 to 150 swats to 40 kids without being absolutely worn out you can't.

[00:32:50] **Rod:** So they would take turns.

[00:32:52] **Deb:** they would just both whip you at the same time, alternating spots. But if you didn't hold yourself on that chair, it would start over.

[00:33:02] **Rod:** Wow.

[00:33:03] **Deb:** So. We saw that evolution in beatings and now understood that there was like, there's no end, you know, they can do whatever they want. So most of the adult men in the Park participated in these, it was, it was what they did.

You know, I know who my own personal abusers are.

Um, but it could be, he did things on whims. It seems like many times he would, he would, uh, I'm remembering a day when he had all the men, he had the men all go home and slap their wives, you know, just go home and slap their wives in the face to remind them that they women. And

[00:33:56] **Rod:** and they did it.

[00:33:58] **Deb:** of course they did it, you know, they were already indoctrinated too. And so this is, this is the confusion for the children of the Park who are now adults. Like I said, I'm 60. And this happened between six and 14, the worst of it.

[00:34:16] **Rod:** Yeah.

[00:34:17] **Deb:** So my entire life has been a set of questions. How could anyone let, let someone tell them that this is okay?

[00:34:26] **Rod:** This goes to the heart of what's wrong with, some of what's wrong with the message, because as a father myself I don't understand how someone would allow anyone else to discipline their kids. As I've got four kids and when our kids were small, if someone tried to discipline them they suffered my wrath or my wife's wrath.

But, I, and this is obviously because William Branham had basically anointed Leo Mercier as the leader. And so because of that, they felt the same kind of allegiance to Leo Mercier as to William Branham because of what William Branham said,

[00:35:06] **Deb:** I absolutely believe that. I've alluded in my book to the idea that their personal discernment was you served their own inclinations were overwritten

[00:35:17] **Rod:** my William Branham, because he had to be right.

[00:35:20] **Deb:** by Leo Mercier because he was endorsed by William Branham and William Branham couldn't be wrong.

[00:35:26] **Rod:** be wrong.

[00:35:27] **Deb:** So this was the part that, and I, I have written my book at a point in time when I was still living with Herbon gray slot, who were wonderful to me, the most wonderful people and probably saved me at some point, but still they, when I had to walk down for a beating, I had to walk down for a beating.

[00:35:56] **Rod:** go ahead. Go ahead. Sorry.

[00:35:58] **Deb:** in my own heart at that time, this is when I feel like I was just filling with frustration and venom. And I said to myself as a child, this will never happen. If I have children. If I have children, I will burn in hell with them before I will let someone take them from me and abuse them.

And that is how my mind was conditioned that if I didn't allow the servant of the Lord or the profit of the end times to dictate how I treated my kids, that hell was, where I was going.

[00:36:38] **Rod:** Wow. It's really, It's interesting because in, in Ephesians six, four, and in Colossians 3 21, Paul says, I think the king James is don't provoke your children to wrath, but what it's talking about is don't make your children frustrated. Don't do the stuff that in fact, what your father allowed to have happened to you, it is don't do that.

And so again, the Bible takes the backseat to the message because William Branham, they would say the Bible is our absolute, but it's not when you ignore it because of things that William Branham set.

[00:37:14] **Deb:** I believe that, and my father was a man among men, but the stories that you know, and you have to understand that everything, and I heard about our life before the Park was all anecdotes and stories, but my dad was a man, a leader of men. Uh, he wasn't afraid to do anything. He flew his own plane. He was, he was a mechanic.

He, he, he once was deputized by the local sheriff in the town when people stole, uh, stole car parts from him and he went and got them back, he wasn't afraid of anything. So this is the man that I, I grew up hearing about. And the man that I so wanted to see, and the man that I believed would, would protect me.

And of course my greatest heartache and the thing that hurts me to my core, more than almost anything I've experienced in my life is when he turned his face from me in Leo mercy bathroom, Liam. Uh, he was a sick sick man, and I, don't know what it was about that bathroom. I've described it in my book. He had an all brown bathroom, a brown toilet.

I had never seen a brown bathroom. I'd never seen a bathroom that nice, frankly, but he would sit on that toilet and he would chastise and rebuke. And make you say you had done things you hadn't done. And if you didn't say it, you were going to suffer. And as a child, it took me longer to figure that out than most kids, um, that if you don't agree with him, you're going to pay.

And I don't know what, what that difference is in some kids' brains. You know, I, I became a very concrete person because of that.

