

Book Review

Mud Puddles Path to Peace by Jody McClure AACC Life Coach

The Truth Will Set You Free

The book, *Mud Puddles: Path to Peace*, by Jody McClure, has the potential to change lives. It's a testimonial about her spiritual journey towards a God-centered life.

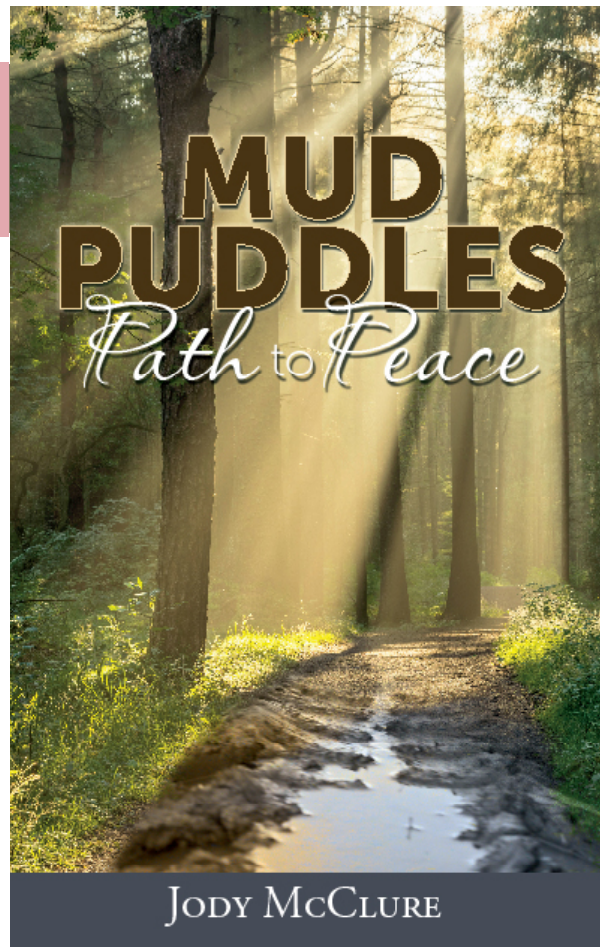
McClure shares her trials and tribulations in order to show the reader that challenges—"mud puddles"—are a necessary part of life (and vital to the journey to an eternal life).

In chapter one the reader finds McClure in her bedroom closet with a gun to her head. Sobbing, in tears and snot, she asks God to give her a reason to not die, a reason to live. He obliges. Upon hearing His voice, a promise, she drops the gun. From this point on we join McClure as she sets out to discover her life's purpose, but first she must get past her life of guilt and pain.

At the center of McClure's suffering is her feeling that she's had to live a lie with her family, friends, and community because of her sexuality. By far the toughest challenge for Jody is handling her parents' disappointment in her. While they mean well (and want her to have an eternal life), Jody feels totally worthless. Her anger, confusion, and self-hatred are major obstacles to moving forward.

Mud Puddles, like life, is a journey, not a destination. Repeatedly, McClure shares her personal relationship with God in chapters titled "Who Am I? Finding My Self-Worth," "Forgiveness," "Blame," "Finding Authenticity," and the "Gift of Conviction."

Structurally, each chapter is introduced with a biblical verse. These spiritual guides are generously planted throughout McClure's testimonial in order to encourage the reader to understand



that her memoir is all about following God's word and serving Him. Whatever the question, having faith in Him is her answer.

McClure used alcohol as a way to cope with her guilt and hatred of herself. It was an escape from pain. She realized that her habit of using alcohol to deal with problems was like choosing an idol over God. And guess what? It caused more guilt!

Jody learned that not forgiving her family for the hurt they had caused her was hindering her spiritual growth with the Lord. When she looked at her sexuality from her parents' point of view, it was clear that their outrage was out of deep love, not hatred.

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 316-303-5010
blmindwellness@gmail.com

In fact, Jody's "parents were trying to do their parental job according to the bible." For a considerable period of time Jody blamed them for her inability to sustain a relationship because if she couldn't trust them, then she couldn't trust anyone. The feeling of rejection, she reasoned, caused her to be overly cautious—selfish—in relationships.

Once Jody took ownership of her motives, she felt her heart begin to heal. She realized it was God molding her and testing her. Eventually, Jody understood that it was her flawed perspective of love that caused her dysfunctional broken relationships, not her sexuality.

Despite God's help, Jody fell "into the trap of fading faith by seeking the things of this world to fulfill" her. Jody shares how God helped her find courage again. She quotes Proverbs 3:5-6: "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make straight your paths."

McClure's openness about her trials and tribulations is remarkable. When things go wrong she sees it as a sign from God "to pay attention and find the lessons in the mess." When things are good and great she gives Him credit.

Jody sees all of this as paramount to her spiritual development on her journey to peace and purpose. She's striving to develop her God-given spiritual gifts. She knows there will be more trials to conquer. Messes grow her character.

"Jody McClure is an American Association of Christian Counselors certified Christian life coach. She remains active in supporting the mission of suicide awareness and prevention."