[00:39:16] **Rod:** I think in your book, yeah. You talk about how you didn't realize that the other kids were allying. And if you didn't lie, you were just going to make things worse. So you started lying just to protect yourself.

[00:39:28] **Deb:** I, to this day, don't know why I would lie about the things I lied about. I, I w I totally believed that I was not an inherent liar. That what I wanted to say, I would say, so I became so afraid of consequences. That I would lie because I was afraid. And then that lie would grow. And I was a kid with a good brain and I was precocious.

I would embellish, I would, I would make it bigger. And this is what I did when I talk about I'm telling a lie in second grade that that whole Park in a frenzy. And this was very hard for me to tell because it was, it was nasty. And I have, I have, it

took me until I was an adult to forgive myself for that lie because I feel, and I named that chapter “projection and opprobrium” because I believe what I did is I projected what I had experienced on someone who had no value to me, the school janitor. and I don't know what any child is doing when they do something like that, other than to say, help me,

[00:40:52] **Rod:** Yeah,

[00:40:53] **Deb:** um, needless to say that was not the outcome. Uh, and I was then labeled as a liar and that just eventually led into being able to also lay label me as a deviant and call me a sexual predator at nine years old.

[00:41:14] **Rod:** that is so bizarre.

[00:41:16] **Deb:** about.

[00:41:17] **Rod:** Yeah. Did any of the kids ever try to run away from this abuse?

[00:41:24] **Deb:** My, one of my nieces tried several times to run away and they always brought her back

[00:41:34] **Rod:** We caught her in. And obviously back then probably law enforcement wasn't as in tuned to what's going on potentially

[00:41:43] **Deb:** mentioned that in my book

[00:41:46] **Rod:** yeah,

[00:41:47] **Deb:** my mother could drive a car, they were living on an income dad made at the county garage, which I think was like \$3 and 70 cents an hour or something like that. There was no place to go untethered from husband, from father, from income. You just had to get through it.

There wasn't women's shelters there wasn't, it just wasn't a time in life where people recognize that need.

And so my mother was trapped there. She was absolutely trapped and they, they did throw her out once and she went back to Kentucky and stayed there for several weeks and ultimately decided to come back and just endure.

But what they did to her after that was take her children from her and keep her. She was drugged on value. And for the last seven years we were in there

[00:42:49] **Rod:** Wow.

It's really interesting to note, because you talk about in, in your book, how Leo Mercier was obviously well into substance abuse, not just alcohol, but also I don't, it was morphine or some kind of opiate.

And it's interesting to know, first Corinthians five, 11 to 12 tells us that we are, have nothing to do with evil men.

Right. And he's clearly evil

[00:43:20] **Deb:** yeah,

[00:43:20] **Rod:** evil and William Branham's comment basically absolved him from all evil.

It sounds like people would even make note of the evil. They knew something was going on. They knew it was wrong, but they just kind of turned their head and didn't take it to its logical conclusion.

[00:43:37] **Deb:** I will never understand, but this is the first time I saw this reverence. If we go back to the point in time and when we brand them visited the. I saw the way he was revered by the people, my own mother and my own father. We lined up on either side of the Park when they drove out of the Park and the folks were all singing till we meet again, it was reverent, it was incandescent.

It was beautiful. Uh, my father had tears on his face. I could see that they absolutely revered this man. And so this very revered men who says to them go on, I see it all coming out. Okay. So my entire adult life was spent asking myself, wanting to ask my father what you are telling me and asking me to believe is that everything that happened to me was meant to be that God said it was okay to do these terrible things to me as a child, because William Branham said, go on.

I see it coming out. Okay.

[00:44:57] **Rod:** So we've talked about physical abuse a bit of both psychological and emotional abuse, which you talk about in your book as well. And I'm certainly not an expert on the subject, but I do understand from what I've read that psychological and emotional pain is far worse. Then physical pain because it damages self-esteem it, it creates long-term mental health problems.

How did that affect you as an adult years later?

[00:45:30] **Deb:** It has taken me most of my adult life to recognize how it affected me, because this is what we do. We just move on. And if we're alive and we're breathing, we go on and we make our lives. But because of those wounds in our heart and our mind, and I've mentioned in my book, how moral wounds never heal, they're always there and they're always fresh.

And the memory of the beatings and the injuries, they are not, they did not hamper my life the way the words did. And So in my life words have become a very valuable and very powerful thing. And so it is my desire above all else right now, to use words, to help people understand that children must not be ruined in their brains.

When they're little, when Leo Mercier called me a whore, a lesbian, a prostitute, a molester of little. These were words. I didn't even know. I

[00:46:39] **Rod:** know.

[00:46:39] **Deb:** know.

I didn't know what they meant. I didn't know what a lesbian was. Well, he told me very graphically what a lesbian was. I've I've written that in my book, but he said to me, you are serpent's seed.

You are the evil twin, And I have to get you away from your sister before you ruin her. You

[00:47:04] **Rod:** heard of the promise where you didn't believe it.

[00:47:08] **Deb:** well, he didn't believe it when he said you a good man will never want you. You will never give a man control over you. You will never allow a man. He demoralized me so completely as a child that I believe what I did and learned to do was insulate myself. And because that's the kind of brain I had, I made a safe place in my head, but there are times when I felt that slipping and I, this is the impact that I want to make with some of my statements in the book.

When I said I will make my way with the God that I begged to spare my mind when I was. Well, my body was being abused and any faith I had was being ripped out of my heart. This is the impact I want to make. This is what we can do to our children, if we're not careful. And the first thing that you do to them is, is make them feel unworthy, worthless, dirty, wrong.

Our children should be lifted up as the most beautiful thing in our life. The most incredible thing we can give our wisdom to. So, yes, I found as an adult and being in a product of the Park made me very good at my job in the emergency department. I, I feel like I can only describe myself as somebody. I had decreased empathy.

Um, I became very inflexible. I, and I think, I believe I've described this in this, in my book, how I

[00:49:07] **Rod:** you probably can disassociate yourself.

[00:49:10] **Deb:** yes, and not disassociate to the point of another personality, but to Disconnect. um, because I felt that that danger of disassociative identity. When that beating started the really bad one, because it was not me walking up there.

It was someone else. It was some other little girl. And that's the first time I felt that dis associative possibility. But oddly enough, I mean, I was being beaten the way a child should never be beaten, but what snapped me out of that was embarrassment. I was embarrassed for trying to get away from two grown men who were beating me and calling me a monkey because I jumped over the chair and hit the wall.

I was so embarrassed by that, by the ridicule. So how does that happen? How does that happen? That a child can be embarrassed by the ridicule and by how they appear in front of their peers. They're the other children as being unable to take their beating, but that embarrassment snapped me out of that disassociation.

And I decided, uh, they won't laugh at me anymore. How does that happen to a child?

[00:50:38] **Rod:** No.

[00:50:39] **Deb:** It's, it's a mystery still, but as an adult, I can see how these things hurt my first marriage. I can see. How this dysfunction made me somebody who was utterly inflexible and in, ER, it worked well. I didn't have, I wasn't broken by horrible events that happened.

I could move right on to the next trauma or the next horrible event. And believe me, I saw everything you can imagine in 30 plus years in the ER, and when I lost mom and dad, it seemed like part of the course, it was, it was natural. It's what should be happening. My mother's death was beautiful. My father's death was not, but when Esther died, I felt something I had never felt before.

And that was just a gripping, insane pain that she couldn't see her children finished their lives, that she wouldn't see her grandchildren grow up, that she wouldn't get to enjoy these things in her life that every person wants to enjoy. And believe me, I've seen enough death to understand that there are many people who miss those things, but Esther should not have been in that position.

And it was also part of me. It was losing part of me.

[00:52:04] **Rod:** Yeah.

[00:52:06] **Deb:** So, but I recognize that the damage to her psyche was different than the damage to my. She became very impulsive. I mean, whatever environment she was in, that's what she was doing. If she was in church, she was in church,

If she was at a party, she was at a party.

Um, you know, she was just impulsive. She made impulsive decisions. I feel like her marriage was impulsive. She didn't know the, the man long enough to marry him. So as you get older and you watch these kinds of things happen and you see the differences in brains, and I've watched this with all of my siblings, I've watched how we have been psychologically changed by our childhood and the younger siblings.

You know, we deal with that every day and it's just part of our lives.

[00:53:07] **Rod:** There's a part in your book where, You get ripped out of your home and you're transplanted into a home of a couple that don't have kids, herb and grace, and it's like suddenly in this black and white, terrible environment, you get colored because these people put. Obviously put some love into your life.

What happened to Herb and Grace? And I won't, we don't want to spoil any, anything for people haven't read the book yet, but it's just, it was very interesting to me. I was curious to say, okay, so this wonderful couple who you spent, a year and a half, two years with, what ended up happening to them?